



Town of Newmarket Council Information Package

Index of Attachments

Date: October 7, 2022

| | Pages |
|---|--------------|
| General Correspondence Items | |
| 1. Notice of Adoption OPA 157 (OPA22.005) & Notice of Passing (ZBA22.009) | 1 |
| Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville | |
| October 3, 2022 | |
| 2. Regional Council Decision - 2022 Mid-Year Development Activity Summary | 6 |
| York Region | |
| October 3, 2022 | |
| 3. Regional Council Decision - 2022 Transportation Master Plan | 76 |
| York Region | |
| October 3, 2022 | |
| 4. Regional Council Decision - Town of Newmarket Inn from the Cold Development Funding | 191 |
| York Region | |
| October 3, 2022 | |
| 5. Regional Council Decision - Vacant Homes Tax to Support Affordable Housing Update | 193 |
| York Region | |
| October 3, 2022 | |

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 6. | Regional Decision - York Region Climate Change Action Plan | 519 |
| | York Region | |
| | October 3, 2022 | |
| 7. | Resolution - Support for Lucan Biddulph / Wasaga Beach / Kingsville re: Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act | 560 |
| | October 5, 2022 | |
| | Municipality of Thames Centre | |

Proclamation, Lighting Requests and Community Flag Raising

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. | Fire Prevention Week | 569 |
| | Proclamation - October 9 to 15, 2022 | |
| 2. | World Polio Day | 572 |
| | Proclamation - October 24, 2022 | |
| | Lighting - October 25, 2022 (red) | |
| | Flag Raising - October 21 to 28, 2022 | |

Information Reports

- INFO-2022-25: Water Distribution System Updates -- AMI Deployment, Billing Vendor and Leak Detection Program

From: [Cannabis Study](#)
To: [Cannabis Study](#)
Cc: [Meaghan Craven](#); [Zahrah Khan](#); [Taylor LaPlante](#); [Dwayne Tapp](#); [Hena Kabir](#); [Bender, Gregory](#); [Rappolt, Robert](#)
Subject: Notice of Adoption OPA 157 (OPA22.005) & Notice of Passing (ZBA22.009)
Date: October 3, 2022 2:45:04 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[Cannabis Study OPA - Notice of Adoption - OPA 157.pdf](#)
[Cannabis Study ZBA - Notice of Passing By-law 2022-099-ZO.pdf](#)

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Hello,

Please be advised that on September 21st, 2022, the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville passed By-law 2022-099-ZO (File No. ZBA22.009) and By-law 2022-100-OP (File No. OPA22.005).

For further information on the By-laws or the Cannabis Study, please contact cannabis.study@townofws.ca.

Thank you,



ZAHRAH KHAN, MES PI.

Policy Planner II | Development Services

111 Sandiford Drive, Stouffville, Ontario L4A 0Z8

t: 905-640-1900 ext. 2329 | **tf:** 855-642-TOWN |

townofws.ca



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111 Sandiford Drive
Stouffville, Ontario
L4A 0Z8

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NOTICE OF ADOPTION

This Notice is to advise you that in accordance with Section 17(23) of the *Planning Act 1990*, the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville at its meeting on September 21st, 2022 has made the decision to:

PASS BY-LAW 2022-100-OP

Official Plan Amendment No. 157 (File No. OPA22.005) for
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

EXPLANATION OF THE PURPOSE & EFFECT OF BY-LAW 2022-100-OP

The purpose of Amendment No. 157 to the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan is to amend the Town's Official Plan to permit indoor cannabis cultivation, outdoor cannabis cultivation, and cannabis processing.

The Official Plan Amendment introduces three new definitions of outdoor cannabis cultivation, indoor cannabis cultivation and, cannabis processing, and applies to all lands within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville designated Agricultural Area, Rural Area, ORM Natural Core Area, ORM Natural Linkage Area, ORM Countryside Area. It also applies to lands designated Industrial Area in the Gormley Industrial Secondary Plan, Industrial Area in the Community of Stouffville Secondary Plan, ORM Natural Core Area, ORM Natural Linkage Area, ORM Countryside Area, in the Ballantrae-Musselman Lake and Environs Secondary Plan, and ORM Natural Core Area, ORM Natural Linkage Area, and ORM Countryside Area, in the Vandorf-Preston Lake Secondary Plan.

A map has not been included as By-Law 2022-100-OP applies Town-wide.

All written and oral submissions received by the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville were considered in the making of this decision.

Who Can File a Notice of Appeal

Only individuals, corporations and public bodies may appeal a decision of the Town to the Ontario Land Tribunal ('OLT'). A notice of appeal may not be filed by an unincorporated association or group. However, a notice of appeal may be filed in the name of an individual who is a member of the association or the group on its behalf.

No person or public body shall be added as a party to the hearing of the appeal unless, before the plan was adopted, the person or public body made oral submissions at a public meeting or written submissions to Town Council or, in the opinion of the OLT, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

When and How to File a Notice of Appeal

The last date for filing a Notice of Appeal is **21st day of October, 2022**. The proposed official plan amendment is exempt from approval by the Regional Municipality of York. The

decision of Town Council is final if a notice of appeal is not received on or before the last day for filing a notice of appeal.

A Notice of Appeal must:

- i. Be filed with the Clerk of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville;
- ii. Set out the reasons for the appeal, and the specific part(s) of the proposed Official Plan Amendment to which the appeal applies;
- iii. Be accompanied by the fee required by the OLT (currently \$1,100 or \$400 for a private citizen, registered charity or non-profit ratepayers' association). Fees are payable by certified cheque, money order, or credit card, and must be in Canadian funds. Certified cheques and money orders should be made payable to the "Minister of Finance";
- iv. In addition, pursuant to By-law No. 2021-112-FI, a processing fee of \$251 per OLT appeal, payable to the Town of Whitchurch- Stouffville, is required to be paid at the time of filing a Notice of Appeal.

Forms and other information respecting appeals to the OLT are available on the OLT's website at: <https://olt.gov.on.ca/appeals-process/>

The OLT may dismiss an appeal for reasons set out in Section 17(45) of the *Planning Act*.

Personal information that accompanies a submission will be collected under the authority of the *Planning Act* and may form part of the public record which may be released to the public.

Mailing Address for Filing a Notice of Appeal

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Municipal Offices
111 Sandiford Drive
Stouffville, Ontario
L4A 0Z8

A copy of the Official Plan Amendment, as well as background information, are available for inspection by contacting Zahrah Khan, Policy Planner II, at cannabis.study@townofws.ca.

DATED at the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville this 3rd day of October, 2022.

Dwayne Tapp
Director of Development Services,
Development Services

A KEY MAP HAS NOT BEEN INCLUDED AS **BY-LAW 2022-100-OP** APPLIES TOWN-WIDE.

NOTICE OF PASSING

This Notice is to advise you that in accordance with Section 34(18) of the *Planning Act 1990*, the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville at its meeting on September 21, 2022 has made the decision to:

PASS BY-LAW 2022-099-ZO

Zoning By-law Amendment (File No. ZBA22.009), for
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

EXPLANATION OF THE PURPOSE & EFFECT OF BY-LAW 2022-099-ZO

The purpose of the Zoning By-law Amendment (File No. ZBA22.009) is to permit, indoor cannabis cultivation, outdoor cannabis cultivation, and cannabis processing in the Town. The Zoning By-law Amendment amends the Town's Comprehensive Zoning By-law to establish site-specific exceptions through the requirement of a Zoning By-law Amendment on lands designated rural and environment zones and employment zones. The Zoning By-law Amendment establishes site-specific regulations for additional permitted uses, minimum setbacks for properties, and introduces three new definitions of: cannabis cultivation, indoor; cannabis cultivation, outdoor; and, cannabis processing. A map has not been included as By-law 2022-099-ZO applies Town-wide.

All written and oral submissions received by the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville were considered in the making of this decision.

Filing of the Appeal

Any person may appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) in respect of the by-law by filing with the Clerk of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The last date for filing a Notice of Appeal is **21st day of October, 2022**. If no appeal is received by this time, the decision is final. A Notice of Appeal must:

- i. Be filed with the Clerk of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville;
- ii. Set out the reasons for the appeal;
- iii. Be accompanied by the fee required by the Ontario Land Tribunal (currently \$400 for a private citizen or \$1,100 for a corporation, cheque made payable to the Minister of Finance).
- iv. In addition, pursuant to By-law No. 2021-112-FI, a processing fee of \$251 per Ontario Land Tribunal appeal, payable to the Town of Whitchurch- Stouffville, is required to be paid at the time of filing a Notice of Appeal.

Notice of Passing File
No. ZBA22.009

Forms and other information respecting appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) are available on the Ontario Land Tribunal's website at: <https://olt.gov.on.ca/about-olt/>.

Personal information that accompanies a submission will be collected under the authority of the Planning Act and may form part of the public record which may be released to the public.

The Ontario Land Tribunal may dismiss an appeal for reasons set out in Section 34(25) of the Planning Act.

Only individuals, corporations and public bodies may appeal a by-law to the Ontario Land Tribunal. A notice of appeal may not be filed by an unincorporated association or group. However, a notice of appeal may be filed in the name of an individual who is a member of the association or the group on its behalf.

No person or public body shall be added as a party to the hearing of the appeal unless, before the by-law was passed, the person or public body made oral submissions at a public meeting or written submissions to the council or, in the opinion of the Ontario Land Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

A copy of the Zoning By-law Amendment, as well as background information, are available for inspection by contacting Zahrah Khan, Policy Planner II, at cannabis.study@townofws.ca.

DATED at the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville this 3rd day of October, 2022.

Dwayne Tapp
Director of Development Services,
Development Services

From: [McPhail, Roxanne](#) on behalf of [Regional Clerk](#)
Subject: Regional Council Decision - 2022 Mid-Year Development Activity Summary
Date: October 3, 2022 3:17:02 PM
Attachments: [2022 Mid-Year Development Activity Summary.pdf](#)

CAUTION: This email originated outside of the Town of Newmarket. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and trusted content.

On September 29, 2022 Regional Council made the following decision:

1. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the local municipalities.

The original staff report is attached for your information.

Please contact Asif Abbas, Planner, at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 77271 if you have any questions with respect to this matter.

Regards,

Christopher Raynor (he/him) | Regional Clerk, Regional Clerk's Office, Corporate Services Department

The Regional Municipality of York | 17250 Yonge Street | Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1
O: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71300 | christopher.raynor@york.ca | york.ca

Our Mission: **Working together to serve our thriving communities – today and tomorrow**

The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole
Planning and Economic Development
September 8, 2022

Report of the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Planner

2022 Mid-Year Development Activity Summary

1. Recommendation

1. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the local municipalities.

2. Summary

Council has delegated authority to the Chief Planner and Director of Community Planning and Development Services to issue approvals for development applications, subject to such approvals being reported to Council semi-annually. Delegated approval authority includes routine Local Official Plan Amendments (OPAs), including exemption from Regional approval and approval of works adjacent to Regional rights-of-way and infrastructure. York Region is a commenting agency to local municipalities for draft plans of subdivision and condominium, site plans, consent to sever, zoning by-law amendment, and minor variance applications on matters of Regional interest.

Information on the mid-year 2022 development application activity for each local municipality is included in Attachment 1.

Key Points:

- In the first half of 2022, Planning and Economic Development received 262 new development applications for review, a 2% increase over 2021 (256 development applications), which was already a high-volume year for development activity
- Development charge collections increased by 23% to \$291,624,215 in the first half of 2022 from \$237,026,190 in 2021
- 17 Official Plan Amendment applications were exempted from Regional approval, 11 OPAs were not exempted, and 7 notices of decision were issued by the Director of Community Planning and Development Services on local OPAs
- Proposed residential units in new draft plan of subdivision applications increased to 872 in the first half of 2022 from 845 in 2021 and proposed residential units in new site plan applications increased to 12,017 in 2022 from 4,615 in 2021. The increase in proposed residential units in new site plan applications is a result of high-density development proposals in the cities of Richmond Hill and Vaughan

- It is anticipated that development activity will continue at a similar pace for the remainder of the year
- The Region launched a public dashboard that provides the Regional current status of all development applications and staff contacts for easy access.

3. Background

Authority to approve certain development applications is delegated to Chief Planner and Director of Community Planning and Development Services

In addition to reporting on OPA approvals, the mid-year 2022 development activity report summarizes the number of new residential applications and associated proposed residential units received, together with the total number of residential units registered. The following information is presented in the Development Activity Summary Report:

- Approval of Local OPAs with no Regional requirements – Delegated
 - Subject to such approvals being reported to Council semi-annually
- Exemption of Local OPAs from Regional approval – Delegated
 - The Region has authority to exempt an OPA from Regional approval if it is determined to be of local significance and there are no Regional requirements. The Regional Official Plan sets out criteria to determine if an amendment is eligible for exemption. If the application qualifies for exemption, the local municipality will issue the decision for the OPA.
 - Subject to such approvals being reported to Council semi-annually
- New development applications received
- Proposed residential units received
- Number of registered plans of subdivision and registered units
- Approval of works in the Regional right-of-way as part of site plan applications with Regional requirements – Delegated
- Engineering approval of works in the Regional right-of-way – Delegated
- Planning and Development Engineering review fee and development charge collection

All nine local municipalities provide data to ensure an accurate Regional development activity report

The Region, with assistance from our local municipalities, has been collecting and tracking development related information and data received on each application in YorkTrax. Application information on location, nature of proposal, number of units, square footage for non-residential, status, progress, and associated applications is captured, and development

trends can be analyzed for reporting. As data continues to be collected in YorkTrax, the Region can more accurately track proposed development activity in each local municipality and region-wide basis to assess trends. Future connections of local systems and YorkTrax will further improve data exchange, accuracy, and timing. A full trend analysis will be provided in the final 2022 annual report in early 2023.

4. Analysis

38 local OPAs were received and 17 local OPA applications were exempted from Regional approval

The Region received 38 local OPA applications in the first half of 2022. The Director of Community Planning and Development Services issued decisions on a total of 35 local OPA applications in the first half of 2022 (17 in 2021). Not all applications received a decision within the first half of the year and some decisions issued were for amendments from applications received prior to 2022.

Of these, 17 local OPAs were exempted from Regional approval, 11 local OPAs were not exempted from Regional approval and seven notices of decision were issued on local OPAs. A majority of exempted OPAs related to changes to building height, density, built form and urban design. The high number of local OPAs not exempted from Regional approval were to ensure conformity with the Regional Official Plan and with local secondary plan updates. The Region retains the approval authority over these local OPAs. A list of local OPAs with approval status by municipality is provided in Attachment 1.

Number of development applications received in 2022 remains consistent compared to 2021

Table 1 identifies the number of new applications received by the Region by type in 2021 and 2022 with percentage change. The primary applications the Region received for review and response are OPAs, Block Plans, Draft Plan of Subdivisions, Zoning By-Law, Draft Plan of Condominiums, Engineering and Site Plans, which totaled 262 new development applications. In the first half of 2022, the number of these primary applications increased by 2% compared to 256 applications for the same period in 2021. In addition to primary applications, the Region received other development applications, including site plans (with no Regional requirements), pre-consultation, consent to sever and minor variances for review and information purposes. The Region received 836 applications in the first half of 2022, compared to 821 in 2021. It is anticipated that development activity will continue at a similar pace for the remainder of the year.

Approximately 67% of new applications received in 2022 were in the cities of Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan. A breakdown of new development applications by municipality is provided in Attachment 1.

Table 1
Number of New Applications Received by York Region
by Type in Mid-Year 2021 and 2022

| Application Type (New Applications) | Mid-Year 2021 | Mid-Year 2022 | Per Cent (%) +/- change | |
|--|--|------------------|----------------------------|------|
| Primary Applications | Official Plan Amendments | 44 | 38 | -14% |
| | Block Plans | 2 | 0 | N/A |
| | Draft Plan of Subdivision | 15 | 19 | 27% |
| | Zoning By-Law Amendments | 76 | 75 | -1% |
| | Draft Plan of Condominium | 10 | 12 | 20% |
| | Engineering Review | 26 | 21 | -19% |
| | Site Plans Applications (Minor and Major) ¹ | 83 | 97 | 17% |
| Total Development Applications | 256 | 262 | 2% | |
| Other Applications Reviewed | Site Plan (No Regional Requirements) ² | 60 | 92 | 53% |
| | Pre-Consultation Meetings | 369 | 319 | -14% |
| | Consent to sever Applications | 46 | 53 | 15% |
| | Minor Variances Applications | 346 | 372 | 8% |
| Total Applications Received | 1077 | 1,098 | 2% | |

¹ Major and minor site plans are determined based on the value of construction work proposed in the Regional right-of-way. More complex right-of-way works require more detailed review.

² No Regional requirements e.g. not adjacent to a Regional road or infrastructure, source water protection area. Applications are received for information purposes only.

Number of proposed residential units in 2022 have increased by 136% compared to mid-year 2021

In the first half of 2022, the number of proposed residential units received by the Region for review as part of new draft plan of subdivision applications was 872; this is slightly higher than 845 units received by mid-year 2021, representing an 3% increase. There were 12,017 proposed residential units received for review as part of new site plan applications compared to 4,615 units received in 2021, representing a 160% increase overall (Table 2).

Development activity fluctuates from year to year and is often dependent on various factors, many outside of the Region's control, that contribute to the increase of proposed residential units. Multiple high-density residential development applications received for the cities of Richmond Hill and Vaughan represent 72% of the proposed residential units as part of new site plan applications. The Region has a good supply of residential inventory undergoing the development review process.

Table 2
Proposed Residential Units Received per Mid-Year in 2021-2022

| | 2021 | 2022 | Per Cent (%) +/- change |
|--|--------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Proposed Subdivision Units ¹ (Single/Semi/Townhouse) | 845 | 872 | 3% |
| Proposed Site Plan units ² | 4,615 | 12,017 | 160% |
| Total proposed units | 5,460 | 12,889 | 136% |

¹ Proposed residential units associated with draft plan of subdivision applications (no apartments).

² Proposed residential site plan units. Units include site plan applications with no regional requirements.

Total residential units registered in 2022 decreased slightly from 2021

The number of registered plans of subdivision and condominium applications increased from 24 in 2021 to 35 in 2022 (Table 3). The residential units generated from those applications decreased from 3,142 registered units in 2021 to 2,998 in 2022, representing a 5% decrease.

The higher number of registered plans of subdivision with lower number of residential units (compared to 2021) indicates an increase in minor residential infill development through intensification. Intensification through infill development is one way a property can be developed with a higher density. Unit registration is expected to continue to remain consistent throughout the remainder of 2022.

Table 3
Registered Plans of Subdivision and Condominium Mid-Year 2021 and 2022

| | 2021 | 2022 |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Registered Plans of Subdivision/units | 15 (1,646 units) | 24 (1,526 units) |
| Registered Plans of Condominium/units* | 9 (1,496 units) | 11 (1,472 units) |
| Total | 24 (3,142 units) | 35 (2,998 units) |

* Includes apartment units

The number of site plan applications receiving Regional approval increased in 2022

York Region approves Regional engineering matters in site plan applications for projects that impact Regional roadways and infrastructure. Site plan applications are reviewed for planning and legal considerations in accordance with the *Planning Act*, protection of Regional wellheads, property requirements, travel demand management, transit, intersection and access design, road and servicing design, and development implications to the Regional road system and rights-of-way. Site plan applications consist of both small ground related infill proposals and major development applications. Both minor and major site plan applications contribute towards the residential and non-residential inventory.

In the first half of 2022, 76 site plan applications received Regional approval on matters with Regional requirements compared to 63 approvals in 2021, representing a 21% increase (Table 4). The number of new minor and major site plan applications received remained consistent with last year, whereas the number of site plan applications with no Regional requirements increased by 53% (Table 1).

Table 4
Approval of Regional Requirements as Part of Site Plan Applications
Mid-Year 2021 - 2022

| | 2021 | 2022 |
|---------------------------------|------|------|
| Approved Site Plan Applications | 63 | 76 |

Regional requirements e.g. adjacent to a Regional road or infrastructure, within source water protection area.

York Region reviewed 58 industrial, commercial, and institutional applications with a total of 772,350 m² (8,313,506 ft²) of gross floor area

The YorkTrax development tracking system has improved the Region's ability to collect development related data on applications received from the local municipalities. All development applications are uploaded into YorkTrax for data capture, analysis, and reporting purposes.

In addition to residential units, YorkTrax now collects non-residential data that includes commercial, industrial, and institutional gross floor area (GFA). In mid-year 2022, the Region received 58 applications with 772,350 m² (8,313,506 ft²) commercial, industrial and institutional GFA for review as part of new site plan applications. The non-residential GFA, shown in Table 5, is collected through new site plan applications only as it is more accurate compared to other applications. Non-residential GFA proposed in OPA applications are not captured due to their preliminary nature. Future development activity reports will provide trends and analysis on non-residential development applications as more data is collected.

Table 5
Proposed Non-Residential GFA Received Mid-Year 2022

| | 2022 |
|---------------|---|
| Commercial | 307,956 m ² (3,314,811 ft ²) |
| Industrial | 264,546 m ² (2,847,549 ft ²) |
| Institutional | 42,374 m ² (456,110 ft ²) |

Proposed non-residential GFA from site plan applications only.

Engineering approvals remained the same in 2022 with 16 approvals

Regional staff issue engineering approvals for works proposed as part of subdivision applications or local municipal capital projects, which involve Regional infrastructure or located in the Region's right-of-way. From January 1 to June 30, 2022, approvals for 16 subdivision-related engineering plans were issued, similar to the first half of 2021. These applications involve both above-ground and below ground engineering works, including but not limited to, intersection and access improvements, road widening, electrical and signalization, storm, water, and sanitary servicing connections, property grading and construction access.

The number of engineering approvals is tied to approvals required for applications to proceed to clearance for registration. Given the consistent number of engineering approvals in 2022, the Region will continue to experience strong growth as these applications proceed to registration and construction.

Regional staff participate on advisory committees and working groups to plan new development areas with local municipal partners

Planning and Economic Development staff participate in Regional and local Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) and Project Working Groups. This includes urban expansion areas, new Secondary Plans and Key Development Areas. Input to these committees and working groups is important to ensure Regional requirements are identified early in the planning process. Region staff also review pre-consultation requests to provide comments and submission requirements for future development applications.

YorkTrax now provides access to local municipalities, developers and the public for application status across the Region

To further improve development process transparency and streamlining, the Region launched a public dashboard accessible from the Region's [website](#). The dashboard provides the Regional current status of all development applications and staff contacts for easy access. It features an interactive map that can filter applications based on date received, municipality and application type. It can be referenced between the comprehensive semi-annual reports to Council.

5. Financial

Application fee revenues decreased by 7% compared to previous mid-year collection

Development application fees are collected in accordance with Regional Bylaw No. 2020-04, as amended, for land use planning approvals and the plan review function. As shown in Table 6, Regional development fees collected in the first half of 2022 decreased by 7% compared to 2021. The decrease in revenue is attributed to a lower number of resubmissions in 2022.

Table 6
Fee Revenue for Development Planning and Engineering
Mid-Year 2021 to Mid-Year 2022

| | 2021 | 2022 |
|-------|-------------|-------------|
| Total | \$2,607,100 | \$2,431,621 |

Development charge collection of \$291,624,215 represents a 23% increase from mid-year 2021

Development charges are collected through development approval process to help recover costs for growth-related infrastructure. Currently, development charges are collected at

subdivision registration and building permit issuance (Attachment 2). From January 1 to June 30, 2022, \$291,624,215 in development charges was collected. This is an increase of 23% over mid-year 2021 (\$237,026,190). Figure 1 shows DC collection in the last 10 years.

On May 26, 2022, Council approved DC Bylaw No. 2022-31. The new Regional development charge rates came into effect on June 17, 2022 with a increase in soft services rates and a slight decrease in hard services rates.

Regional development charge increases have historically resulted in spikes of draft plan of subdivision registrations; however, the impact may be less pronounced this year due to:

- Decrease in the hard services rates under the 2022 DC Bylaw, which may have caused development to delay subdivision registration until after June 17
- The rate freezing provisions in effect

Regional DC Collections forecast projected higher collections in 2022 compared to the average annual amounts collected in the previous three years. It is anticipated that DC collections would continue to be realized in the second half of 2022 as developers proceed with projects.

Figure 1
Development Charges Collection Trend – 10 years

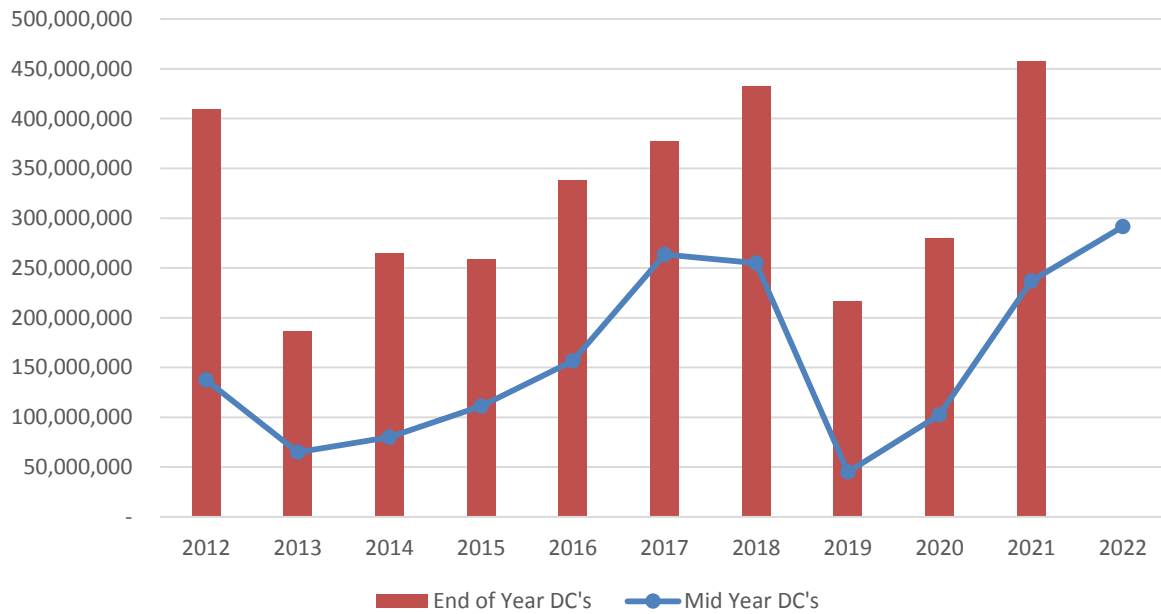


Table 7
Development Charges Collected by Mid-Year 2021 to 2022

| 2021 | 2022 |
|---------------|---------------|
| \$237,026,190 | \$291,624,215 |

6. Local Impact

Regional staff work closely with local municipal staff to ensure timely review of development applications, Regional and local policy objectives are met, approvals occur within the timelines prescribed by the *Planning Act*. Continued collaboration, and development data exchange assists in timely processing of applications.

7. Conclusion

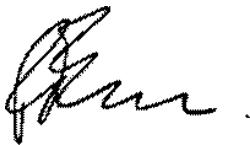
The 2022 Mid-Year Development Activity report summarizes delegated approvals and new development applications received by the Region in 2022 with a 2021 comparison, using data collected from YorkTrax, to Council for information. A full trend analysis will be provided in the final 2022 annual report in early 2023.

The Director of Community Planning and Development Services issued decisions on a total of 35 local OPA applications in the first half of 2022. While the number of applications fluctuate annually due to the cyclical nature of development, applications received in the first half of 2022 remained consistent to last year. Total proposed residential units related to new draft plan of subdivision and site plan applications significantly increased to 12,889 in 2022 from 5,460 in 2021. The increase in proposed residential units in new site plan applications is a result of high-density site plan applications received in cities of Richmond Hill and Vaughan. The Region has a good supply of residential inventory undergoing the development review process.

The increase in development charge collection is an indicator of a higher level of construction as charges are payable either at registration of plans of subdivision or at building permit. Development charge collection increased by 23% to \$291,624,215 in 2022 (2021 - \$237,026,190). It is anticipated that development activity will remain strong in 2022.

Regional staff will continue to work closely with local municipal partners to achieve Regional and local policy objectives through the development review and approval process. Continued process improvement through YorkTrax helps Regional staff ensure timely approvals within the timelines prescribed by the *Planning Act*.

For more information on this report, please contact Asif Abbas, Planner, at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 77271. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Recommended by:

Paul Freeman, MCIP, RPP
Chief Planner



Recommended by:

Dino Basso
Commissioner of Corporate Services



Approved for Submission:

Bruce Macgregor
Chief Administrative Officer

August 25, 2022

Attachments (2)

14061709

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY SUMMARY MID-YEAR 2022

TABLE of CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 3 |
| DELEGATED APPROVAL AUTHORITY | 4 |
| YORK REGION DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022 | 5 |
| QUICK FACTS | 5 |
| YORK REGION DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022 | 6 |
| Town of AURORA DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022 | 9 |
| QUICK FACTS | 9 |
| DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022 | 11 |
| Town of EAST GWILLIMBURY DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022 | 13 |
| QUICK FACTS | 13 |
| DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022 | 15 |
| Town of GEORGINA DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022 | 17 |
| QUICK FACTS | 17 |
| DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022 | 19 |
| Township of KING DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022 | 20 |
| QUICK FACTS | 20 |
| DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022 | 22 |
| City of MARKHAM DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022 | 23 |
| QUICK FACTS | 23 |
| DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022 | 25 |
| Town of NEWMARKET DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022 | 30 |
| QUICK FACTS | 30 |
| DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022 | 32 |
| City of RICHMOND HILL DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022 | 34 |
| QUICK FACTS | 34 |
| DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022 | 36 |
| City of VAUGHAN DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022 | 40 |
| QUICK FACTS | 40 |
| DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022 | 42 |
| Town of WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022 | 53 |
| QUICK FACTS | 53 |
| DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022 | 55 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The 2022 Mid-Year Development Activity report summarizes delegated approvals and new development applications received by York Region in the first half of 2022 with a 2021 comparison, using data collected from YorkTrax, to Council for information. A full trend analysis will be provided in the 2022 annual report in early 2023.

The Director of Community Planning and Development Services issued decisions on a total of 35 local official plan amendments (OPAs) applications in the first half of 2022. 17 Official Plan Amendment applications were exempted from Regional approval, 11 OPAs were not exempted and 7 notices of decision were issued. While the number of applications fluctuate annually due to the cyclical nature of development, applications received in the first half of 2022 remained consistent compared to last year. Total proposed residential units related to new draft plan of subdivision and site plan applications significantly increased to 12,889 in 2022 from 5,460 in 2021. The increase in proposed residential units in new site plan applications is a result of high-density site plan applications received in cities of Richmond Hill and Vaughan. The Region has a good supply of residential inventory undergoing the development review process.

The number of registered plans of subdivision and condominium applications increased from 24 in 2021 to 35 in 2022. The associated residential units generated from those applications decreased from 3,142 registered units in 2021 to 2,998 in 2022, representing a 5% decrease. The higher number of registered plans of subdivision with lower number of residential units (compared to 2021) indicates an increase in minor residential infill development through intensification.

The increase in development charge collection is an indicator of a higher level of construction as charges are payable either at registration of plans of subdivision or at building permit. Development charge collection increased by 23% to \$291,624,215 in 2022 (2021 - \$237,026,190). It is anticipated that development activity will remain strong in 2022.

Regional staff will continue to work closely with local municipal partners to achieve Regional and local policy objectives through the development review and approval process. Continued process improvement through YorkTrax helps Regional staff ensure timely approvals within the timelines prescribed by the Planning Act.

DELEGATED APPROVAL AUTHORITY

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY SUMMARY MID-YEAR 2022

LOCAL 'ROUTINE' OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENTS

These are minor applications with no outstanding Regional or local issues that the Chief Planner and Director of Community Planning and Development Services have been authorized by Council to approve.

LOCAL 'EXEMPT' OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENTS

These are applications that are exempted under the provisions of the York Region Official Plan 2010, which the Director of Community Planning and Development Services can exempt from the approval process. The exemption enables the local municipality to make the final decision on the application.

CONDITIONS of APPROVAL for PLANS of SUBDIVISION and CONDOMINIUMS

As a commenting agency, the Region provides written correspondence to the local municipality which outlines Regional requirements and conditions of draft approval, which may include transit, water and wastewater, servicing allocation, roads, water resources, public health, financial and planning conditions.

CLEARANCE of REGIONAL CONDITIONS for PLANS of SUBDIVISION and CONDOMINIUMS

As a commenting agency, the Region provides a letter to the local municipality outlining how each Regional condition of draft approval has been satisfied.

REGIONAL SITE PLAN APPROVAL

Staff has delegated authority to issue conditions of site plan approval on applications of Regional interest, and when necessary enters into site plan agreements with respect to these applications. These conditions include, but are not limited to, land requirements, water and wastewater, transportation, water resources, public health, land use planning, roads, access improvements and financial requirements.

REGIONAL ENGINEERING APPROVALS

The Region provides engineering approvals for works proposed on the Region's right-of-ways as part of development applications and local municipal capital projects. These approvals are required to be in place before subdivision clearance can be issued by the Region.



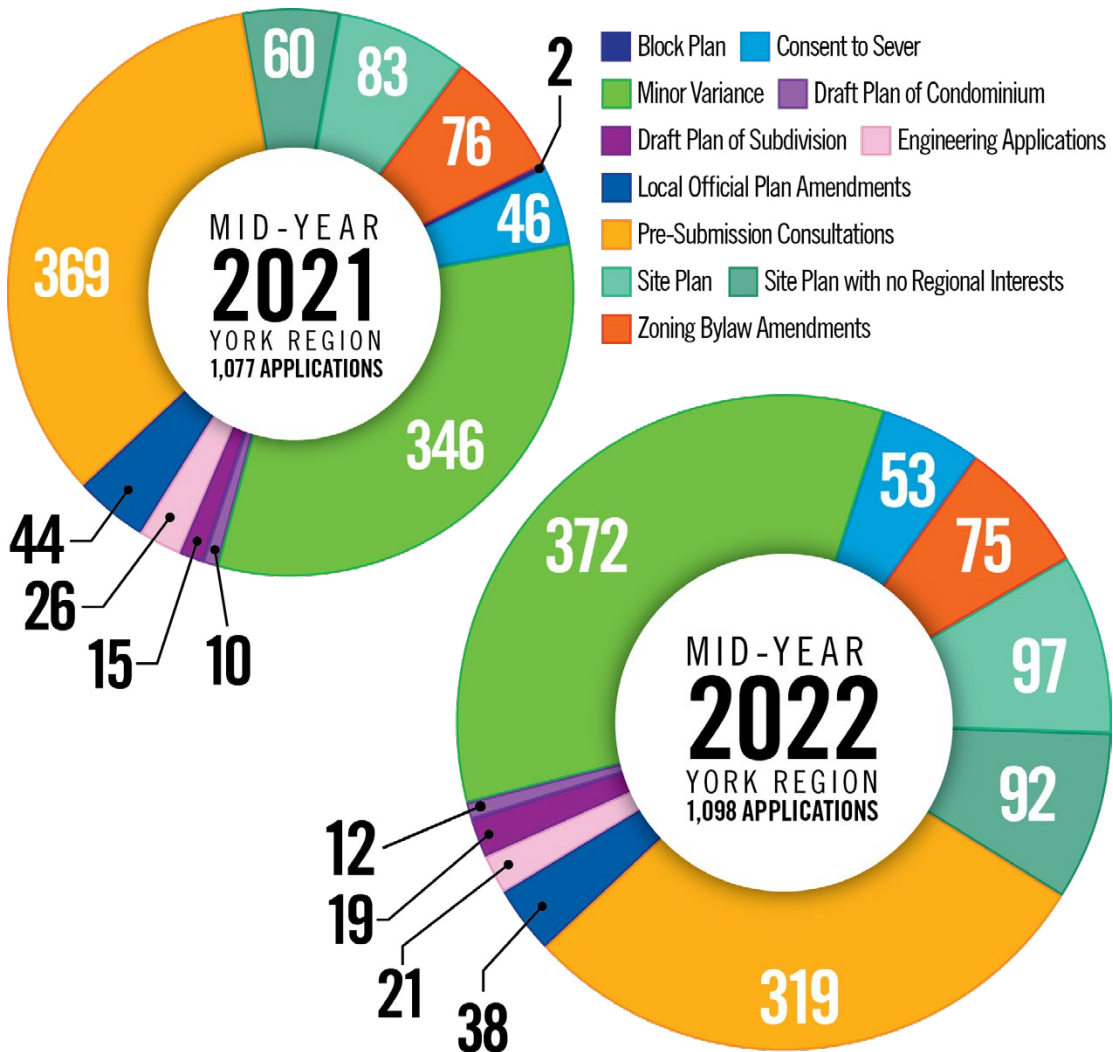
YORK REGION

DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022

QUICKFACTS

- › Regional staff received a total of 1,098 development applications
 - › 262 are primary development applications
- › Total of 872 residential units received as part of subdivision applications
- › Total of 12,017 residential units received as part of site plan applications
- › Total of 2,998 units cleared for registration
- › 17 Local Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) were exempted from Regional approval, 11 OPAs were denied Regional exemption and seven notice of decisions were issued on local OPAs

FIGURE 1 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE MID-YEAR 2021 and MID-YEAR 2022

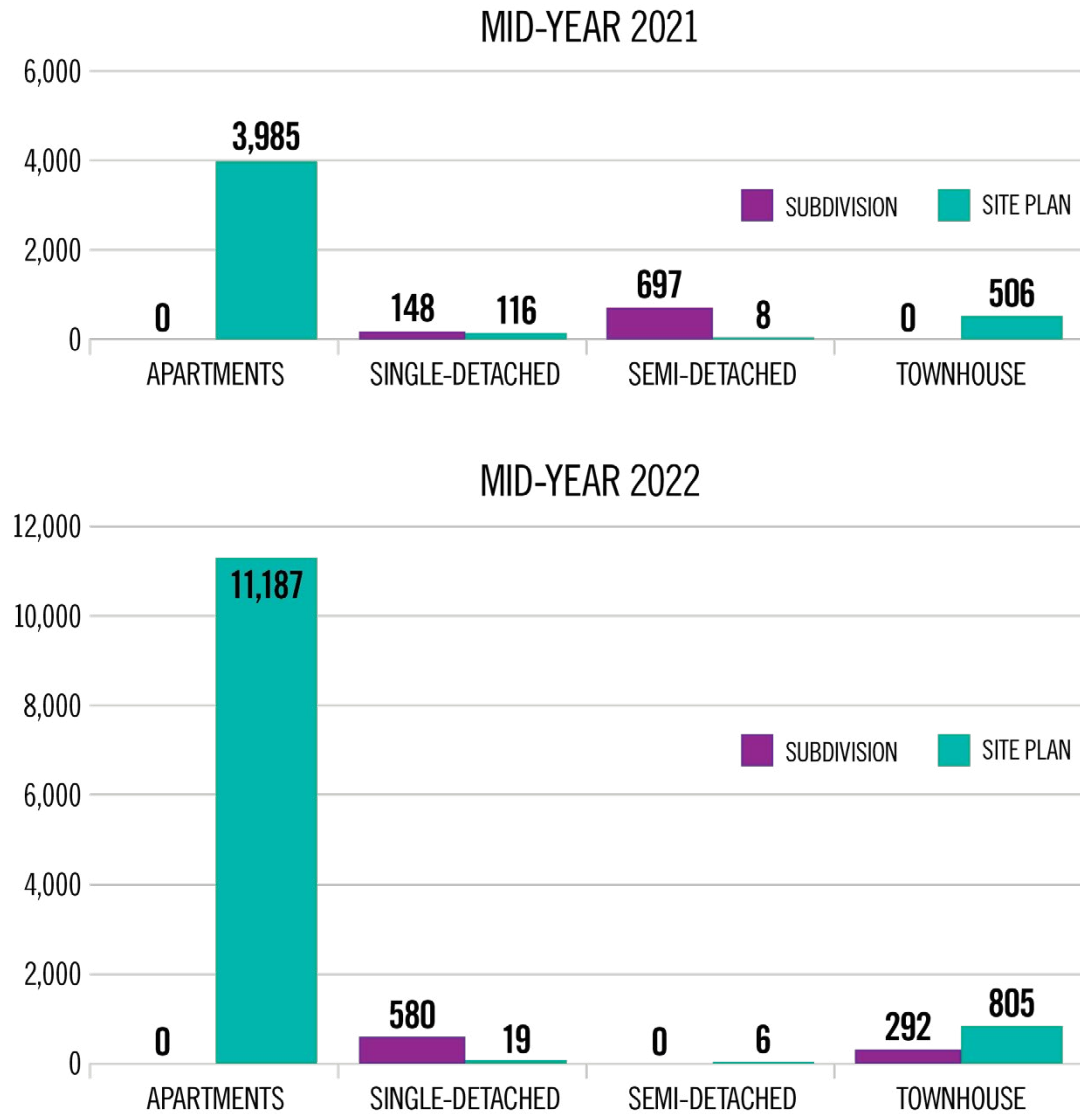




YORK REGION

DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022

FIGURE 2 TYPE of PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL UNITS in MID-YEAR 2021 and MID-YEAR 2022





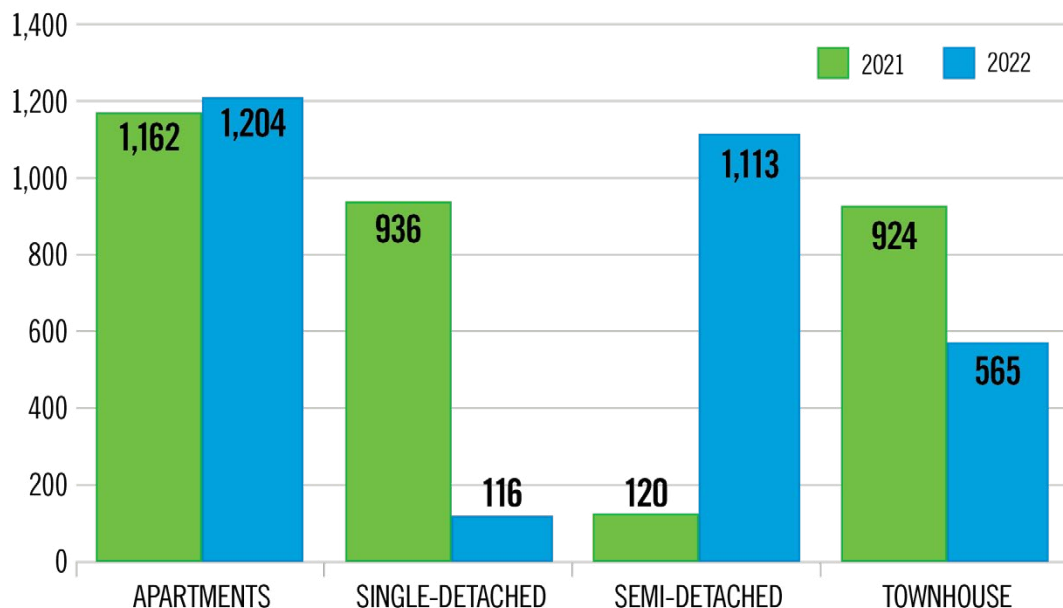
YORK REGION

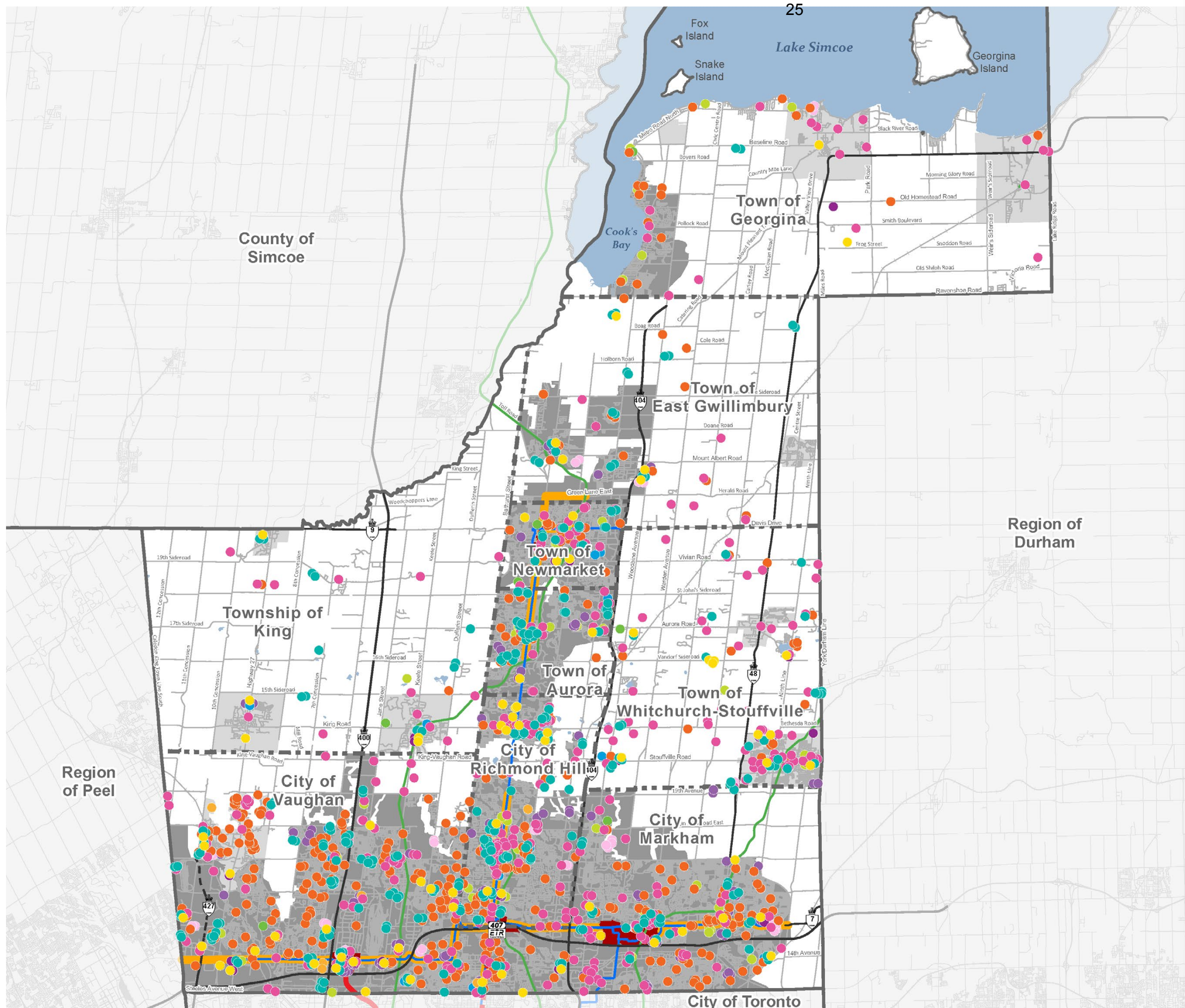
DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022

TABLE 1 TYPE of PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL UNITS by MUNICIPALITY in MID-YEAR 2022

| MUNICIPALITY | SUBDIVISION | | | SITE PLAN | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|
| | SINGLE DETACHED | SEMI-DETACHED | TOWNHOUSE | APARTMENTS | SINGLE DETACHED | SEMI-DETACHED | TOWNHOUSE |
| AURORA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 70 |
| EAST GWILLIMBURY | 0 | 0 | 0 | 522 | 5 | 0 | 98 |
| GEORGINA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| KING | 6 | 0 | 0 | 73 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| MARKHAM | 241 | 0 | 244 | 1,506 | 3 | 0 | 133 |
| NEWMARKET | 0 | 0 | 0 | 307 | 1 | 4 | 80 |
| RICHMOND HILL | 7 | 0 | 19 | 3,053 | 4 | 0 | 49 |
| VAUGHAN | 0 | 0 | 29 | 5,560 | 0 | 0 | 265 |
| WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE | 326 | 0 | 0 | 166 | 2 | 0 | 110 |
| TOTAL | 580 | 0 | 292 | 11,187 | 19 | 6 | 805 |

FIGURE 3 REGISTERED RESIDENTIAL UNITS by TYPE in MID-YEAR 2021 and MID-YEAR 2022





- Consent to Sever
- Engineering Application
- Minor Variances
- Official Plan Amendments - Exemption ¹
- Official Plan Amendments - Exemption Denied¹
- Official Plan Amendments - Notice of Decision¹
- Official Plan Amendments - Routine ¹
- Pre Submission Consultation
- Site Plan Applications
- Subdivision/Condominium Applications
- Zoning By-Law Amendments
- Regional Centre ²
- Regional Corridor ²

¹ Refer to Attachment 1 - Delegated Approval Authority
² The Regional Centres and Corridors are identified in the Municipal Development profile maps.



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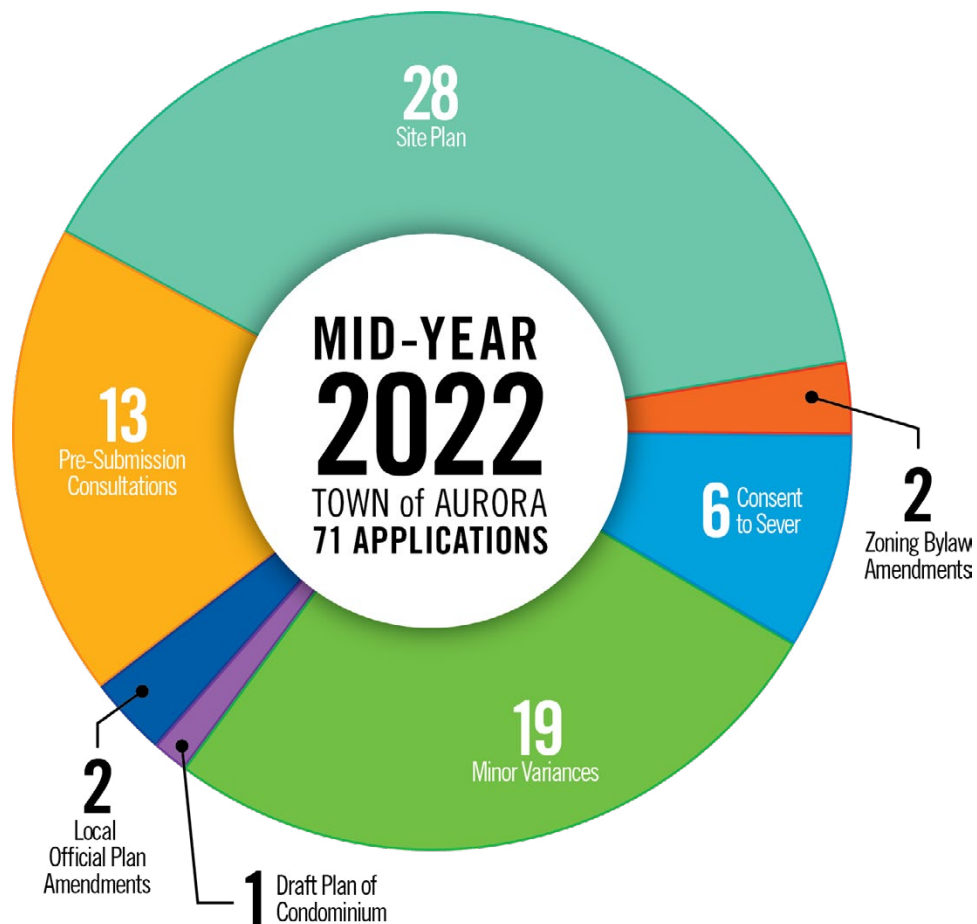
TOWN of AURORA

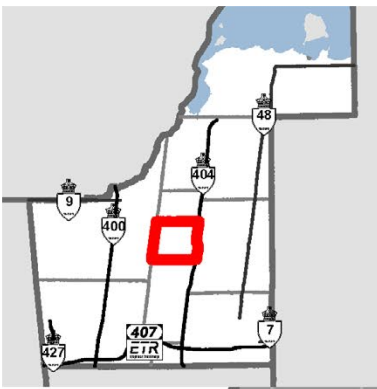
DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022

QUICKFACTS

- › Aurora made up 6.5% of development applications in York Region
- › Regional staff respond and participate in pre-consultation meetings held every two weeks

FIGURE 4 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE MID-YEAR 2022





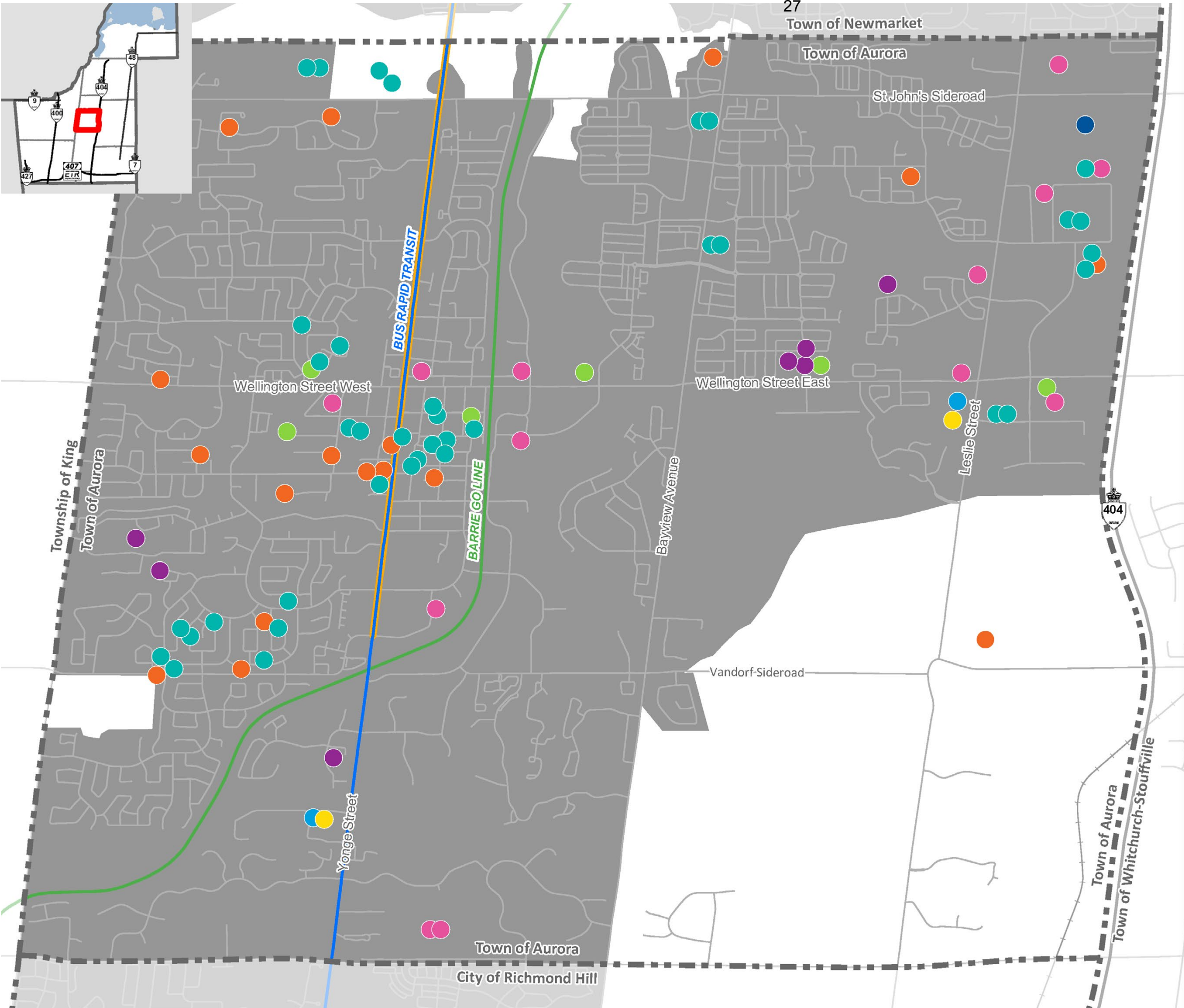
YORK REGION

TOWN OF AURORA

MID-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PROFILE 2022

- Consent to Sever
- Minor Variances
- Official Plan Amendments - Exemption ¹
- Official Plan Amendments - Routine ¹
- Pre Submission Consultation
- Site Plan Applications
- Subdivision/Condominium Applications
- Zoning By-Law Amendments
- Regional Corridor ²

¹ Refer to Attachment 1 - Delegated Approval Authority
² The Regional Corridors are identified in the Municipal Development profile maps.



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TOWN of AURORA

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 2 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS and DECISIONS

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Application Status | Location | Description |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.20.A.0034 | OPA-2020-05 | Exemption | 1675, 1625 St John's Sideroad | To permit a gas station use within existing "Business Park 1" designation |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.A.0011 | OPA-2022-01 | Routine | 15 Glensteepie Trail | To permit 4 lots with a detached dwelling unit on each lot |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.A.0012 | OPA-2022-02 | Routine | 1289 Wellington Street East | To permit a mixed residential development comprised of three 7-storey apartment buildings (541 dwelling units) and 12 townhouse blocks (59 dwelling units) with private roads |

TABLE 3 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Draft Plan of Condominium | CDMP.22.A.0006 | CDM-2022-01 | 25, 20 Mavrinac Boulevard | Two separate Common Elements Condominiums on either side of Mavrinac Boulevard |
| Registered Plan of Condominium | CDMR.22.A.0013 | YRCP1481 | 106 Scrivener Drive | Condominium tenure for 11 dwelling units across 3 building blocks |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.A.0039 | 65M4716 | 2 Simmons Crescent, 21 Golf Links Drive | 26 single detached dwellings |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.A.0042 | 65M4717 | 21 Golf Links Drive | Park Open Space Environmental Protection Areas of Phase 2A (Park) in the Highland Gate community |

TOWN of AURORA

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 3 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.A.0048 | 65M4721 | 14288 Yonge Street | 11 single-detached units on a private road and an environmental block |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.22.A.0010 | 65M4731 | 20 Mavrincac Boulevard | 36 single-detached units, 85 street townhouses, 36 lane townhouses, 88 back-to-back townhouses, 206 senior units (120 long term care apartments and 86 rental units) |
| Site Plan | SP.22.A.0064 | SP(EX)-2022-02 | 15900 Bayview Avenue | Garden Centre and 2 associated tents (441 sq.m. & 126 sq.m.) that will occupy 100 parking spaces |
| Site Plan | SP.22.A.0014 | SP-2021-14 | 32 Don Hillock Drive | Single-storey multi-unit industrial building |
| Site Plan | SP.22.A.0023 | SP-2021-15 | 420 Addison Hall Circle | 6,570 sq.m multi-unit industrial building |
| Site Plan | SP.22.A.0048 | SP-2022-01 | 155, 135 Addison Hall Circle | 3 multi-unit industrial buildings |
| Site Plan | SP.22.A.0103 | SP-2022-02 | 11 Spring Farm Road | 2-storey secondary school |
| Site Plan | SP.22.A.0133 | SP-2022-03 | 45 Tyler Street | 70 residential townhouse units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.A.0054 | SPM 2022-02 | 162 St John's Sideroad | Driveway access to St. Annes School |
| Site Plan | SP.22.A.0053 | SPM-2022-01 | 306 St John's Sideroad | Re-use of existing building to a private school |
| Site Plan | SP.22.A.0005 | SPR-2021-15 | 61 Metcalfe Street | 2-storey rear addition, an integral garage and porch to the existing dwelling, and pool |
| Site Plan | SP.22.A.0070 | SPR-2022-08 | 25 Knowles Crescent | To add a second storey to the existing one-storey dwelling and attached garage |

TOWN of EAST GWILLIMBURY

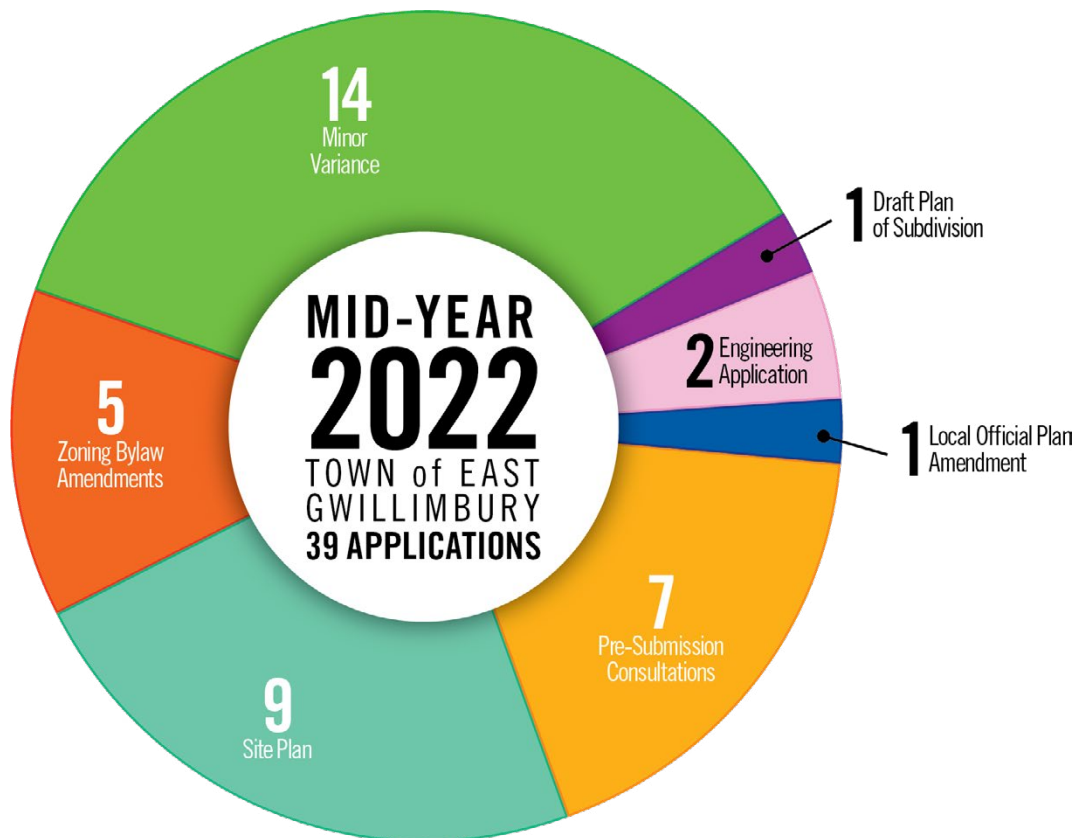
DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022

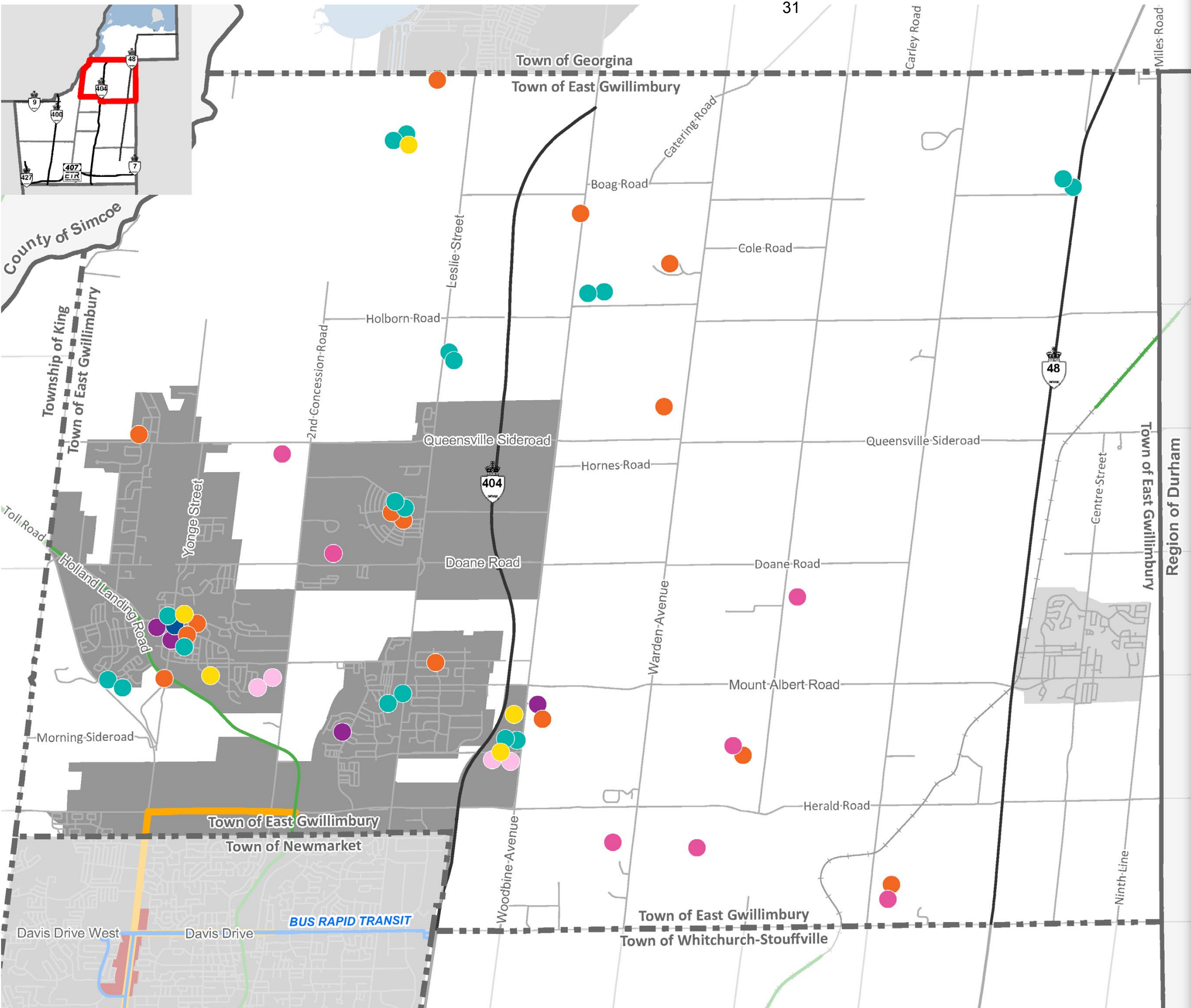


QUICKFACTS

- › East Gwillimbury made up 3.5% of new development applications in York Region
- › Regional staff respond and participate in pre-consultation meetings held every two weeks

FIGURE 5 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE MID-YEAR 2022





YORK REGION

TOWN OF EAST GWILLIMBURY MID-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PROFILE 2022

- Engineering Application
- Minor Variances
- Official Plan Amendments - Exemption ¹
- Pre Submission Consultation
- Site Plan Applications
- Subdivision/Condominium Applications
- Zoning By-Law Amendments
- Regional Corridor ²

¹ Refer to Attachment 1 - Delegated Approval Authority
² The Regional Corridors are identified in the Municipal Development profile maps.



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TOWN of EAST GWILLIMBURY

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022

TABLE 4 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS and DECISIONS

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Application Status | Location | Description |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.E.0025 | OPA.22.01 | Exemption | 19357, 19349, 19365, 19399 Yonge Street | To permit 98 dwelling units |

TABLE 5 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--|--|
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.E.0012 | 19T-22001 | 19357, 19349, 19365, 19399 Yonge Street | Create 2 blocks with concurrent site plan that will facilitate 98 stacked townhouse units |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.E.0007 | 18574 & 18818 Woodbine | Sharon | Woodbine Employment Lands; external sanitary and watermain servicing |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.E.0002 | 19T-20001 | Part of Lot 105 & 106, Concession 1 and Part of Block 44, Registered Plan 65M-2551 | Mount Albert and 2nd Concession residential development to facilitate construction of "Street D" for related Subdivision 19T-20001 |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.E.0023 | 65M4720 | 18879, 18917 Woodbine Avenue | Commercial/industrial subdivision consisting of 7 blocks and 3 open space blocks |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.22.E.0002 | 65M4736 | Part of Lot 9, Concession 2 | 6 single-detached units (Blocks 1-6) and 1.5 units over 3 future development blocks (Blocks 7-9) |
| Site Plan | SP.22.E.0066 | SPA.22.04 | Block 275 - Holland Vista Street | 522 units of residential apartments through a 3-phase development approach, consisting of 8 buildings, a place of worship, community centre, ground floor retail |
| Site Plan | SP.22.E.0042 | SPA.21.22 | 21035 Leslie Street | Legalization of an existing detached structure as a 'garden suite' |



TOWN of EAST GWILLIMBURY

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022

TABLE 5 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|---|
| Site Plan | SP.22.E.0037 | SPA.22.02 | 2402 Holborn Road | Nursery, two accessory storage sheds and parking lot containing 12 spaces |
| Site Plan | SP.22.E.0047 | SPA.22.03 | 18948, 18818, 18574 Woodbine Avenue | Construction of an advanced logistics and distribution centre |
| Site Plan | SP.22.E.0059 | SPA.22.05 | 22044 Highway 48 | 3-storey self-storage building, gas bar including a 4-pump gas canopy and convenience store |
| Site Plan | SP.22.E.0060 | SPA.22.06 | 18960 Leslie Street | Re-purpose the existing single-detached dwelling to a medical office (dental) |
| Site Plan | SP.22.E.0071 | SPA.22.07 | Lot 17 & 18, Concession 2 | Servicing allocation for the Health and Active Living Plaza on Jim Mortson Drive |
| Site Plan | SP.22.E.0100 | SPA.22.08 | 19399, 19357, 19349, 19365 Yonge Street | 98 stacked townhouses over 6 blocks |
| Site Plan | SP.22.E.0113 | SPA.22.09 | 22356 Leslie Street | 4 accessory residential units for seasonal farm employees |

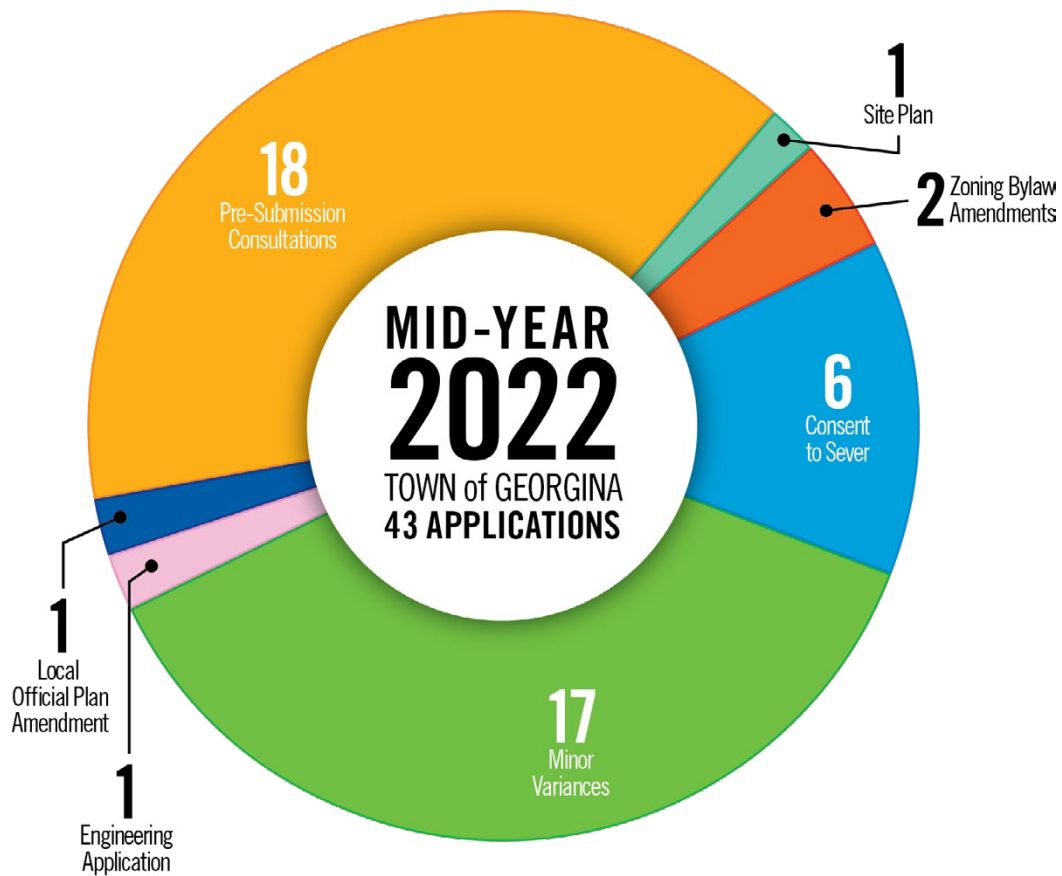
TOWN of GEORGINA

DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022

QUICKFACTS

- › Georgina made up 4.2% of new development applications in York Region
- › Regional staff respond and participate in pre-consultation meetings held every two weeks

FIGURE 6 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE MID-YEAR 2022



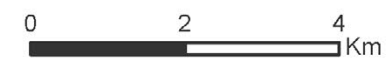
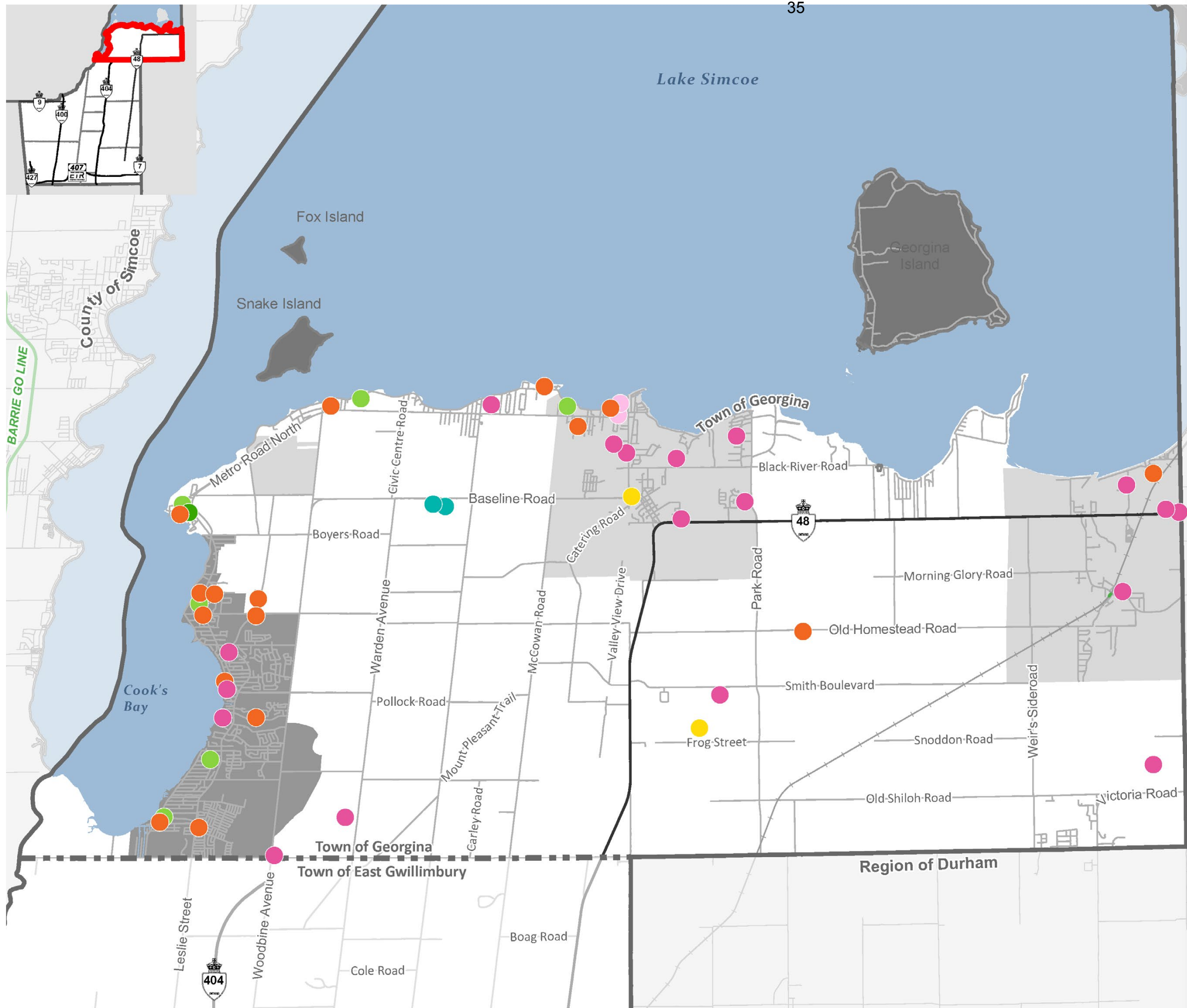
YORK REGION

TOWN OF GEORGINA

MID-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PROFILE 2022

- Consent to Sever
- Engineering Application
- Minor Variances
- Official Plan Amendments - Notice of Decision
- Pre Submission Consultation
- Site Plan Applications
- Zoning By-Law Amendments

¹ Refer to Attachment 1 - Delegated Approval Authority



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TOWN of GEORGINA

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 6 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS and DECISIONS

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Application Status | Location | Description |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--|
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.21.G.0064 | OPA 144 | Notice of decision | 389 Curley Street | To permit a consent to divide the subject property into 2 residential building lots |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.G.0037 | 02.202 | Routine | Town-wide | To permit an additional residential unit in a detached building on the same lot as a single detached dwelling irrespective of whether the single detached dwelling contains an additional residential unit in the Agricultural Protection Area and Rural Area designations |

TABLE 7 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.G.0001 | S.9.204 | 2080, 2080 Metro Road North | 24 block townhouse units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.G.0092 | B.1.396 | 3525, 3527 Baseline Road | Construction of a roads maintenance equipment shelter shed |

TOWNSHIP of KING

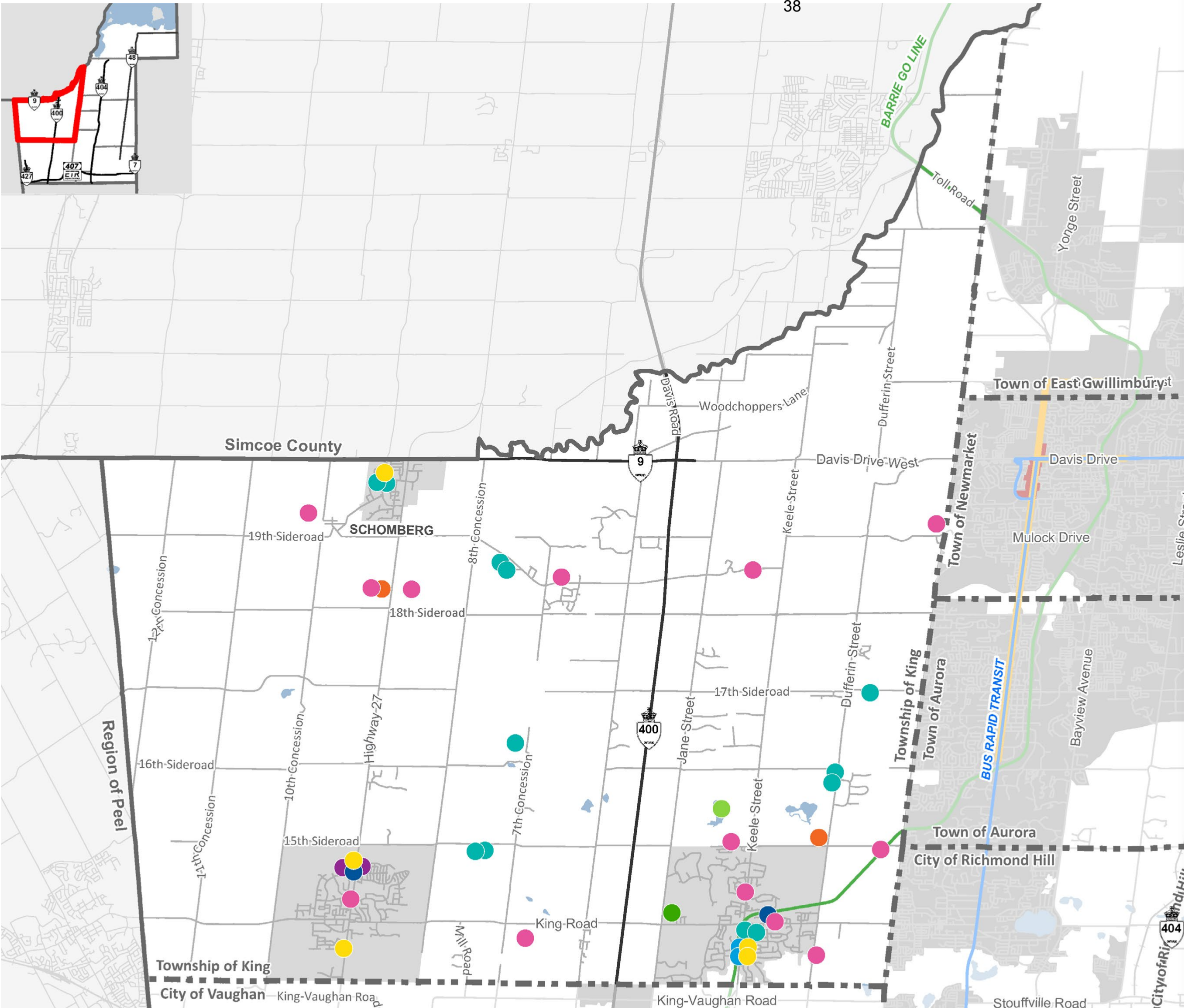
DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022

QUICKFACTS

- › King made up 2.9% of new development applications in York Region
- › Regional staff respond and participate in pre-consultation meetings held every two weeks

FIGURE 7 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE MID-YEAR 2022





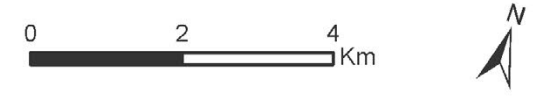
YORK REGION

TOWNSHIP OF KING

MID-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PROFILE 2022

- Consent to Sever
- Minor Variances
- Official Plan Amendments - Exemption ¹
- Official Plan Amendments - Notice of Decision
- Official Plan Amendments - Routine ¹
- Pre Submission Consultation
- Site Plan Applications
- Subdivision/Condominium Applications
- Zoning By-Law Amendments

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TOWNSHIP of KING

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 8 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS and DECISIONS

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Application Status | Location | Description |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.18.K.0025 | OP-2018-02 | Exemption | 204 Dew Street | To permit 8 semi-detached residential units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.K.0005 | OP-2021-04 | Exemption | 13440 Highway 27 | To permit 6 single-detached dwellings |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.21.K.0012 | OPA 99 | Notice of decision | 52 James Stokes Court | To permit a density increase of 6.3 units/hectare for 4 single-detached units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.K.0010 | OP-2021-05 | Routine | 12762, 12796, 12800, 12780 Keele Street | To permit a 6-storey residential apartment building containing 247 units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.K.0026 | OP-2022-01 | Routine | 12734 Keele Street | To permit a 6-storey building |

TABLE 9 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.K.0004 | 19T-21K02 | 13440 Highway 27 | 6 single-detached dwellings |
| Site Plan | SP.22.K.0089 | SPD-21-106 | 326 Main Street | 6-storey residential building |
| Site Plan | SP.22.K.0116 | 12935 Keele Street | 12935 Keele Street | Keele Street to Doctors Lane, storm sewer & sidewalk extension |
| Site Plan | SP.22.K.0043 | SPD-21-105 | 5015 Lloydtown/ Aurora Road | 1,040 sq.m. building with 4 service bays to service vehicles |
| Site Plan | SP.22.K.0032 | SPD-22-104 | 14480 Dufferin Street | 2-storey dwelling with the ground floor area of 961.61 sq.m. and a cabana. The proposal is considered 'Major Development' within the Oak Ridges Moraine |
| Site Plan | SP.22.K.0102 | SPD-22-17 | 4785 15th Sideroad | 60m high steel self-supported tower |

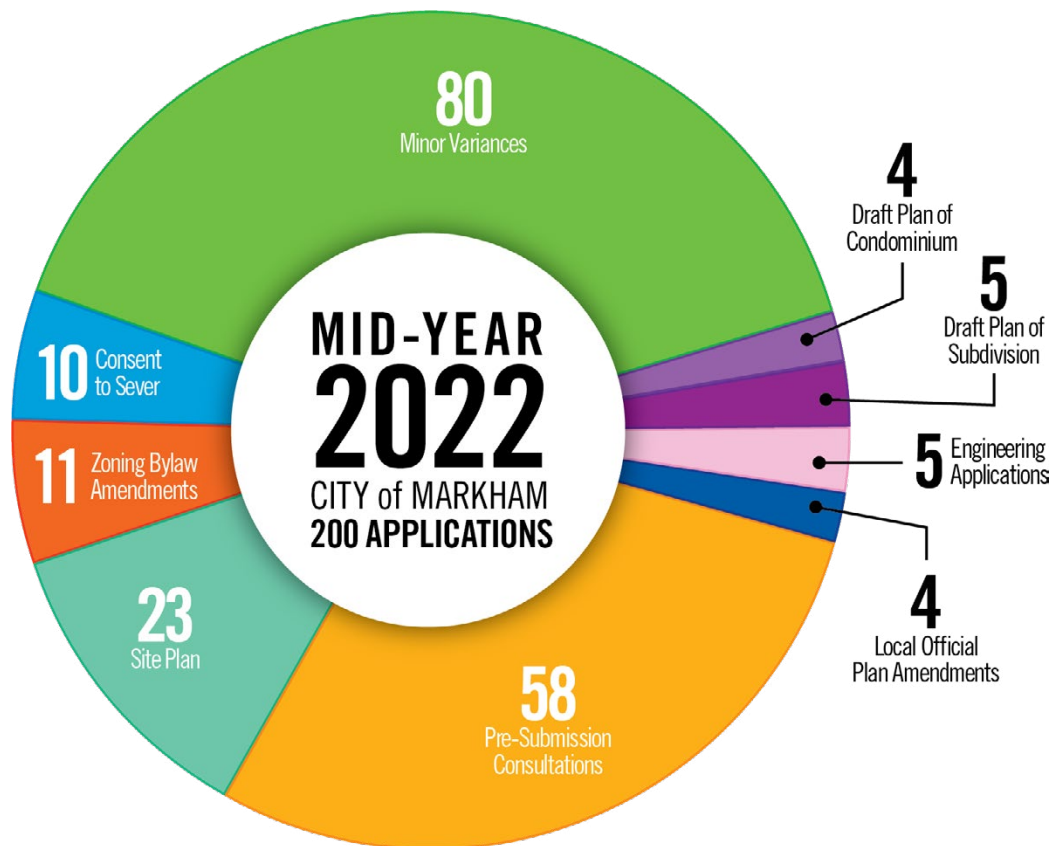
CITY of MARKHAM

DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022

QUICKFACTS

- › Markham made up 18.2% of new development applications in York Region
- › Regional staff respond and participate in pre-consultation meetings held every two weeks

FIGURE 8 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE MID-YEAR 2022



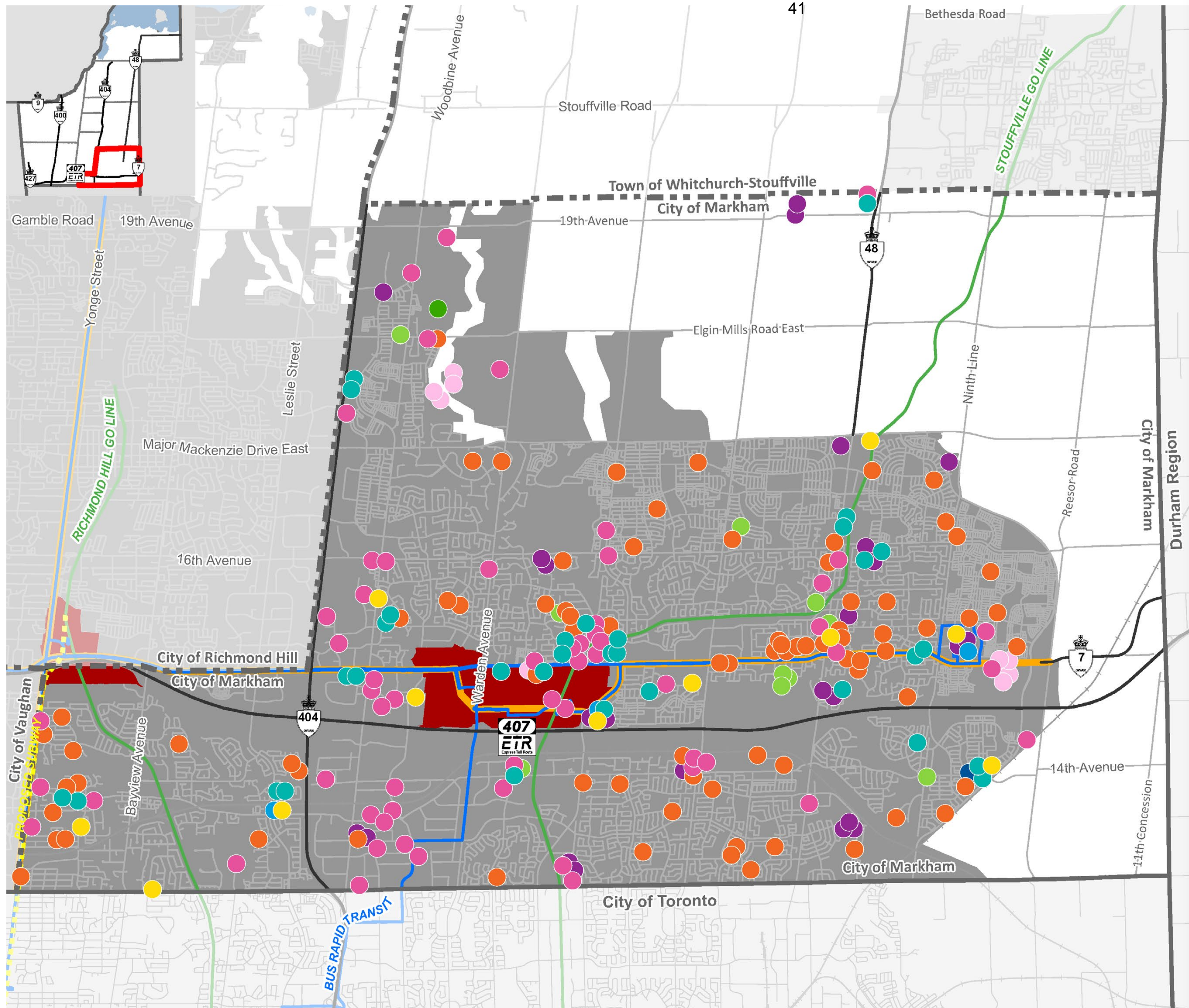
YORK REGION

CITY OF MARKHAM

MID-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PROFILE 2022

- Consent to Sever
- Engineering Application
- Minor Variances
- Official Plan Amendments - Exemption ¹
- Official Plan Amendments - Notice of Decision ¹
- Official Plan Amendments - Routine ¹
- Pre Submission Consultation
- Site Plan Applications
- Subdivision/Condominium Applications
- Zoning By-Law Amendments
- Regional Centre ²
- Regional Corridor ²

¹ Refer to Attachment 1 - Delegated Approval Authority
² The Regional Centres and Corridors are identified in the Municipal Development profile maps.



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CITY of MARKHAM

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 10 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS and DECISIONS

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Application Status | Location | Description |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.M.0015 | PLAN 21 120261 | Exemption | 7085 14th Avenue | To permit a mixed-use development |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.19.M.0036 | OPA 37 | Notice of decision | Victoria Glen Community | To permit 840 units (410 single-detached and semi-detached, 130 townhouses and 300 stacked townhouses/apartments) |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.M.0017 | PLAN 21 145907 | Routine | 8111 Kennedy Road | To permit a high-density, mixed-use and transit-oriented development |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.M.0004 | PLAN 21 146653 | Routine | 2300 John Street | To permit a mixed-use development comprised of 2 towers with 593 units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.M.0033 | PLAN 22 116592 | Routine | 6950 Highway 7 | To permit 11 mixed-use and residential buildings with a total of 2,229 residential units and 36,100 sq.m. GFA of commercial space, a public park |

TABLE 11 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Draft Plan of Condominium | CDMP.22.M.0001 | 21.144247.000.00.CNDO | 2 Liam Lane | 92 freehold semi-detached units with an internal common element condominium road |
| Draft Plan of Condominium | CDMP.22.M.0002 | 21.146455.000.00.CNDO | 73 Main Markham Street South | Common element road that will service 13 townhouse units |
| Draft Plan of Condominium | CDMP.22.M.0012 | 22.120510.000.00.CNDO | 168 Old Kennedy Road | 64 multiple dwelling units in a stacked townhouse-built form |
| Draft Plan of Condominium | CDMP.22.M.0009 | CNDO 22 115874 | 70, 50 Don Park Road | Conversion of 31 existing industrial units to condominium tenure |

CITY of MARKHAM

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 11 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--|--|
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.M.0020 | 19TM-16004 | 4031 16th Avenue | 7 single-detached dwelling lots |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.M.0009 | PLAN 21 145907 | 8111 Kennedy Road | 4 high-rise towers, two 8-storey mid-rise buildings and two 3-storey townhouse blocks. The high-rise towers include building heights of 21-storeys, 31-storeys 37-storeys and 41-storeys |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.M.0005 | PLAN 21 147883 | 10, 20 Fincham Avenue | A condominium lot, residential lot and 2 parcels for the purpose of road widening |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.M.0015 | PLAN 22 114368 | 5662, 5474 19th Avenue | Low, medium and high-density residential uses in the form of single-detached dwellings, townhouses, midrise, apartments, including purpose-built rental, senior's housing affordable units |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.M.0021 | PLAN 22 116592 | 6950 Highway 7 | 11 mixed-use and residential buildings |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.M.0003 | Lindwide Phase 5B | 7323, 6937, 7265 Highway 7 | Lindwide Phase 5B intersections for William Forester Road/Highway 7 and Markham Veteran's Street/Highway 7 |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.M.0014 | SU 18 181743-002 | Part of the west half of Lot 24 and part of the west half of the east half of Lot 24, Concession 4 | 140 detached lots, 52 rear-lane townhouse units, 30 back-to-back townhouse units |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.M.0018 | TEC 21 142694 02 | 10348 Warden Avenue, 40, 32, 34, 36, 38, 42 Boynton Circle, 10162 Warden Avenue, 6, 8 Wilmont Court, | Engineering component of Draft Plan 19T-19M005 |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.M.0017 | TECH 20 132920 | 7170, 7186, 7128 Highway 7 | Road reconstruction of William Forster Road from Arthur Bonner Avenue to Highway 7 and boulevard improvements on Highway 7 |

CITY of MARKHAM

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 11 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--|---|
| Registered Plan of Condominium | CDMR.22.M.0002 | YRCP1479 | 9900 Markham Road | A common element road that will service 195 townhouse units |
| Registered Plan of Condominium | CDMR.22.M.0007 | YRCP1480 | 2 Liam Lane | To create 92 freehold semi-detached units with an internal common element condominium road |
| Registered Plan of Condominium | CDMR.22.M.0009 | YRCP1485 | 10952, 10950 Woodbine Avenue | 27 industrial units |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.M.0041 | 65M4726 | 7 Town Crier Lane | 11 single-detached units and a vacant lot |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.M.0014 | 65M4729 | Part of Lots 9, Concession 8 | 147 townhouse units |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.22.M.0001 | 65M4738 | 5072 14th Avenue | 8 single-detached dwellings and a block for road widening |
| Site Plan | SP.22.M.0117 | SPC 22 115746 | 3853 Highway 7, 38 Water Walk Drive, 3863, 3851, 3857, 3859, 3861, 3855 Highway 7,8, 18 Water Walk Drive | Addition of 4 apartment units, revise the parking statistics to remove the notation that 12 surface parking spaces are to serve an adjacent block (Block 4) |
| Site Plan | SP.22.M.0079 | SPC 22 109682 | 7085 14th Avenue | Phased affordable housing development. Phase 1 (Block A) proposes a 4-storey affordable and purpose built rental building consisting of 48 units |

CITY of MARKHAM

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 11 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Site Plan | SP.22.M.0098 | SPC 22 114181 | 9351, 9399, 9331 Markham Road | High-rise mixed-use development consists of 2 towers of 37-storeys (Tower A) and 42-storeys (Tower B) connected by a 3 level elevated sky bridge. The podium element ranges from 5 to 7 storeys in height, at-grade commercial uses, 9 townhouse units, 2 residential lobbies and indoor amenity space |
| Site Plan | SP.22.M.0087 | SPC 21 148034 | 1 Lyndhurst Drive | Demolish and replace place of worship and daycare |
| Site Plan | SP.22.M.0112 | SPC 22 112558 | Woodbine By-Pass | 3 industrial warehouse buildings with a total GFA of 82,505 sq.m. |
| Site Plan | SP.22.M.0126 | SPC 22 114241 | 20, 10 Fincham Avenue | 14 townhouse units of common element condominium tenure accessed by a private laneway and a residential lot to accommodate a freehold single-detached dwelling with frontage and access directly from Fincham Avenue |
| Site Plan | SP.22.M.0149 | SPC 22 115049 | 36 Apple Creek Boulevard | 8-storey building with an approximate GFA of 36,625 sq.m. (394,228.2 sq.ft.) for Phase 1. The primary programming is facilitating a life lease community (i.e. assisted living senior residence) offering approximately 332 affordable senior units |

CITY of MARKHAM

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 11 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---|
| Site Plan | SP:22.M.0162 | SPC 22 116603 | 17 Anna Russell Way | 119 townhouses (38 back-to-back townhouses and 81 traditional townhouses) |
| Site Plan | SP:22.M.0185 | SPC 22 118350 | 6565 Highway 7 | 1-story commercial building with a GFA of 351.99 sq.m. |
| Site Plan | SP:22.M.0159 | SPC 22 118800 | 55 East Valhalla Drive | 5 buildings: Building A - 3-storey office and commercial ; Building B, C and D - 1-storey industrial with mezzanine, and; Building E - 3-storey office and commercial |

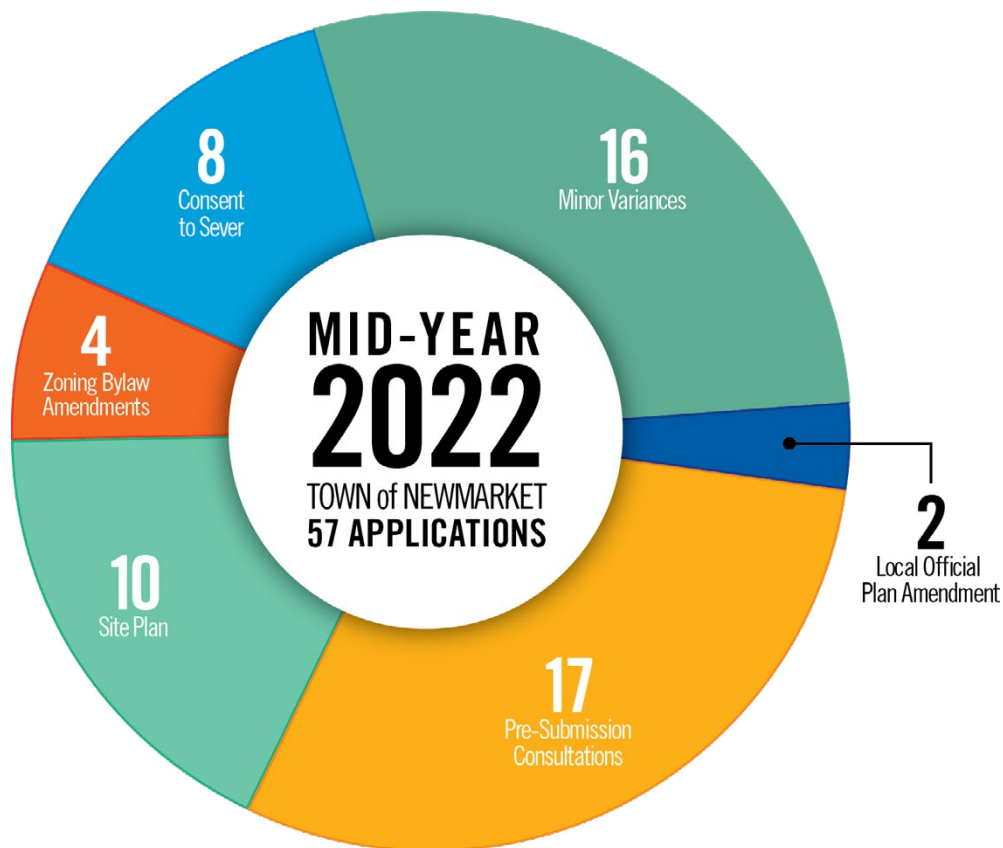
TOWN of NEWMARKET

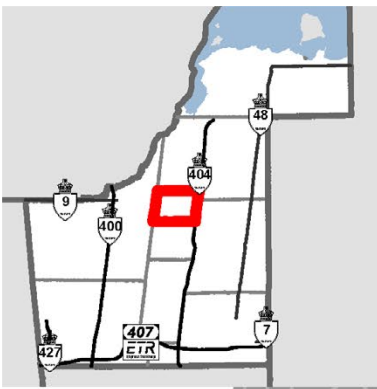
DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022

QUICKFACTS

- › Newmarket made up 5.2% of new development applications in York Region
- › Regional staff respond and participate in pre-consultation meetings held every two weeks

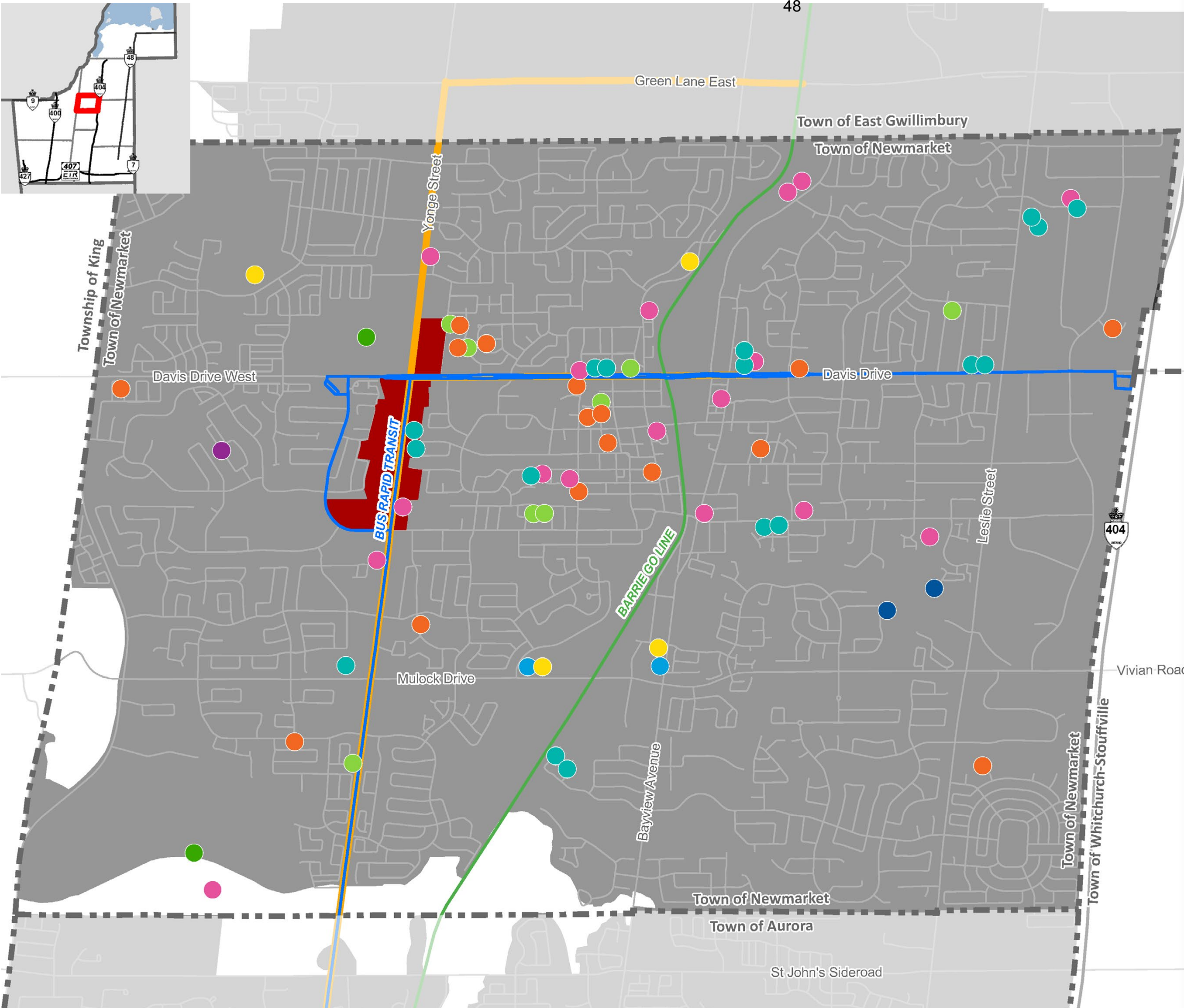
FIGURE 9 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE MID-YEAR 2022





YORK REGION

TOWN OF NEWMARKET MID-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PROFILE 2022



- Consent to Sever
- Minor Variances
- Official Plan Amendments - Exemption ¹
- Official Plan Amendments - Notice of Decision ¹
- Official Plan Amendments - Routine ¹
- Pre Submission Consultation
- Site Plan Applications
- Subdivision/Condominium Applications
- Zoning By-Law Amendments
- Regional Centre ²
- Regional Corridor ²

¹ Refer to Attachment 1 - Delegated Approval Authority
² The Regional Centres and Corridors are identified in the Municipal Development profile maps.



Produced by: The Regional Municipality of York
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 Development Branch 2022

Data: The Regional Municipality of York, The Regional
 Municipalities of Durham and Peel, County of Simcoe,
 City of Toronto
 Queen's Printer for Ontario 2003-2022

TOWN of NEWMARKET

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 12 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS and DECISIONS

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Application Status | Location | Description |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.15.N.0009 | D9-NP1312 | Exemption | West of Leslie Street, North of Mulock Drive | To re-designate from Major Institutional to Emerging Residential, Parks & Open Space and Natural Heritage System |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.20.N.0063 | D09NP2015 | Exemption | 415 Pickering Crescent | To permit 32 three-storey townhouse units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.19.N.0029 | OPA 30 | Notice of decision | 17600 Yonge Street | To permit the expansion of the existing mall as a mixed-use medium to high density development containing 5,000 residential units, a new road system and parks/open space |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.20.N.0050 | D09NP2012/ OPA 32 | Notice of decision | 119 Shoniker Drive, 306, 370, 488, 24, 434, 162 St John's Sideroad, 16176 16200, 16250, 16356 Yonge Street | To permit 315 low-density units, 115 lane townhouses, 205 medium-density and 370 high-density residential units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.N.0006 | OPZS-2022-001 | Routine | 301 Mulock Drive | To permit two 8-storey mixed-use apartment buildings that will be centrally connected by a 1-storey lobby with retail space |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.N.0016 | OPZS-2022-004 | Routine | 16756, 16764 Bayview Avenue | To permit a 6-storey apartment building |

TOWN of NEWMARKET

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 13 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|---|
| Registered Plan of Condominium | CDMR.22.N.0018 | YRCP1487 | Part of Block 120, Registered Plan 65M-4587 | To facilitate an easement |
| Site Plan | SP.22.N.0011 | SPA-2022-001 | 674 Gorham Street | Addition to the existing building that facilitates 4 additional residential rental units for a total of 9 rental units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.N.0138 | SPA-2022-006 | 17365 Yonge Street, 17395 Yonge Street | To facilitate development of 1 apartment building with maximum height of 12-storeys and 2 townhouse blocks with a maximum height of 3 storeys and parking below grade |
| Site Plan | SP.22.N.0163 | PLN-SPA-2022-007 | 603 Davis Drive, 22 Bolton Avenue, 18 Bolton Avenue | 6-storey assisted living and memory care building with 96 bedrooms |
| Site Plan | SP.22.N.0175 | PLN-SPA-2022-010 | Part Lot 89, Concession 1 | 28 townhouse units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.N.0055 | SPA-2022-003 | 22 Hamilton Drive, 1005, 1025, 1015, 1029 Davis Drive | 24 townhouses and 4 semi-detached units on a private road |
| Site Plan | SP.22.N.0152 | SPA-2022-008 | 355 Davis Drive | Addition of an outdoor playing area for a new daycare |
| Site Plan | SP.22.N.0178 | SPA-2022-011 | 17895 Leslie Street | Two 2-storey multi-unit industrial buildings |

CITY of RICHMOND HILL

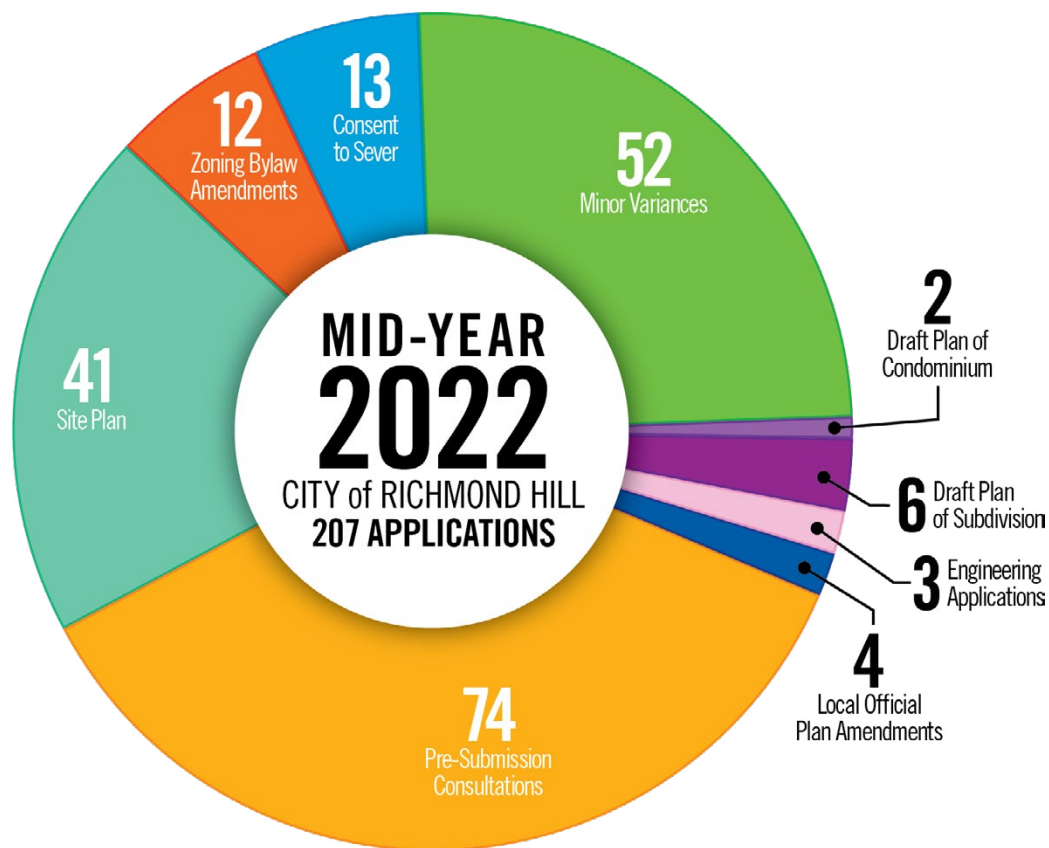
DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022



QUICKFACTS

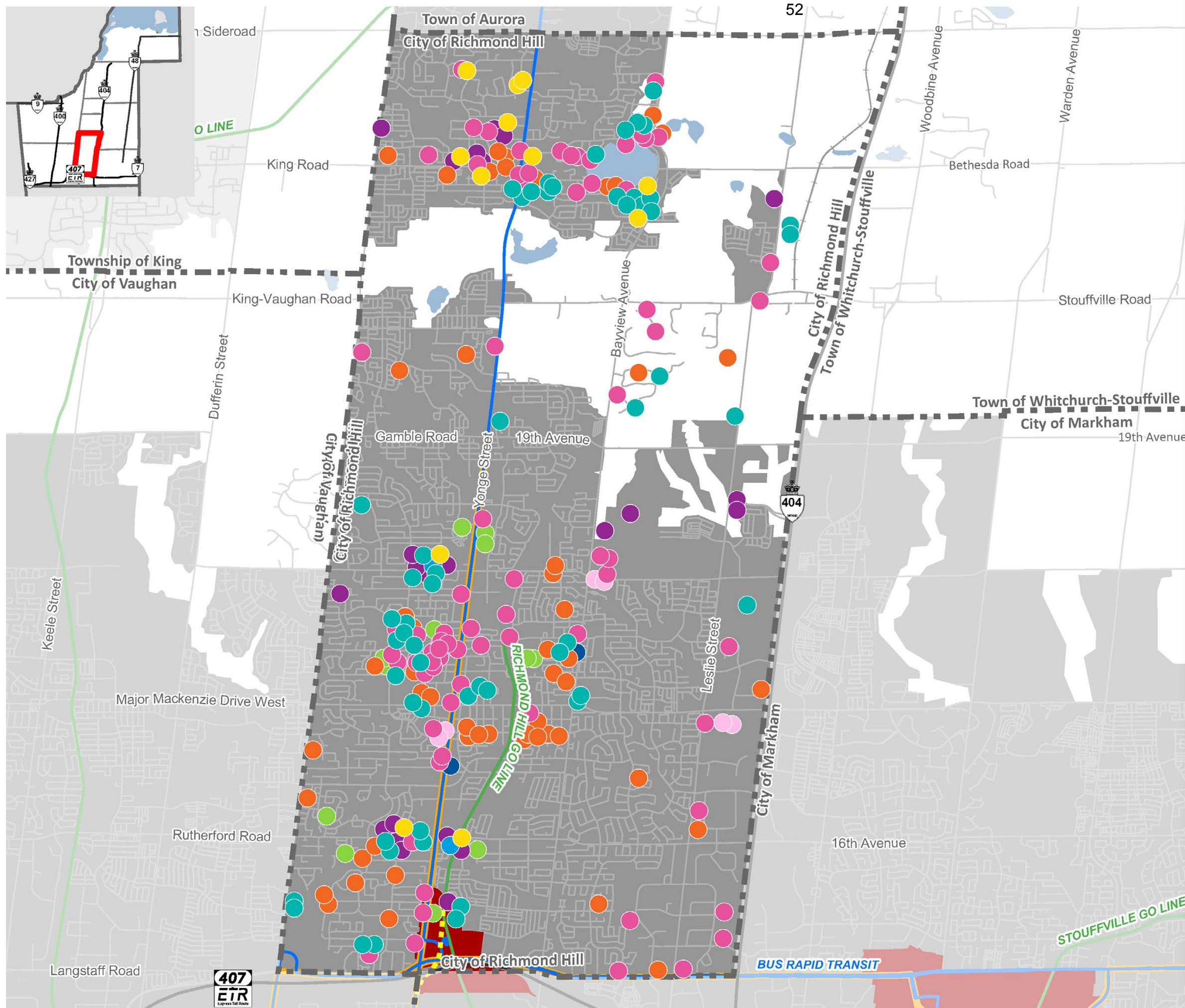
- › Richmond Hill made up 18.8% of new development applications in York Region
- › Regional staff respond and participate in pre-consultation meetings held every two weeks

FIGURE 10 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE MID-YEAR 2022



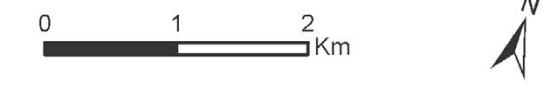
YORK REGION

CITY OF RICHMOND HILL MID-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PROFILE 2022



- Consent to Sever
- Engineering Application
- Minor Variances
- Official Plan Amendments - Exemption ¹
- Official Plan Amendments - Routine ¹
- Pre Submission Consultation
- Site Plan Applications
- Subdivision/Condominium Applications
- Zoning By-Law Amendments
- Regional Centre ²
- Regional Corridor ²

¹ Refer to Attachment 1 - Delegated Approval Authority
² The Regional Centres and Corridors are identified in the Municipal Development profile maps.



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 Corporate Services Department, Planning and Economic
 Development Branch 2022

Data: The Regional Municipality of York, The Regional
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 City of Toronto
 Queen's Printer for Ontario 2003-2022



CITY of RICHMOND HILL

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022

TABLE 14 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS and DECISIONS

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Application Status | Location | Description |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.20.R.0045 | D01-20008 | Exemption | 126, 124, 122 Cartier Crescent | To permit a 6-storey residential building consisting of 118 apartment units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.21.R.0059 | D01-21007 | Exemption | 9651 Yonge Street | To permit a mixed-use, high-density, transit-oriented development consisting of residential and non-residential uses |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.R.0027 | D01-22002/OPA 18.3 | Exemption Denied | City-Wide | To update the City's 2041 Planning Vision and City Structure |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.R.0028 | D01-22003 / OPA 18.4 | Exemption Denied | City-Wide | To update policies to expand opportunities for missing-middle housing and create "15-minute" communities across the city's settlement areas |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.R.0008 | D01-22001 | Routine | 77 16th Avenue | To permit a high-density, mixed-use development comprised of 3 buildings 22, 25 and 37 storeys with 4-storey podiums containing a total of 922 residential units with at-grade commercial space |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.R.0018 | D01-22004 | Routine | 196 Elgin Mills Road West, 41 Cooperage Crescent | To permit 3 single-detached dwelling units and 14 townhouse dwelling units |



CITY of RICHMOND HILL

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022

TABLE 15 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| Draft Plan of Condominium | CDMP.22.R.0011 | CON-22-0002 | 0 MCCAGUE DRIVE | Common elements, including private roadways, sidewalks, environmental protection lands and visitor parking spaces |
| Draft Plan of Condominium | CDMP.22.R.0003 | D05-21006 | 225, 231, 211 Carrville Road | 19 townhouse dwelling units accessed by a private condominium lane |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.R.0001 | D03-21005/SUB-21-0005 | 51 Elm Grove Avenue | 4 single-detached dwelling units and the extension of Carmela Avenue |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.R.0003 | D03-21006/SUB-21-0006 | 231, 225, 211 Carrville Road | 19 townhouse dwelling units accessed by a private condominium lane |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.R.0006 | D03-22001 | 77 16th Avenue | Three buildings 22, 25 and 37 storeys with 4 storey podiums containing a total of 922 residential units and 538 sq.m. of at-grade commercial space |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.R.0017 | D03-22005/SUB-22-0005 | 7, 3, 5 Hughes Street | 12 townhouse dwelling units |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.R.0010 | SUB-22-0002/D03-22002 | 41 Cooperage Crescent, 196 Elgin Mills Road West | 3 single-detached dwelling units and 14 townhouse dwelling units |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.R.0016 | SUB-22-0004 | 292, 282 Elgin Mills Road West | 15 townhouse dwelling units |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.R.0005 | 19T-11R04 | 1577 Major Mackenzie Drive East | Regional intersection and subdivision works in support of Mackenzie Commons - Montagna Capital Inc. |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.R.0016 | Elgin Mills & Bayview Ave | 850 Elgin Mills Road East, 10747 Bayview Avenue | Sanitary sewer extension on Elgin Mills Road East |



CITY of RICHMOND HILL

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022

TABLE 15 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---|--|
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.R.0010 | Urban MESP Sanitary | 9867 Yonge Street | Urban MESP Sanitary Improvements - Baif Development - Diversion to YDSS |
| Registered Plan of Condominium | CDMR.22.R.0019 | YRCP1488 | 105, 85, 75, 95 Oneida Crescent | 19-storey apartment building with 232 units |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.R.0013 | 65M4715 | 10 Portage Avenue, 13223, 13215 Bathurst Street | 5 single-detached dwelling units |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.18.R.0031 | 65M4722 | 11011 Bayview Avenue | 30 single-detached units and 10 partial single-detached units (total 35 units) |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.18.R.0032 | 65M4723 | 11061 Bayview Avenue | 318 single-detached units and 106 townhouse units |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.R.0036 | 65M4727 | 10, 6, 4, 8, 12 McCachen Street | 34 townhouse units and 2 semi-detached units on a private road |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.R.0044 | 65M4730 | 12826, 12844 Leslie Street | 2 semi-detached dwelling and 43 townhouses |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.22.R.0003 | 65M4739 | 259, 251, 253 Oxford Street | 3 single-detached dwellings 20 semi-detached dwellings |
| Site Plan | SP.22.R.0051 | D06-21082 | 450, 446, 448 Balkan Road, 122, 124, 126 Cartier Crescent | 6-storey residential building consisting of 118 apartment units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.R.0101 | D06-22014 | 8825, 8905 Bathurst Street | 2 apartment buildings (20 and 15 storeys) |
| Site Plan | SP.22.R.0179 | D06-22028 | 91, 81, 39, 45, 97, 79, 41, 53, 59, 89, 69 Carrville Road | High-density residential development comprised of 3 buildings 32, 32 and 16 storeys in height, totaling 1,024 dwelling units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.R.0056 | D06-22002 | 0 Oneida Crescent | High-density residential development comprised of 4 apartment buildings 25, 30, 32 and 37 storeys with 3-storey podiums totaling 1,517 residential units |



CITY of RICHMOND HILL

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022

TABLE 15 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Site Plan | SP.22.R.0146 | D06-21008 | 292, 282 Elgin Mills Road West | Medium-density residential development comprised of 15 townhouse dwelling units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.R.0027 | D06-21075 | 211, 225, 231 Carrville Road | 19 townhouse dwelling units accessed by a private condominium lane |
| Site Plan | SP.22.R.0003 | D06-21077 | 1070 Major Mackenzie Drive East | 9-storey retirement residence consisting of 242 units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.R.0057 | D06-21080 | 181, 187 Elgin Mills Road West | 15 townhouse units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.R.0114 | D06-22015 | 73 Lake Avenue | 2-storey detached dwelling |
| Site Plan | SP.22.R.0120 | D06-22017 | 599 Sunset Beach Road | Single-detached dwelling |
| Site Plan | SP.22.R.0121 | D06-22018 | 599 Sunset Beach Road | Single-detached dwelling |
| Site Plan | SP.22.R.0127 | D06-22021 | 12689 Leslie Street | 2-storey single-detached dwelling |
| Site Plan | SP.22.R.0135 | D06-22022 | 171 Major Mackenzie Drive West | Expansion of the existing park area |
| Site Plan | SP.22.R.0165 | D06-22023 | 100 Old Surrey Lane | 2-storey single-detached dwelling |

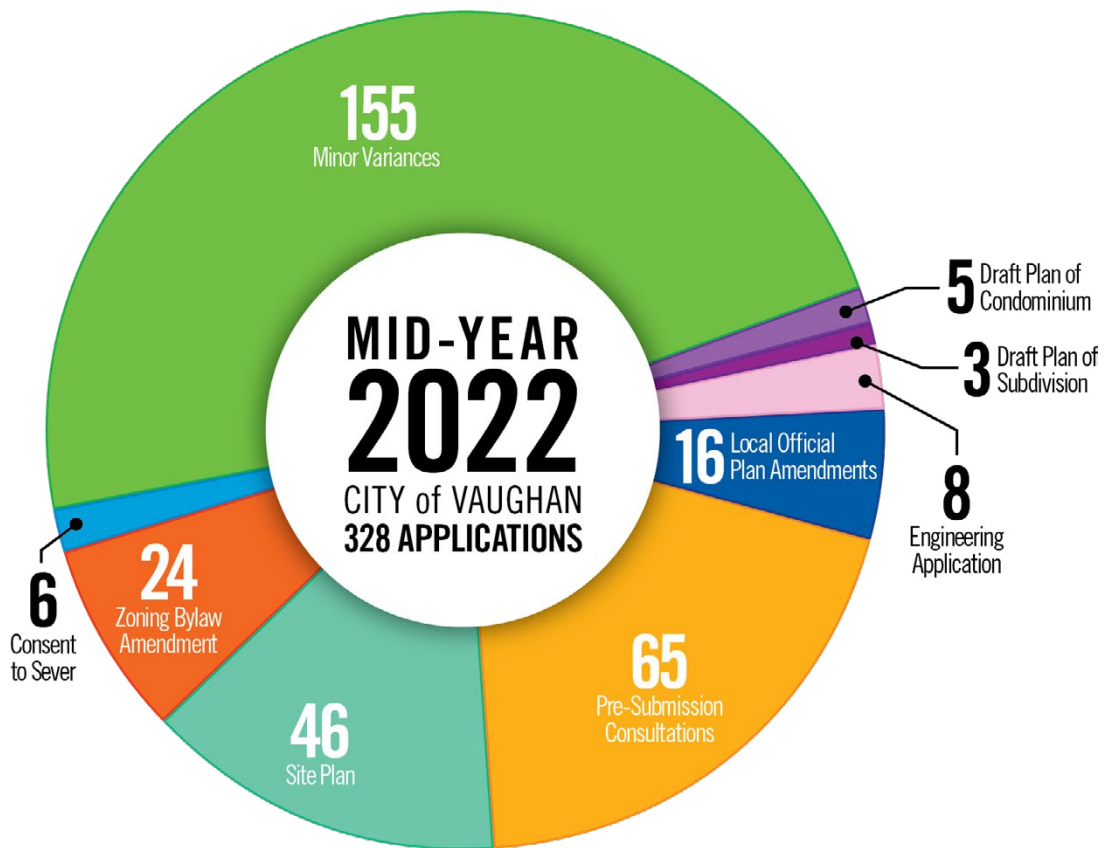
CITY of VAUGHAN

DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022

QUICKFACTS

- › Vaughan made up 29.8% of new development applications in York Region
- › Regional staff respond and participate in pre-consultation meetings held every two weeks

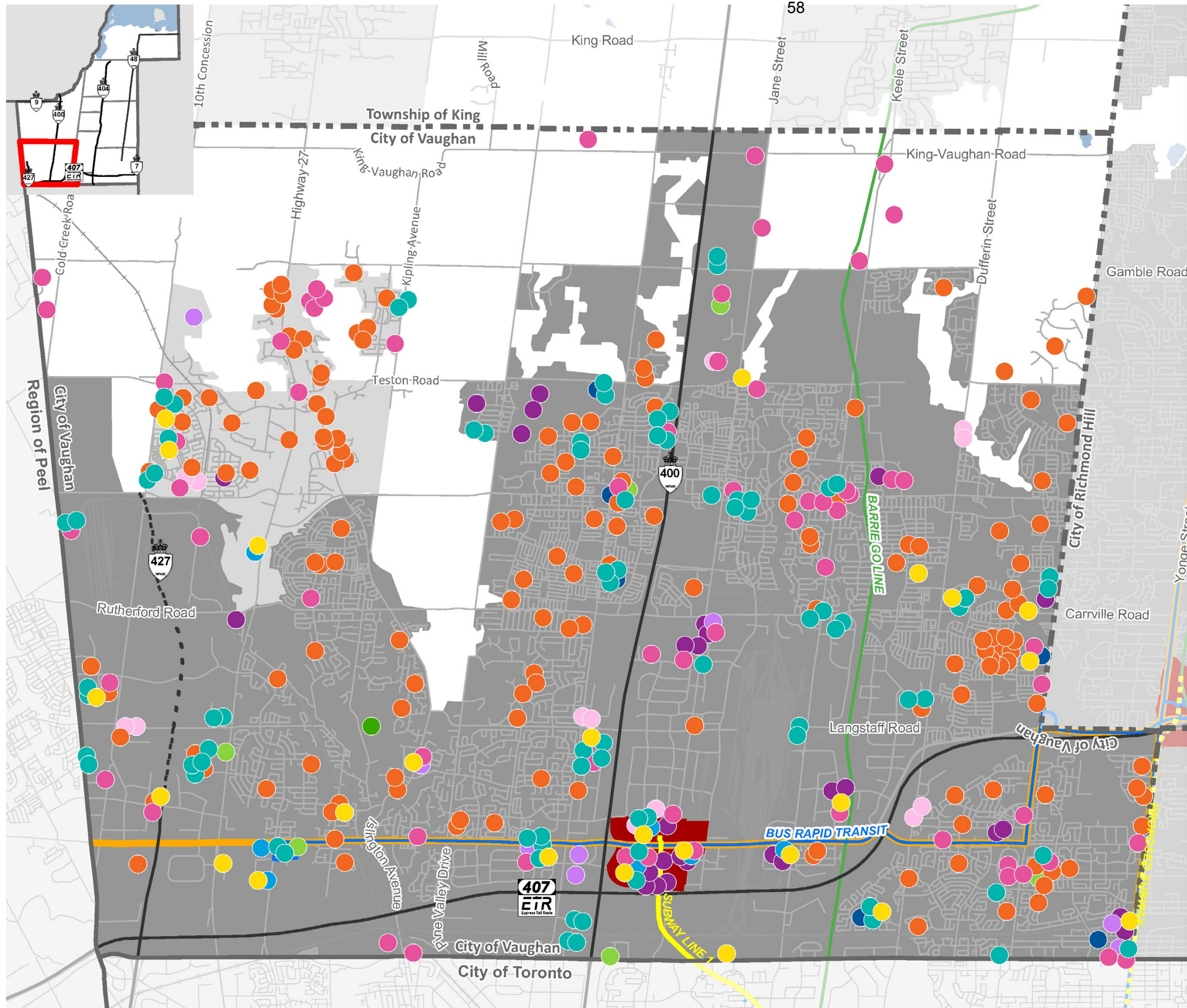
FIGURE 11 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE MID-YEAR 2022



YORK REGION

CITY OF VAUGHAN

MID-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PROFILE 2022



- Consent to Sever
- Engineering Application
- Minor Variances
- Official Plan Amendments - Exemption ¹
- Official Plan Amendments - Exemption Denied ¹
- Official Plan Amendments - Notice of Decision ¹
- Official Plan Amendments - Routine ¹
- Pre Submission Consultation
- Site Plan Applications
- Subdivision/Condominium Applications
- Zoning By-Law Amendments
- Regional Centre ²
- Regional Corridor ²

¹ Refer to Attachment 1 - Delegated Approval Authority
² The Regional Centres and Corridors are identified in the Municipal Development profile maps.



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CITY of VAUGHAN

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 16 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS and DECISIONS

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Application Status | Location | Description |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.20.V.0030 | OP.20.008 | Exemption | 3600 Major Mackenzie Drive West | To permit a mixed-use development comprised of two seniors' supportive living buildings and 3 residential apartment buildings with a total of 988 units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.21.V.0025 | OP.21.005 | Exemption | 3911 Teston Road | To permit 145 (3-storey) townhouse units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.21.V.0033 | OP.21.011 | Exemption | 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, 26 Comdel Boulevard, 9465 Weston Road, 15, 11, 10, 12 Lichen Court | To permit 15 single-detached dwellings and 155 townhouses comprising of 84 standard townhouses, 60 back-to-back townhouses and 11 dual-frontage townhouses |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.21.V.0078 | OP.21.022 | Exemption | 72 Crestwood Road | To permit a place of worship |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.21.V.0082 | OP.21.024 | Exemption | 8940 Bathurst Street | To permit 2 mid-rise apartment buildings comprised of 593 units and 5 townhouse blocks containing 115 units for a total of 708 residential units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0013 | OP.21.030 | Exemption | 80 Glen Shields Avenue | To permit a mid-rise apartment building containing 198 residential units and retail |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.21.V.0073 | OP.21.020 | Exemption Denied | 9075, 9085 Jane Street | To permit a 30-storey residential tower with 301 residential units and 5,514 sq.m. of amenity space |

CITY of VAUGHAN

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 16 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS and DECISIONS (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Application Status | Location | Description |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.21.V.0083 | OP.21.021 | Exemption Denied | 88 Steeles Ave. West | To permit 2 residential buildings with heights of 40-storeys and 52-storeys connected by a 5 to 7-storey podium with retail uses at-grade. The proposed development consists of 1,077 residential units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0001 | OP.21.026 | Exemption Denied | 177 Whitmore Road | To permit a mixed-use development consisting of 3 high-rise towers ranging from 32 to 38-storeys in height. The development proposes 1,172 residential units, including 18 townhouse units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0007 | OP.21.028 | Exemption Denied | 2600, 2700 Steeles Avenue West | To permit 4 development blocks each containing two 53-storey residential mixed-use towers on a 6-storey podium (total of 8 towers on 4 blocks) with office uses and retail uses at-grade |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0014 | OP.21.029 | Exemption Denied | 11069, 11075, 11023, 10983, 11035, 11091, 11363, 11131, 11231 Huntington Road | To permit 645 single-detached units and 328 townhouses |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0020 | OP.22.003 | Exemption Denied | 8286, 8274, 8270 Islington Avenue | To permit a 7-storey mid-rise residential building |

CITY of VAUGHAN

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 16 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS and DECISIONS (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Application Status | Location | Description |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0021 | OP.22.002 | Exemption Denied | 16, 30, 31, 21 Famous Avenue, 10, 20, 30, 40 Colossus Drive, 3555 Highway 7, 20 Weston Road | To facilitate the creation of 2 distinct precincts (North: OP.22.002; South: OP.22.005) divided by Colossus Drive where most building heights will range from 8 to 55 storeys except for one landmark building in the Northern Precinct that will be taller than 55 storeys |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0022 | OP.22.005 | Exemption Denied | 11, 2131, 55, 67, 71 Colossus Drive, 7575, 7501 Weston Road, | To facilitate the creation of 2 distinct precincts (North: OP.22.002; South: OP.22.005) divided by Colossus Drive where most building heights will range from 8 to 55 storeys except for one landmark building in the Northern Precinct that will be taller than 55 storeys |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0023 | OP.22.001 | Exemption Denied | 7200 Yonge Street | To permit building height up to 55- storeys and density 6.5 FSI |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.20.V.0004 | OPA 74 | Notice of decision | 20 Lloyd Street | To permit a golf course and associated uses |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0002 | OP.21.025 | Routine | 9650 Highway 27 | To permit a residential building consisting of 339 rental units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0003 | OP.21.027 | Routine | 20 Roysun Road | To permit a 12-storey mixed-use apartment building with a total of 330 residential units and 1,665.91 sq.m. of ground floor commercial |

CITY of VAUGHAN

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 16 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS and DECISIONS (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Application Status | Location | Description |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0032 | OP.22.004 | Routine | 101 Edgeley Boulevard | To permit increased height and density and deletion of the east-west 20m right-of-way ('Local Road' in the VMC Secondary Plan) |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0035 | OP.22.006 | Routine | 10819, 10811 Jane Street | To permit a 12-storey mid-rise building consisting of a ground floor daycare facility, an assisted-living facility operated by Safehaven on floors 1-3, and market residential units on floors 4-12 |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0031 | OP.22.007 | Routine | 5655, 5657, 5731, 5767, 5781 Highway 7 and 7700, 7714 Martin Grove Road | To permit a 12 to 28-storey high-rise mixed-use development within 10 blocks consisting of residential, commercial uses and a new road network. The development consists of 3,390 residential units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0038 | OP.22.008 | Routine | 2267 Highway 7, 7700 Keele Street | To permit 4 buildings with 7 towers containing residential, office, community amenity and retail uses |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0039 | OP.22.009 | Routine | 180 Maplecrete Road, 2955, 2953, 2957, 2951 Highway 7 | To permit 3 development blocks consisting of 5 buildings with heights ranging from 25 to 49-storeys and total of 2,176 dwelling units |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.V.0040 | OP.22.011 | Routine | 80, 50, 30, 120, 70, 60, 2 Commerce Street, 90 Interchange Way, 101 Exchange Avenue | To permit 5 mixed-use residential buildings in tower and podium configurations ranging in height between 15-46-storeys |

CITY of VAUGHAN

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 17 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Draft Plan of Condominium | CDMP.22.V.0005 | 19CDM-21V008 | 101 Exchange Avenue, 2 Commerce Street, 70, 9, 30, 120, 60, 80, 50 Interchange Way | Standard condominium tenure for a 15-storey residential apartment building (west tower) with 243 residential units |
| Draft Plan of Condominium | CDMP.22.V.0004 | 19CDM-22V001 | 101 Exchange Avenue, 2 Commerce Street, 70, 9, 30, 120, 60, 80, 50 Interchange Way | Standard condominium tenure for the adjacent connected 18-storey residential apartment building with 282 residential units |
| Draft Plan of Condominium | CDMP.22.V.0007 | 19CDM-22V002 | 10, 20 Gatineau Drive | 2 residential towers of 17 and 20 storeys |
| Draft Plan of Condominium | CDMP.22.V.0010 | 19CDM-22V003 | 9060 Jane Street, 1 Bass Pro Mills Drive, 8960 Jane Street, 27 Korda Gate, 9000 Jane Street | 2 apartment buildings (24 & 26 storeys) with ground floor retail |
| Draft Plan of Condominium | CDMP.22.V.0008 | 19CDM-22V004 | 311 Bowes Road | Conversion of the tenure from rental to condominium (standard) |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.V.0007 | 19T-21V008 | 220, 216 Doughton Road | Proposed residential block to facilitate two residential towers (47 and 49 storeys) with a 4-storey podium and 4 levels of underground parking |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.V.0011 | 19T-22V001 | 7200 Yonge Street | Create blocks for high-density mixed-use, medium density residential, a public park and public street network |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.V.0022 | 19T-22V002 | 2267 Highway 7, 7700 Keele Street | 8 mixed-used buildings ranging in height from 6 to 60 storeys connected by podiums ranging in height from 1 to 7 storeys |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.V.0015 | 19T-16V001 | 230 Grand Trunk Avenue | 30 single-detached units |

CITY of VAUGHAN

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 17 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.V.0012 | 19T18V010 | intersection of Langstaff Road and Street G | Design work for the intersection of Langstaff Road and Street G and watermain on Langstaff/Huntington Road |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.V.0020 | 19T-20V004 | North of Major Mackenzie Drive and West of Canadian Pacific Railway | Nashville Heights Residential Subdivision (Phase 2B) |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.V.0008 | 19T20V005 | 10804, 10804, 10804, 10804, 10804, 10970, 11110, 10980 Jane Street, 3180 Teston Road | Construct Street 3 within Block 34 East Phase 1 |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.V.0009 | 82730 | Dufferin Street from Major Mackenzie Drive to Teston Road | To implement improvements along Dufferin Street and Teston Road to accommodate traffic volume increase identified in the Region's 2016 Transportation Master Plan |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.V.0013 | 88196 & 84006 | Fieldstone Dr and Chrislea Rd Bass Pro Mills extension to Hawkview Blvd | Contains 30% submission design drawings for Weston Road Improvements (Highway 407 to Fieldstone Dr. / Chrislea Rd. and from Bass Pro Mills extension to Hawkview Blvd.) |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.V.0011 | Dufferin & Beverley Glen | 7850 Dufferin Street | Design work for the existing signalized intersection at Dufferin St. & Beverley Glen Blvd. Intersection will be converted from 3 to 4 legs with pedestrian ramps and tactile plate at all 4 corners |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.V.0004 | Portage Parkway - Design Sub. | North of Highway 7 East of Highway 400 | Design submission for the Portage Parkway road widening between Applewood Crescent & Jane Street |

CITY of VAUGHAN

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 17 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Registered Plan of Condominium | CDMR.22.V.0006 | YRCP1477 | 9370 Bathurst Street | Common element condominium with 50 townhouse units (within 8 blocks) |
| Registered Plan of Condominium | CDMR.21.V.0018 | YRCP1478 | 9075, 9085 Jane Street | Apartment building consisting of 285 units |
| Registered Plan of Condominium | CDMR.21.V.0022 | YRCP1483 | 9075, 9085 Jane Street | Apartment building consisting of 284 units |
| Registered Plan of Condominium | CDMR.21.V.0025 | YRCP1484 | 5 Buttermill Avenue, 950, 898 Portage Parkway | 22 stacked townhouse units located within Transit City 1 & 2 |
| Registered Plan of Condominium | CDMR.22.V.0017 | YRCP1486 | 100 & 110 Eagle Rock Way | 312 residential units within a 10 & 12 storey building |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.V.0043 | 65M4718 | 2 Commerce Street, 70, 90, 120, 80, 50, 30, 60 Interchange Way, 101 Exchange Avenue | 574 apartments and 419 street townhouse units |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.V.0015 | 65M4719 | 6079, 6061 Rutherford Road, 134, 140 Simmons Street | 111 townhouse units |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.18.V.0038 | 65M4728 | 10355 Pine Valley Drive | 43 single-detached units and 4 units over 8 part lots |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.18.V.0042 | 65M4732 | 10640, 10460 Pine Valley Drive | 99 single residential dwelling units and 16 partial units (107 single units) |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.V.0038 | 65M4733 | 4333 Teston Road | 170 single-detached dwellings |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.V.0040 | 65M4734 | 100 Cannes Avenue, 10355 Pine Valley Drive, 4333 Teston Road | Development of a park open space/ buffer and valley land |

CITY of VAUGHAN

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 17 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.V.0025 | 65M4735 | Block 200, Plan 65M-4383 | 27 single-detached units and 3 part-lots for future single-detached units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0063 | DA.21.072 | 80 Glen Shields Avenue | 198 residential units in a mid-rise building consisting of a 9-storey tower and a 7-storey tower connected by step up podium. Ground floor will be occupied by a daycare, grocery store and retail |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0168 | DA.22.023 | Block 40 Plan 65M-4486 | 22-storey tower (Tower A) and a 20-storey tower (Tower B) connected by a 3-storey landscaped podium |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0106 | DA.22.007 | 177 Whitmore Road | 32, 35 and 38 storeys connected by a 2-7 storey podium |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0160 | DA.22.009 | 101 Edgeley Boulevard | 8 residential apartment towers ranging from 17 to 62 storeys |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0192 | DA.22.032 | 120, 60 Interchange Way, 2 Commerce Street, 70, 30, 80, 50, 90, 101 Interchange Way | 5 mixed-use residential buildings in tower and podium configurations ranging between 15 to 46-storeys |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0153 | DA.18.078 | 8300 Huntington Road | Self-storage facility comprised of 5 buildings with a total gross floor area of 12,813 sq.m. |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0010 | DA.21.043 | 7731 Martin Grove Road and 5601 Highway 7 | 2-storey automotive service bay addition of 517.93 sq.m. to an existing car dealership |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0030 | DA.21.046 | 3240 Kirby Road | 50 m tall circular steel monopole telecommunications tower |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0040 | DA.21.060 | 910 Rutherford Road | 3-storey addition to the existing Synagogue and Community Centre |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0017 | DA.21.061 | 55, 27, 27 Director Court | Single-storey addition to the Phase 1 industrial building |

CITY of VAUGHAN

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 17 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|---|
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0009 | DA.21.062 | 175, 191 and 209 Milani Boulevard | 2-storey mixed-use industrial/office building comprising industrial uses on the ground floor and office space on the second floor |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0021 | DA.21.063 | Part of Lot 11 and 12, Concession 10 | Single-storey industrial/warehouse building (Building 'B') |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0024 | DA.21.064 | 11271 Kipling Avenue | 30-metre steel monopole telecommunication tower |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0022 | DA.21.065 | Blocks 157-162, Plan 65M-4694. | 6 townhouse blocks comprised of 6 street townhouses per block for a total of 36 units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0008 | DA.21.066 | Part of West half of Lots 21 & 22, Concession 9 | 59 of 178 street townhouse units associated with approved Draft Plan of Subdivision 19T-19V001 |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0041 | DA.21.067 | 2 Marc Santi Boulevard, 9600 Bathurst Street, 49 Lebovic Campus Drive | Twin pad arena as well as the renovation of pre-existing space and new arena-related office and private athletic space |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0025 | DA.21.068 | 333 Cityview Boulevard | 1-storey industrial warehouse building with a total GFA of 9,966.28 sq.m. of which 386 sq.m. will be dedicated to office space |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0034 | DA.21.069 | 3911 Teston Road | 3-storey 145 townhouse units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0026 | DA.21.070 | 541 Cityview Boulevard | Minor changes to the existing facade, a new canopy and minor changes to the existing drive-thru |

CITY of VAUGHAN

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 17 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--|---|
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0031 | DA.21.071 | Block 125 and Part of Block 106 Plan 65M-4556 and Part of Block 245 Plan 65M-4672. | Eight 2-storey townhouses |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0068 | DA.22.001 | 2911, 2901, 2891, 2921 Major Mackenzie Drive West | Modifications to the existing 326 sq.m. building to accommodate a proposed BMO Bank of Montreal |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0080 | DA.22.002 | 8500 Keele Street | Conversion of the existing warehouse space in the south building to accessory retail use |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0067 | DA.22.003 | 8700 Dufferin Street | 3 storey addition to existing building |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0110 | DA.22.006 | 9280 Keele Street | 22m Meso Flower telecommunication tower |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0111 | DA.22.008 | 6100 Langstaff Road | Two 2-storey data centre buildings, each with a 1-storey office component |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0141 | DA.22.014 | 2901, 2891, 2921, 2911 Major Mackenzie Drive West | 16 electric vehicle fast charging stations |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0148 | DA.22.017 | 67 Jacob Keffer Parkway | Convert the existing office/warehouse building into a commercial school |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0158 | DA.22.019 | 7393 Weston Road, 1 Century Place, 7405 Weston Road | 2-storey addition to the existing data centre |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0167 | DA.22.020 | 326 Jevlan Drive | 2-storey industrial building with ancillary office spaces |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0150 | DA.22.021 | 350 Lawford Road | Development of up to 5 portable classrooms |

CITY of VAUGHAN

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022



TABLE 17 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE (continued)

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0151 | DA.22.022 | 8311 Weston Road | Motor Vehicle Sales Establishment within an existing building |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0186 | DA.22.026 | 196, 170, 120, 210, 160, 182 Milani Boulevard | Multi-unit warehouse building with accessory office space to be constructed in 2 phases. First phase 12,623 sq.m. GFA and second phase 5,086 sq.m. GFA |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0172 | DA.22.027 | 9465 Weston Road | 155 townhouse units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0184 | DA.22.028 | 10059 Keele Street | Additional use permissions to allow pet services and reconfigure the parking area |
| Site Plan | SP.22.V.0189 | DA.22.030 | 9701 Highway 50 | 1-storey warehouse with 2-storey office facility and separate areas for vehicle parking and truck movement/loading |

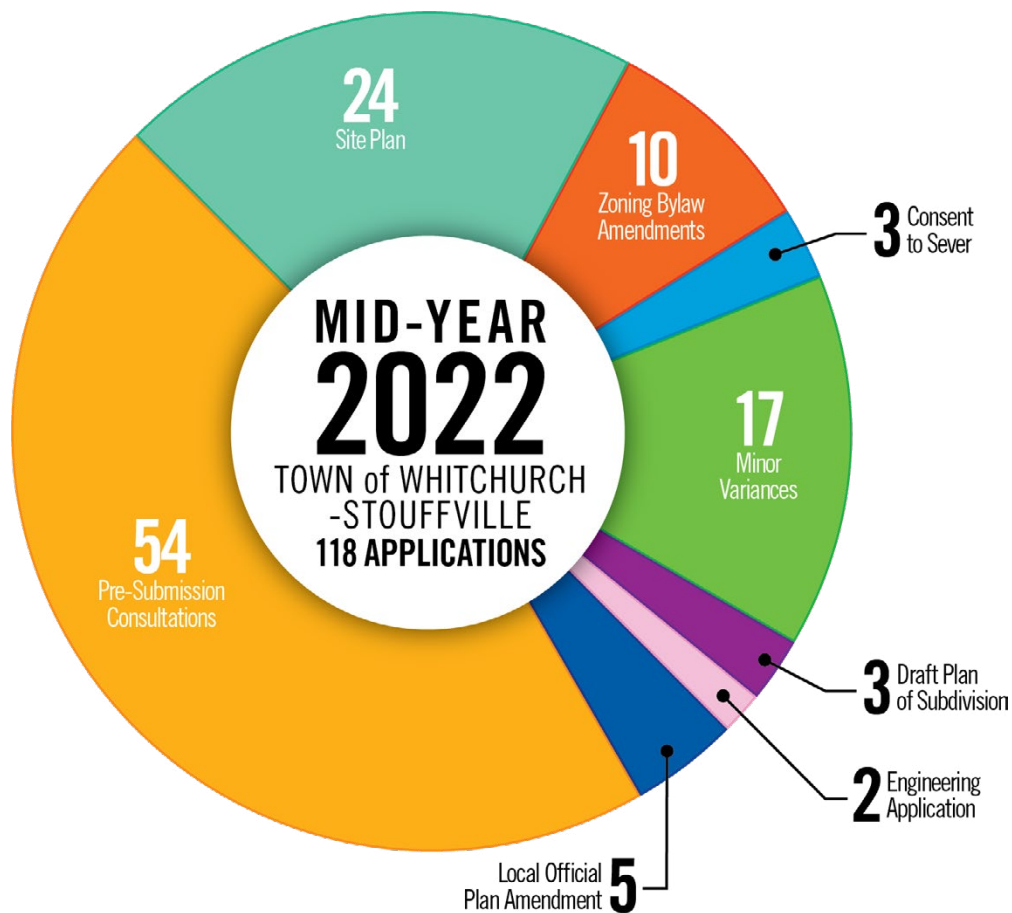
TOWN of WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE DEVELOPMENT PROFILE MID-YEAR 2022

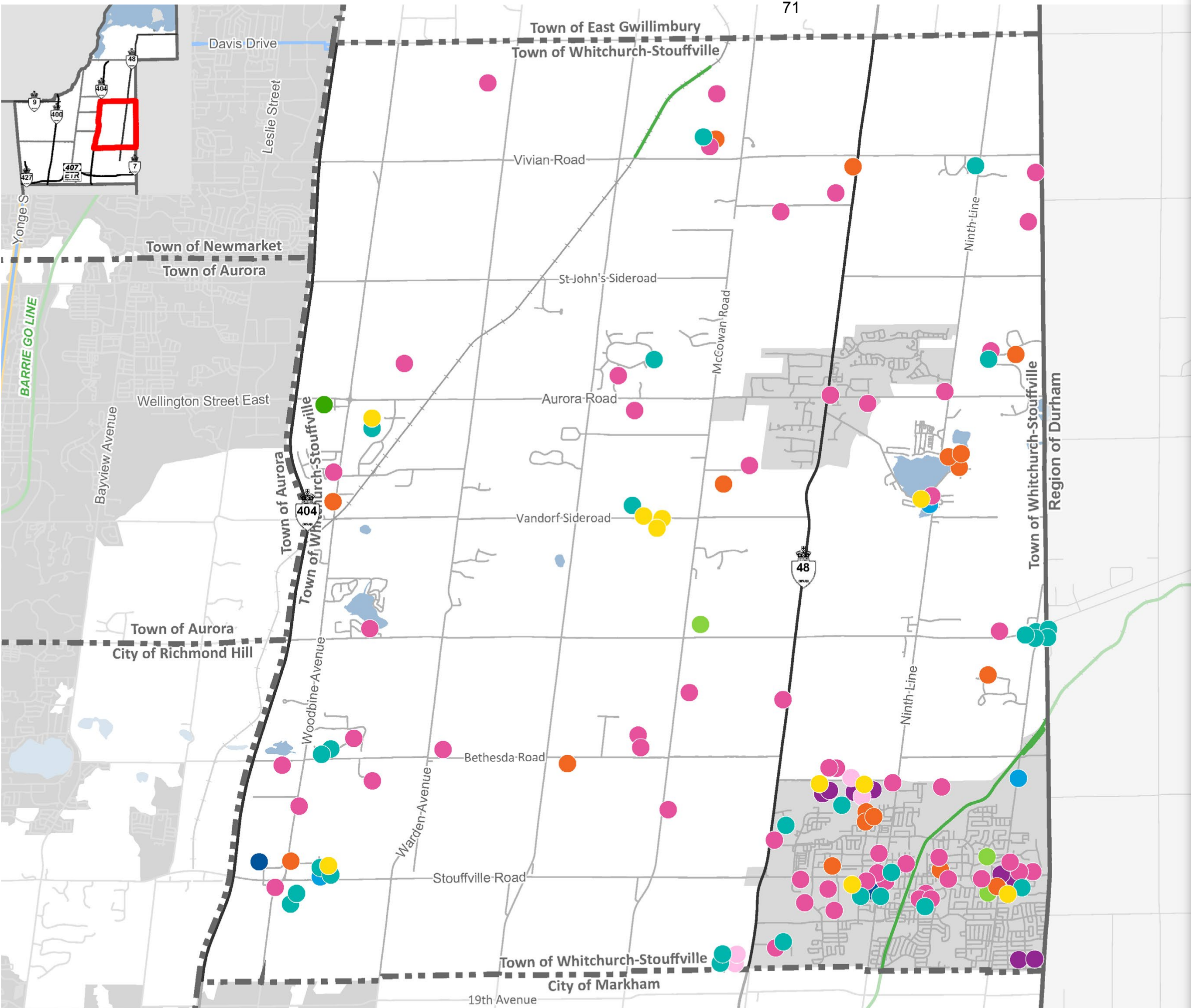


QUICKFACTS

- › Whitchurch-Stouffville made up 10.7% of new development applications in York Region
- › Regional staff respond and participate in pre-consultation meetings held every two weeks

FIGURE 12 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE MID-YEAR 2022





YORK REGION

TOWN OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE MID-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PROFILE 2022

- Consent to Sever
- Engineering Application
- Minor Variances
- Official Plan Amendments - Exemption ¹
- Official Plan Amendments - Notice of Decision
- Official Plan Amendments - Routine ¹
- Pre Submission Consultation
- Site Plan Applications
- Subdivision/Condominium Applications
- Zoning By-Law Amendments

¹ Refer to Attachment 1 - Delegated Approval Authority



Produced by: The Regional Municipality of York
Corporate Services Department, Planning and Economic
Development Branch 2022

Data: The Regional Municipality of York, The Regional
Municipalities of Durham and Peel, County of Simcoe,
City of Toronto
Queen's Printer for Ontario 2003-2022



TOWN of WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022

TABLE 18 OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS and DECISIONS

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Application Status | Location | Description |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.21.W.0080 | OPA21.007 | Exemption | 56 Gordon Collins Drive | To permit the conversion of an existing warehouse into a fitness and recreational facility as an additional permitted use |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.W.0030 | OPA22.002 | Exemption | 5945 Main Street | To permit high-density residential development with 166 dwelling units (one 10-storey apartment building) and two 1-storey retail buildings |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.21.W.0057 | OPA 151 | Notice of decision | 2159 Aurora Road | To permit a light industrial manufacturing facility |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.W.0019 | OPA22.001 | Routine | 2 Stalwart Industrial Drive | To permit a crematorium within the Industrial designation |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.W.0029 | OPA22.003 | Routine | Old Elm (formerly Lincolnville) Go Land Use Study Area | Town-initiated Official Plan Amendment for the Old Elm (formerly Lincolnville) Go Land Use Study Area |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.W.0036 | OPA22.004 | Routine | 14622 Ninth Line | To permit 11 lots to be serviced with private wells and septic systems |
| Local Official Plan Amendment | LOPA.22.W.0034 | OPA22.005 | Routine | Town Wide | To establish a land use planning framework to regulate lands legally used for the cultivation and processing of recreational cannabis |



TOWN of WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

DETAILED APPLICATION INFORMATION MID-YEAR 2022

TABLE 19 NEW DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS by TYPE

| Application Type | Regional File Number | Local File Number | Location | Description |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--|---|
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.W.0008 | 19T(W)-22.001 | 5481, 5551 Bethesda Road | 134 single-detached lots, part lot blocks, a future condominium townhouse residential block (Block 135) |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.W.0013 | 19T(W)-22.002 | 5731 Bethesda Road | 192 single-detached units, 102 townhouses, school block and parks |
| Draft Plan of Subdivision | SUBP.22.W.0014 | 19T(W)-22.003 | 6835 Main Street, 447 Loretta Crescent | 10 townhouse units |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.W.0006 | 19T(W)-20.004 | 11776 Highway 48 | 548 apartment units with a mixed-use component and 88 townhouse units. |
| Engineering Application | ENG.22.W.0019 | 19T(W)-22.002 | 5731 Bethesda Road | Fill Management Plan for proposed earthworks |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.W.0045 | 65M4724 | West of York Durham Line and North of 19th Avenue | 200 single-detached units |
| Registered Plan of Subdivision | SUBR.21.W.0046 | 65M4725 | West of York Durham Drive and North of 19th Avenue | 167 single-detached units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.W.0123 | SPA22.012 | 5945 Main Street | Two 1-storey retail buildings and one 10-storey residential building which includes 166 dwelling units |
| Site Plan | SP.22.W.0076 | SPA17.013 | 12 Lincolnville Ln | Single dwelling |
| Site Plan | SP.22.W.0077 | SPA17.014 | 18 Lincolnville Ln | Single dwelling |
| Site Plan | SP.22.W.0090 | SPA22.008 | 2 Stalwart Industrial Drive | 678 sq.m. crematorium building |
| Site Plan | SP.22.W.0107 | SPA22.010 | 12131 Woodbine Avenue | Corporate Office Transport Terminal and Service area utilized by Miller Waste Systems. |
| Site Plan | SP.22.W.0164 | SPA22.019 | 11776 Highway 48 | 100 townhouse units |

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY SUMMARY MID-YEAR 2022

For more information on development activity in York Region please contact:

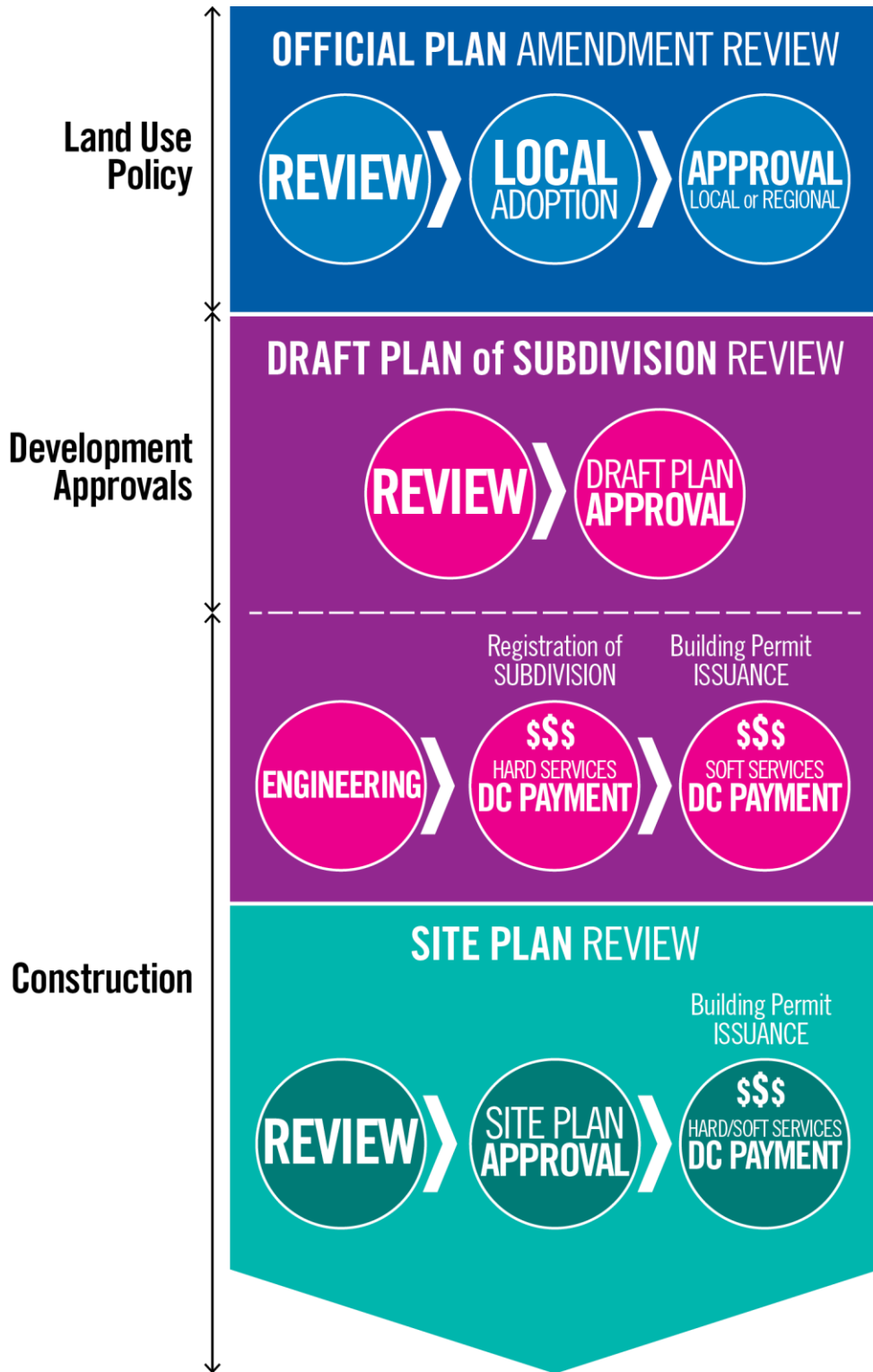
PLANNING

1-877-464-9675 Extension 75430

york.ca/developmentservices



ATTACHMENT 2



From: [Switzer, Barbara](#) on behalf of [Regional Clerk](#)
Subject: Regional Council Decision - 2022 Transportation Master Plan
Date: October 3, 2022 3:13:09 PM
Attachments: [2022 Transportation Master Plan.pdf](#)

CAUTION: This email originated outside of the Town of Newmarket. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and trusted content.

On September 29, 2022 Regional Council made the following decision:

1. Council approve the 2022 Transportation Master Plan, included as Attachment 1 to this report.
2. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Clerks of the local municipalities, Toronto and Region and Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authorities, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The original staff report is attached for your information.

Please contact Brian Titherington, Director, Transportation and Infrastructure Planning at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 75901 if you have any questions with respect to this matter.

Regards,

Christopher Raynor (he/him) | Regional Clerk, Regional Clerk's Office, Corporate Services Department

The Regional Municipality of York | 17250 Yonge Street | Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1
O: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71300 | christopher.raynor@york.ca | york.ca

Our Mission: **Working together to serve our thriving communities – today and tomorrow**



2022 YORK REGION

TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN





We acknowledge that York Region is located on the traditional territory of many Indigenous peoples such as 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.

York Region falls under the Nanfan Treaty, Treaty 13 and the Williams Treaties. There are also other land claims and treaty rights involving portions of York Region that have not been resolved. The Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation is a Williams Treaty First Nation and the closest First Nation community to York Region.



Mayor
Frank Scarpitti
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Don Hamilton
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Jack Heath
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Joe Li
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Jim Jones
City of Markham



Mayor
David West
City of Richmond Hill



Mayor
Maurizio Bevilacqua
City of Vaughan



Chairman & CEO
Wayne Emmerson



Regional Councillor
Joe DiPaola
City of Richmond Hill

A Message from York Region Chairman and CEO and Members of Regional Council

Whether living, working or playing in York Region, transportation remains a vital service, providing travellers with cycling, walking, driving and transit options.

York Region continues to make transportation and transit-related initiatives a key priority, including bringing subway service into the Region and enhancing roads and surrounding infrastructure to support multiple modes of transportation.

The 2022 Transportation Master Plan is a long-term vision for York Region's growing communities, which are expected to grow to more than 2 million people and nearly 1 million jobs by 2051.

The plan looks ahead 30 years and considers transportation infrastructure needs to support growing communities, changing technology and movement of goods.

The 2022 Transportation Master Plan is coordinated with the Region's Official Plan and the Water and Wastewater Master Plan, ensuring a future where Regional services continue to create strong, caring and safe communities.



Regional Councillor
Mario Ferri
City of Vaughan



Regional Councillor
Carmine Perrelli
City of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor
Gino Rosati
City of Vaughan



Mayor
John Taylor
Town of Newmarket



Regional Councillor
Linda Jackson
City of Vaughan



Regional Councillor
Tom Vegh
Town of Newmarket



Mayor
Margaret Quirk
Town of Georgina



Regional Councillor
Robert Grossi
Town of Georgina



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

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Executive Summary | 2 |
| Introduction | 8 |
| A1 Setting a strategic direction for transportation | 8 |
| A2 Building on past foundations | 9 |
| A3 Understanding travel in York Region and how it is evolving | 11 |
| A3.1 Many travel options within and beyond the Region | 11 |
| A3.2 New technology is making travel safer and more efficient | 11 |
| A3.3 The network is becoming more coordinated, connected and focused | 13 |
| A3.4 Matching services to land use will be key as communities grow..... | 14 |
| A3.5 Transportation landscape is changing — and quickly | 15 |
| A4 Traveller feedback was vital to updating the plan | 16 |
| Context | 20 |
| B1 Provincial guidance..... | 21 |
| B1.1 Provincial Policy Statement | 21 |
| B1.2 A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe | 21 |
| B1.3 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)..... | 22 |
| B1.4 2041 Regional Transportation Plan..... | 22 |
| B1.5 Ministry of Transportation Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan..... | 23 |
| B1.6 Provincial Environmental Assessment Act..... | 23 |
| B2 York Region Vision plans and priorities | 23 |
| B2.1 Vision, Strategic Plan and Regional Fiscal Strategy | 23 |
| B2.2 Regional Official Plan | 24 |
| B2.3 Climate change actions | 25 |
| B2.4 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment | 27 |
| B2.5 Collaboration and partnerships | 29 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Framework and approach | 32 |
| C1 The Plan followed recommended processes | 32 |
| C2 Consultation and engagement were key elements in updating the TMP..... | 33 |
| C3 Indigenous communities engagement | 34 |
| C4 Discover, Explore, Reveal | 36 |
| C5 Approach to planning has evolved..... | 38 |
| Listening and learning | 42 |
| D1 Travel patterns are changing | 42 |
| D1.1 Most want to continue working from home at least part of the time | 44 |
| D1.2 Interest in other travel options is growing..... | 44 |
| D1.3 A larger share of people both live and work in the Region..... | 45 |
| D1.4 A shift to electric is underway among car owners..... | 45 |
| D1.5 Respondents would invest half the budget in transit, walking and cycling options... | 46 |
| D1.6 Youngest and oldest age groups least likely to own / drive a car..... | 47 |
| D1.7 Residents and stakeholders value fiscal prudence and innovative solutions | 47 |
| D2 Foundations of the 2022 Transportation Master Plan | 47 |
| D2.1 Purpose Statement | 48 |
| D2.2 Guiding Principles..... | 48 |
| D2.3 Objectives | 49 |
| D3 2022 Transportation Master Plan reflects evolving attitudes and options | 49 |
| D3.1 Making life without a car an option | 50 |
| D3.2 Making transportation healthier | 51 |
| D3.3 Creating complete communities and complete streets | 51 |
| Mapping the Region’s transportation future | 54 |
| E1 How the proposed network was developed | 54 |
| E2 Testing options | 56 |
| E3 Recommended transportation networks for Active Transportation, Rapid Transit and Roads..... | 58 |
| E3.1 A larger, more integrated active transportation network..... | 58 |
| E3.2 More rapid transit corridors..... | 60 |
| E3.3 A more strategic approach to the road network | 63 |
| E3.4 Transportation needs continue to evolve to support changing land use | 67 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Strategic approach to change | 70 |
| F1 New and evolving areas of focus..... | 70 |
| F1.2 Focus areas..... | 70 |
| F1.3 Alignment of Focus Areas with Objectives..... | 71 |
| F2 Safety for all travellers..... | 72 |
| F3 Transportation equity and inclusion..... | 73 |
| F4 Reduce car travel, especially during rush hours..... | 75 |
| F5 Fiscal and environmental sustainability..... | 77 |
| F6 Reviewing roles and functions in Regional corridors..... | 79 |
| F6.1 Ownership and use of boulevard..... | 79 |
| F6.2 Micromobility..... | 80 |
| F6.3 HOV lanes / transit lanes..... | 81 |
| F6.4 Parking..... | 81 |
| F6.5 Movement of goods using large trucks..... | 82 |
| From plan to action | 86 |
| G1 Cost of the Plan..... | 86 |
| G2 Funding the Plan..... | 88 |
| G3 Balancing services with financial needs..... | 88 |
| G4 How asset management supports growth..... | 89 |
| G5 Approach to implementation..... | 90 |
| G6 Total costs of the transportation network..... | 92 |
| G7 Measuring and monitoring performance..... | 94 |
| G8 Updating the Transportation Master Plan..... | 95 |
| Appendices | 97 |
| A Glossary..... | 98 |
| B Maps..... | 101 |
| Contact Information | 107 |



▲ Vehicles travel on King Road between Weston Road and Highway 27 in the Township of King.

Executive Summary

York Regional Council's vision of Strong, Caring, Safe Communities guides all Regional departments and staff to be accountable to the communities we serve. The **2022 Transportation Master Plan (TMP)** is the long-term vision for York Region's transportation network and aligns with the Vision's four areas of focus: **Economic Vitality, Good Government, Healthy Communities** and **Sustainable Environment**. The TMP considers the Region's transportation infrastructure needs over the next 30 years to support growth and the changing needs of travellers, while highlighting focus areas for further study.

By 2051, York Region's population is expected to grow to over two million residents and nearly one million jobs. To support growth, the TMP is reviewed every five years to ensure the regional transportation network meets the needs of all motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders. The 2022 TMP builds upon the elements of the 2016 TMP and has been coordinated to align with the Regional Official Plan and the Water and Wastewater Master Plan updates.

The purpose of the TMP is to guide staff in planning, building, operating and maintaining a connected transportation network that is safe, sustainable, efficient, reliable and ready for the future. It balances the needs of the unique communities across York Region and is further supported by the following objectives:

- > **Make the best use of infrastructure and services:** Maximize the effectiveness of the existing road network
- > **Encourage all types of travel:** Design Regional roads to accommodate all ages, abilities and modes of travel, including active transportation, transit, passenger vehicles and goods movement
- > **Provide a resilient and adaptable transportation network:** Adapt to changing environmental, social, financial and technological landscapes
- > **Enhance partnerships:** Recognize the importance of collaborating with the public and private and non-profit organizations to provide transportation infrastructure, programs and services

> **Actively engage and share information:**

Learn from all residents and stakeholders

- > **Align project costs:** Ensure project costs are consistent with the Region's fiscal strategy, the 10-Year Roads and Transit Capital Construction Program and obtain Regional Council approval annually

The following was considered when updating the 2022 TMP:

- > Updates to the Regional Official Plan to accommodate population and job growth in line with new provincial forecasts
- > Growing interest in active and eco-friendly travel options, including walking, cycling, carpooling and transit
- > Participation and feedback from York Region residents and stakeholders
- > Alignment with the Region's fiscal strategy
- > Commitments by senior levels of government and the Region to build the Yonge North Subway Extension to the City of Richmond Hill
- > Provincial plans for new and extended freeways with provision for parallel corridors dedicated to rapid transit
- > New technology to collect and use data to improve efficiency, enhance safety and save costs



▲ Research for the 2022 TMP was conducted during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Unlike previous Master Plans which had in-person Public Information Centres (above left), the 2022 TMP utilized online engagement tools such as virtual consultation, social media and YouTube videos.

York Region's priorities for investment in the 2022 TMP are based on comprehensive input from a wide range of transportation users and other interested parties, including residents, elected officials, municipal, provincial and federal governments, Indigenous communities and other community and agency partners.

The update also reflects long-term trends that have seen transit use grow faster than single-occupant vehicle travel and more reliance on cycling or walking instead of driving for shorter trips.

In developing the 2022 TMP, staff drew on knowledge gained while implementing the 2016 TMP and the impacts of disruptive events like the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to a change in the way the Region now approaches planning:

- > **Allow for flexibility:** Having the ability to change plans accordingly to reflect changing travel needs, global events, new technology, regulatory changes and emerging ideas and approaches
- > **Advocate for big projects the Region needs:** Advocating for provincial and federal funding as well as approaching other potential funders to share costs will be crucial in delivering the major projects outlined in the 2022 TMP

- > **Consider fiscal and environmental bottom lines:** The TMP must align with the Region's ability to pay for the projects outlined, and calls for a prudent approach in planning growth-related capital investments and the impact on the environment
- > **Seek and respond to opportunities:** Respond to federal, provincial and other partnership funding opportunities to build roads, transit infrastructure and operating funding
- > **Engage more often and more broadly:** Use a variety of techniques / tools, such as online surveys, social media, virtual engagement and post-pandemic in-person opportunities, to ensure as many voices as possible continue to be heard

Over the next five years, staff will monitor and take into consideration the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on York Region's transportation network and how it is used.

▼ Pedestrians walk on the sidewalk and cyclists ride in the dedicated on-street bike lane on Timothy Street in the Town of Newmarket.

As a long-term infrastructure plan, the TMP contains three main elements:

1. **Active transportation:** The plan supports a well-integrated and well-connected network of bike lanes, trails and multi-use paths to make these options easier and safer for all users. (See Maps 1 and 2 in [Appendix B](#))
2. **Rapid transit:** The Plan recommends additional rapid transit corridors to address the Region's growth to 2051 and beyond. (See Map 3 in [Appendix B](#))
3. **Optimized road network:** Investments will target managing traffic flow in the Region's most congested areas, improving roads in new development areas and enabling better access to freeways, Regional Centres, rapid transit and key links to major employment areas by making efficient use of the existing assets, such as roads, lanes and intersections, as well as investing in new projects. (See Map 4 in [Appendix B](#))

Transportation network maps have been developed to identify the transportation infrastructure required in York Region by 2051 to provide multiple travel options to serve pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and motorists.

The 2022 TMP identifies five new focus areas that bring together several related priorities:

- > Safety for all travellers
- > Transportation equity and inclusion
- > Reduce car travel, especially during rush hours
- > Fiscal and environmental sustainability
- > Role and function of Regional corridors

While many investments and actions within Transportation Operations, Public Works already reflect these priorities, further work and study by the Region and its partners will identify opportunities for new and / or improved approaches. Proposed actions and initiatives will be brought forward to York Regional Council for review and endorsement through the annual capital plans over its next four-year term.



- ▼ Students cross Leslie Street in the Town of East Gwillimbury with assistance from a crossing guard.

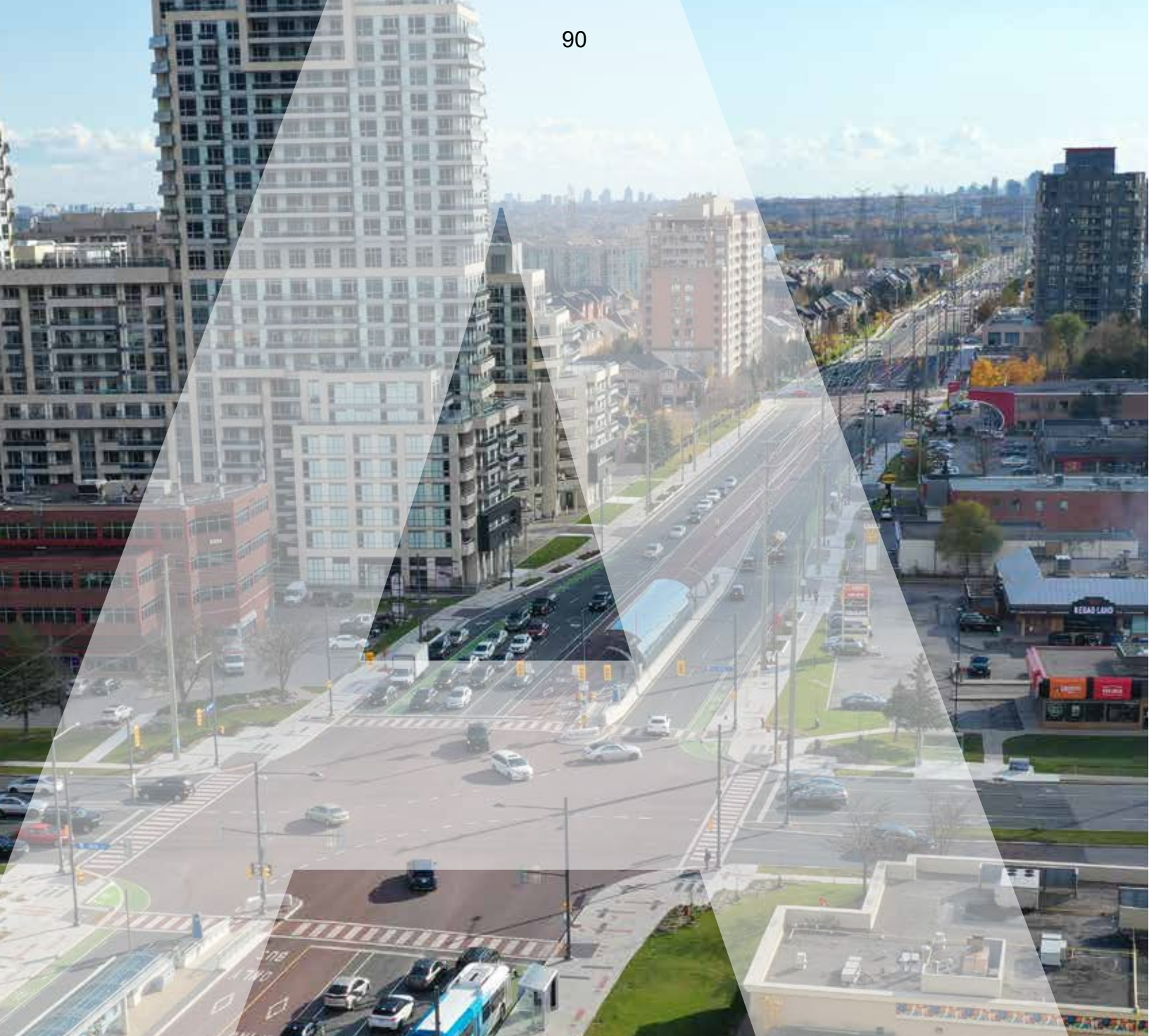


The 2022 TMP was completed following guidance provided by the Municipal Engineers Association. Projects within master plans are subject to provincial environmental legislation, typically under the municipal class environmental assessment process.

The Plan also aligns with other applicable provincial legislation and guidance, including the Provincial Policy Statement, other land-use considerations and Metrolinx and Ministry of Transportation plans.

Progress on achieving the projects and priorities outlined in the 2022 TMP will be monitored through a comprehensive review every five years. In addition, annual status updates will inform York Regional Council and the public on all focus area initiatives and actions, planned and completed work. Developing progress indicators and a framework for reporting will be key initiatives of the first status update.

The draft 2022 TMP identifies five new focus areas that bring together several related priorities: Safety for all travellers, transportation equity and inclusion, reduce car travel, especially during rush hours, fiscal and environmental sustainability and role and function of Regional corridors



In this chapter...

- A1 Setting a strategic direction for transportation
- A2 Building on past foundations
- A3 Understanding travel in York Region and how it is evolving
- A4 Traveller feedback was vital to updating the plan

▲ Intersection of Yonge Street and Carrville Road in the City of Richmond Hill

MASTERMIND

Introduction

A1 Setting a strategic direction for transportation

As York Region grows and changes, the 2022 Transportation Master Plan will set the strategic direction for roads, transit and active transportation options like walking and cycling, allowing people and goods to travel safely and reliably through the Region in environmentally and financially sound ways.

Provincial forecasts, revised in 2020, predict the Region will be home to just over two million residents and almost one million jobs by 2051. The Regional Official Plan, which guides the Region's growth, was updated in 2022 to incorporate this substantial increase. Infrastructure plans, including the TMP, align with the updated Regional Official Plan.

To meet the transportation needs of a growing population, encouraging change in how and when people travel will be needed in addition to expanding Regional roads.

Traveller behaviour is constantly changing. The global COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated a move toward working from home and, while longer-term trends are still uncertain, a large majority of Canadian workers currently show a preference to continue working from home, at least part of the time. This is likely to affect how and when people travel.



▲ Vehicles and YRT bus travel along Yonge Street in the City of Richmond Hill.

The growing urgency to address climate change is also affecting how people travel. Low-carbon transportation options like transit, walking and cycling reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. The Region has set an aspirational goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2051 and through its [Energy Conservation Demand Management Plan](#), has committed to shifting its corporate and transit fleets to electric vehicles, including electric buses, by that date. This move and the extension of the Yonge subway line to the City of Richmond Hill represents major steps in the right direction. The move to lower-carbon options will also contribute to healthier communities by encouraging more physical activity and reducing traffic-related pollution and noise.

This TMP builds on a foundation of master plans going back to 2002 that recognized the need for new solutions. With the above factors accelerating the pace of change, the 2022 TMP also provides flexibility as conditions continue to change.

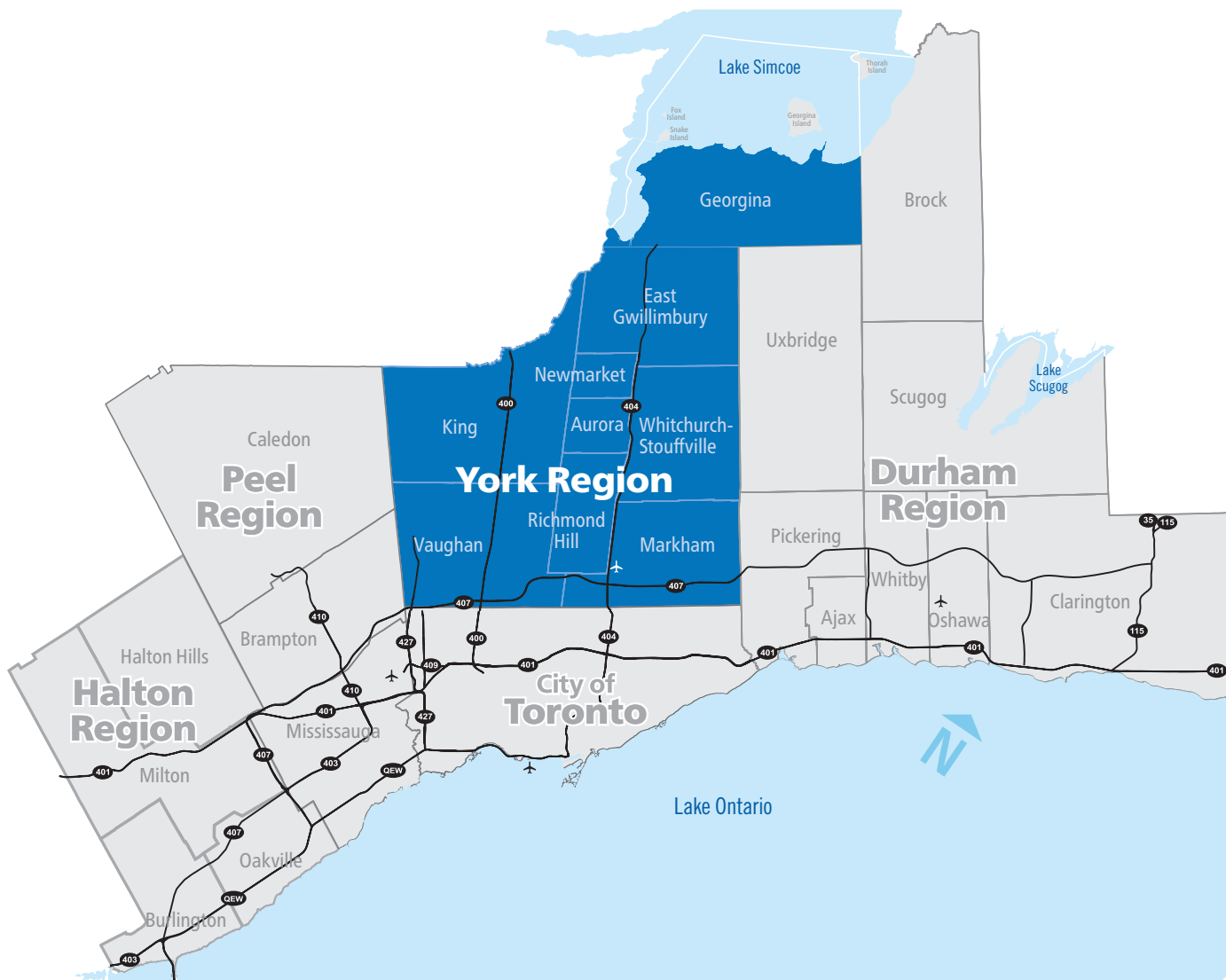
A2 Building on past foundations

Transportation has been critical to York Region's growth since its establishment in 1971 and will continue to play a vital role as the Region continues to accommodate new growth.

The Region was home to 1.2 million people and almost 624,000 jobs in 54,000 business establishments in 2021. Stretching from Steeles Avenue in the south to Lake Simcoe in the north, it encompasses an area of 1,776 square kilometres. Its position directly north of the City of Toronto, as shown in Figure 1, has helped to make it the fastest-growing large municipality in Ontario.

The progressive approach taken in previous transportation master plans has dramatically changed the landscape for transportation in the Region over the past two decades:

- York Region Transit (YRT) operates 34 kilometres of dedicated bus rapidways (or Viva) on Highway 7, Davis Drive and Yonge Street
- YRT service also links to the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, Metrolinx's GO services and other new stops in the Region along the extended western arm of the subway line (TTC line 1), as well as to Finch station on the Yonge Street line
- Transit services have evolved to reflect new options and changing needs, with a focus on scheduled bus service in high-demand areas and options like on-request service elsewhere
- Numerous growth-related road projects have increased capacity and created connections to transit services and freeways
- Completed projects have filled in missing road links like Bathurst Street north of Green Lane and Bayview Avenue between Stouffville and Bloomington roads and have provided passage across barriers, allowing travellers to cross 400-series highways between interchanges
- The Region has also successfully advocated for the extension of Highway 404 in the towns of East Gwillimbury and Georgina as well as Highway 427 in the City of Vaughan to manage congestion and support planned growth
- Increasing use of intelligent transportation systems, discussed in Section A3.2, is making the network safer and more efficient
- Many road widening projects included the addition of multi-use paths for bicycle and pedestrian traffic or dedicated cycle tracks in roadside boulevards to make active transportation easier and safer for all travellers
- More than 85% of the work on the York Region portion of a 121-kilometre walking and cycling route linking Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario is complete
- Plans are moving forward for a more than 50-kilometre walking and cycling route (South York Greenway) parallel to Highway 407 to support active and eco-friendly ways of travelling. Details are available at york.ca/southyorkgreenway



▲ FIGURE 1: York Region and its nine local municipalities are located centrally within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

- The Region continues to support, promote and encourage active and eco-friendly ways of travelling such as walking, cycling, scootering, hiking, carpooling and taking transit

These initiatives provide a strong foundation for continued growth and coordination and connection of transportation in and beyond York Region.

Central to the next phase of growth is the Yonge North Subway Extension which would extend TTC Line 1 to the City of Richmond Hill. This landmark project, which has been a top transit priority for the Region for several years, is being led by the provincial government. Major construction is expected to start in 2023 and to be complete within the next decade.

A3 Understanding travel in York Region and how it is evolving

A3.1 Many travel options within and beyond the Region

The transportation system in York Region includes roads, active transportation, transit and rail lines. The Region's direct responsibilities within this network include:



York Region Transit: Operating in all nine local municipalities, YRT offers a range of accessible services, including bus rapid transit, conventional bus and

Mobility On-Request and Mobility On-Request Paratransit. It connects travellers to transit services in the City of Toronto, Peel Region, Durham Region and the provincial GO Transit rail and highway bus systems. Strategically located "park and ride" lots encourage drivers to connect to transit for trips into urban areas and key destinations such as Toronto Pearson International Airport. YRT also supports active transportation, with bike racks on the front of buses and bike parking racks at many of its bus terminals, bus stops and Vivastations.



Active transportation and micromobility: Regional road corridors include high-quality facilities such as sidewalks, bike lanes, multi-use

paths and bike parking at bus stops and terminals, encouraging travellers to switch to more eco-friendly options. Active transportation includes walking, hiking and cycling. Micromobility, which relies on smaller, electric-powered vehicles like e-bikes and

e-scooters, is also emerging as a lower-carbon alternative to gas-powered travel.



Regional roads: The Region is responsible for arterial roads, most of which are typically laid out in a 2-by-2-kilometre grid. These roads

are designed to accommodate all types of traffic, including passenger vehicles, trucks for the movement of goods, transit vehicles and bicycles.

As the links between local municipal streets and provincial highways, they are critical in moving people and goods throughout the Region.

A3.2 New technology is making travel safer and more efficient

York Region is a leader in adopting intelligent transportation system technologies that collect and use data to improve efficiency, enhance safety and save costs:

- > Over 400 Bluetooth sensors installed across the Region allow staff to monitor travel in real time on the road network, identify and respond to bottlenecks and provide alternate route information in response to incidents and adverse weather. This data helps traffic operations staff access the impacts of traffic signal timing changes to alleviate traffic delays and is also used to improve road safety
- > YRT has implemented a driver support system to improve ride quality for transit passengers and extend the life of buses. YRT is also piloting a pedestrian warning and collision avoidance system designed to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on increasingly busy streets



▲ FIGURE 2: Transportation network in York Region.

Safety technologies used in York Region:



Bluetooth and wi-fi sensors



Bus monitoring system



Pedestrian warning and collision avoidance system



Pre-emption for emergency vehicles

- YRT is using a vehicle health monitoring system on electric and diesel transit vehicles to monitor components in real time and identify potential problems early to improve reliability and reduce maintenance costs
- The Region has also undertaken a two-year automated speed enforcement pilot to increase safety in school areas, with the possibility of continuing and expanding the program in the future

A3.3 The network is becoming more coordinated, connected and focused

A key aspect of York Region’s work is collaborating with other levels of government and the private sector to create an integrated transportation network — one where travellers move not just from street to road to highway in their cars, but where they can travel using several transportation options and transfer easily from one to another.

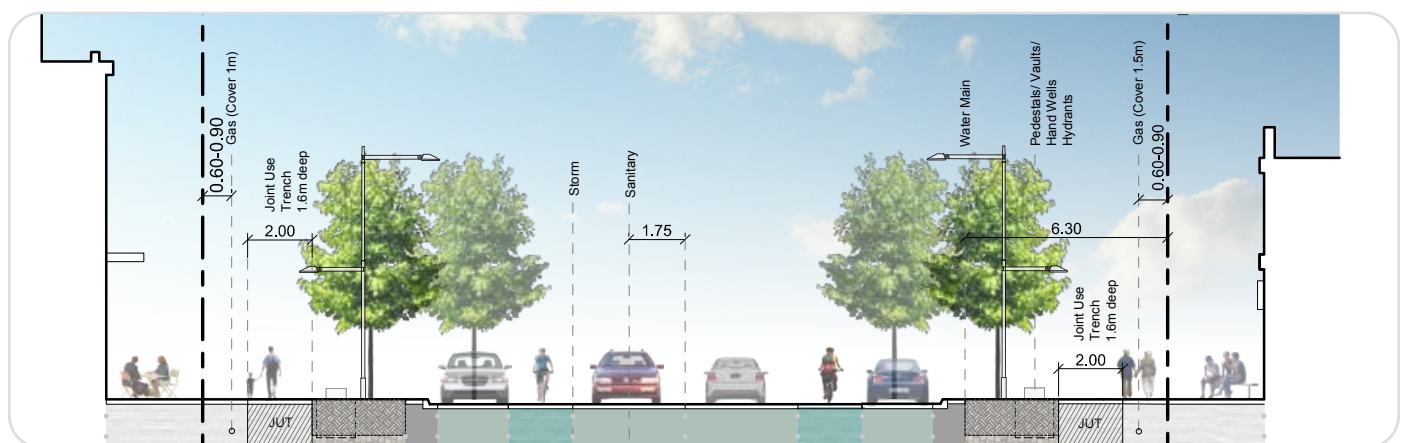
This is important because travellers are now more likely to use multiple modes of transportation: in addition to or instead of a private vehicle, they are cycling, walking, taking a bus, train or subway and using on-request transit more than travellers in the past. This means the Region and its partners need to

include all modes of transportation in the network, including the movement of goods, so they connect, just as Regional roads connect with local streets and provincial highways. The Region and its partners are considering how best to expand this network and add new options, which is discussed further in Chapter E.

The transportation programs and related infrastructure, such as roads, sidewalks, walking and cycling paths, terminals and more, are also evolving to recognize that different population and employment densities call for different transportation options like carpooling, cycling, walking and other human-powered ways of getting around, as well as low-carbon options like e-scooters and e-bikes. These are referred to as “active and eco-friendly options” throughout this document.

For example:

- Supporting investments in bus rapid transit and subway expansion through comprehensive planning and integration with Regional and local official plans and Water and Wastewater Master Plan to align high-density growth, such as in Major Transit Station Areas and Regional Centres, to ensure the efficient movement of people and goods.
- Areas of medium density support conventional scheduled bus service



▲ FIGURE 3: Cross-section of street corridor demonstrating integration of space for multiple modes of travel and utilities. Where feasible, cycling facilities will be relocated to the boulevard.

YORK REGION'S **POPULATION** is EXPECTED to GROW from



YORK REGION'S **EMPLOYMENT** is EXPECTED to GROW from



▲ FIGURE 4: York Region's expected population and employment growth based on Provincial forecasts.

- High- and medium-density areas are also favourable for active and eco-friendly options for trips to school, shopping, work or connecting to public transit
- In communities with the least population, on-request transit services are the most suitable. Cycle tracks and trails are more oriented to recreational use and travel by car for longer trips is more common

The Region's transportation planning is becoming more focused on providing the right services in the right areas at the right time. This supports travel needs effectively while helping to ensure the transportation network and services stay within the Region's financial means.

A3.4 Matching services to land use will be key as communities grow

With roughly 820,000 more people and 366,000 more jobs expected by 2051, York Region will accommodate the largest share of growth of any municipality in the provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area. This growth (see Figure 4) reflects provincial forecasts.

The updated Regional Official Plan allocates the expected distribution of population and jobs by local municipality, which in turn affects infrastructure needs. It is projected the cities of Vaughan, Markham and Richmond Hill, on the Region's southern border, will account for roughly three-quarters of the Region's population by 2051, similar to the current share.

In the north, the forecast for the Town of East Gwillimbury is to see its population and employment essentially quadruple by 2051. While the Town of Georgina's population increase is projected to be less than the Regional average, the number of jobs is expected to more than double.

The Region must plan now for future transportation needs in these growing communities due to the time it requires to complete major projects like road widening and rapid transit. Anticipating this growth will help to reduce service lags and congestion.

Transportation planning must also integrate with land use planning, including the type of use and expected intensity of development. Growth to 2051 will continue to be focused mainly along two Regional corridors: north-south along Yonge Street and east-west along Highway 7. This is the underlying framework for the Region's Centres and Corridors approach to achieving higher densities, as required under the provincial growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The provincial government has recently required upper-tier municipalities, like York Region, to delineate boundaries and set minimum density targets for Major Transit Station Areas around subway, bus rapid transit and GO rail stations.



▲ Traffic congestion at Westburne Drive on Rutherford Road in the City of Vaughan.

The Region's urban system is composed of Regional centres and corridors and major transit station areas within and supporting them, local centres and corridors, community areas and employment areas and several towns and villages. All these areas play a part in accommodating forecasted growth while maintaining their character. It is intended that most new growth for both residents and jobs will be accommodated within these areas.

A3.5 Transportation landscape is changing — and quickly

As new technologies emerge and people choose different ways to travel, transportation planning is required to meet those needs. For example, if more travellers are expected to choose to walk or cycle to their destinations in the future, more walking and cycling paths will be required. The impacts of electric vehicle, e-scooter and e-bike uptake, as well as the continuation of working from home and online shopping trends, are not yet fully understood. The Region will continue to monitor these trends and adjust transportation planning as needed.

▼ Cyclist rides on multi-use path alongside St John's Sideroad in the Town of Aurora.



As the Region continues to grow, options like ridesharing, bike sharing and e-scooter rentals are likely to become more widely available in urban areas, which could change the idea of needing to own a vehicle. These options, which can help manage traffic congestion significantly, are increasingly supported by market-supplied apps that bring data and services together to show travellers the fastest way to get to a destination and allow for easy payment along the way.

There has been much discussion of the future role of autonomous vehicles. Current evidence suggests that, in the short to medium term, the most likely use will be for specific purposes, such as short-local transit trips, with dedicated infrastructure such as fiber optic cable and sensor networks (networks that allow information to be sent to and received from objects and devices), facilities for secure public Wi-Fi and faster mobile networks. Pilot projects around the world are helping to determine how autonomous vehicles might be incorporated safely and more broadly into transportation networks.

York Region has been working with various stakeholders, including the [Canadian Urban Transit Research & Innovation Consortium \(CUTRIC\)](#) to identify potential routes to pilot autonomous transit shuttles. Multiple routes have been identified for further evaluation in 2022 to determine suitability for a pilot project.

A4 Traveller feedback was vital to updating the plan

The transportation solutions recommended in the 2022 TMP are estimated to cost \$17.2 billion over the next 30 years. Where and how York Region should prioritize investments is based on comprehensive input from a wide range of transportation users and other interested parties, including:

- > Residents, neighbourhood associations and community groups
- > Businesses and industry, including the development community
- > Local municipal councils and staff
- > York Regional Council and staff
- > Conservation authorities
- > School boards
- > Emergency services, including York Regional Police
- > Neighbouring municipalities
- > Indigenous communities
- > The provincial government, including the Ministry of Transportation and its transit agency, Metrolinx
- > The federal government

Chapter C discusses input into the plan in more detail.



▲ Partnership with York Regional Police on Pedestrian Safety initiative in Holland Landing, Town of East Gwillimbury.

Despite diverse needs across the Region, all residents rely on the transportation network to connect them to homes, workplaces, local businesses, schools and other important destinations.

The Region's economy also depends on a well-designed transportation network. Businesses operate in a global economy that relies on moving people, goods and resources quickly and efficiently. Roads with robust highway, rail and air connections strengthen supply chains and get goods to market faster, while convenient public transit allows employees to get to and from workplaces.

Talking with and listening to a wide range of interested parties helped build a greater understanding of how roads and transit are currently used and, more critically, how the network needs to evolve in the future to continue meeting traveller needs. Ongoing engagement is needed to identify priorities for its transportation investments.



In this chapter...

- B1 Provincial guidance
- B2 York Region Vision, plans and priorities

▲ Runners travel along Nokiidaa Trail in the Town of East Gwillimbury.

Context

The recommendations of the Transportation Master Plan are influenced by legislative requirements of the Province of Ontario and achieve the Region's Vision of "Strong, Caring, Safe Communities." Over the next 30 years, these will continue to evolve, requiring transportation planning to be adaptable and flexible.

Figure 5 provides an overview of York Region's master planning context:



▲ FIGURE 5: Visual demonstrating how the 2022 TMP is shaped.

The next sections in this Chapter provide an overview of the provincial legislation and provincial and regional priorities, policies, and plans that were considered in developing the TMP.

B1 Provincial guidance

The provincial government sets a framework for growth and development in Ontario that municipalities must follow.

This section outlines provincial requirements and plans relevant to the TMP.

B1.1 Provincial Policy Statement

Ontario's [Provincial Policy Statement](#), last updated in 2020, provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development, including transportation facilities. The provincial [Planning Act](#) requires that all planning decisions be consistent with this statement.

The statement supports financial and environmental sustainability, encouraging, and in some cases requiring, municipalities to coordinate infrastructure projects with land use planning, make the best use of existing assets before developing new ones, incorporate green infrastructure where possible and consider climate change impacts.

The statement sets out policies to promote safe and energy-efficient transportation. This includes multiple modes of transportation such as transit, active transportation and private vehicle travel. Municipalities are expected to support this direction with compact development (an urban layout encouraging active transportation, low energy consumption and reduced pollution), mixed land uses and measures to promote a shift to transit, active transportation and other more eco-friendly transportation options.

B1.2 A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The provincial [Places to Grow Act, 2005](#) and [A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe](#) gives the Ontario government the power to designate growth areas throughout the province and provides population and employment forecasts to 2051. York Region is part of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, an area of some 10,000 square kilometres in south-central Ontario, one of the fastest-growing areas in North America.

The provincial government requires municipalities to identify and plan for infrastructure, such as roads, transit and multi-use paths, needed to support these growth forecasts. York Region and other regional municipalities, in coordination with local municipal planners, identify where the growth can be accommodated and should be focused locally.

The provincial growth plan's policies encourage coordinated transportation planning, inter-connectedness, safety, sustainability and diverse transportation options to reduce reliance on cars.

It focuses heavily on directing growth to areas that are already built up and making intensification a priority. Strategic areas for growth in the plan include urban growth centres and major transit station areas as depicted in Figure 6.



▲ FIGURE 6: Illustration of major transit station area elements.

B1.3 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)

The [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) sets mandatory standards for private, public and non-profit sectors to remove barriers and ensure equitable access for all individuals with disabilities by 2025. This includes, under Regulation 191 / 11, standards for planning, designing and building transportation facilities. The Region's transportation projects comply with the relevant requirements of the Act and regulation(s).

B1.4 2041 Regional Transportation Plan

Developed in partnership with municipalities and other stakeholders, Metrolinx adopted the [2041 Regional Transportation Plan](#) in 2018. This plan is the successor to The Big Move, released in 2008, which was the first regional transportation plan for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, also incorporating the Regional Municipality of Waterloo.

The 2041 Regional Transportation Plan sets out a blueprint for a system that puts traveller needs first, reduces traffic congestion, improves air quality and supports economic viability through three goals: strong connections, complete travel experiences and sustainable and healthy communities.

To support these goals, it outlines five strategies:

1. Complete the delivery of current Regional transit projects.
2. Connect more of the plan area with frequent rapid transit.
3. Optimize the transportation system.
4. Integrate transportation and land use.
5. Prepare for an uncertain future.

The 2041 Regional Transportation Plan includes projects that would directly benefit travel in York Region:

- Extending the Yonge subway north from Finch Station (currently underway)
- Filling gaps in the bus rapid transit network along Highway 7 and Yonge Street
- Providing rapid transit on Jane Street, Major Mackenzie Drive and Leslie Street and, in partnership with the City of Toronto, on Steeles Avenue from the TTC line 1 to Milliken GO station
- Providing frequent Regional express bus service on highways 407, 400, 404 and 427

- Improving GO rail service to offer more frequent all-day service
- Enhancing bus service on sections of Major Mackenzie Drive, Yonge Street and Green Lane

The TMP considers the plan's timing, priorities and improvements in its infrastructure models and technical analysis. It also looks at where additional improvements will be needed to support growth in the Region, advocating for these improvements to be included in future updates to the provincial plan.

B1.5 Ministry of Transportation Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan

Released in March 2022, the [Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan](#) was developed by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation to help set priorities up to 2051, direct spending towards an optimal transportation system and prepare for new technology like automated vehicles. The goals are to support continued prosperity and quality of life while meeting environmental and social needs.

The Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan is intended to provide direction to municipalities, transportation agencies and service providers. The TMP reflects the directions, technical analysis and recommendations in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan.

B1.6 Provincial Environmental Assessment Act

The TMP describes the future transportation network at a high level and will be implemented through specific projects and initiatives. These projects will be subject to the requirements under the provincial [Environmental Assessment Act](#), and *Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA)*. Chapter C provides more details.

B2 York Region Vision, plans and priorities

B2.1 Vision, Strategic Plan and Regional Fiscal Strategy

[Vision](#) helps to guide Regional Council and staff decisions to achieve the quality of life residents want now and in the future. Approved by Council in November 2021, it carries forward the previous vision statement of "Strong, Caring, Safe Communities."

Vision describes a York Region that, among others, has a seamless network for mobility of goods, services and people, and promotes living sustainably. The TMP is designed to help inform and implement infrastructure needs, such as roads, transit terminals and pedestrian and cycling facilities to achieve Vision. Figure 7 illustrates York Region's accountability framework and shows how Vision guides all corporate plans.

York Region's Strategic Plan, updated every four years, is a roadmap emphasizing priorities over each term of York Regional Council that align with the long-term vision. In 2019, Council adopted the 2019-



◀ FIGURE 7: This diagram illustrates York Region's accountability framework and shows how Vision guides all corporate plans.

2023 Strategic Plan. Specific goals and objectives influencing the TMP include:

- > Increasing economic prosperity
- > Building sustainable communities and protecting the environment
- > Supporting community health, safety and well-being
- > Delivering trusted and efficient services

This Regional direction is reflected in the TMP through a proposed network that is safe and reliable, provides convenient travel options, promotes economic growth, manages congestion, minimizes impacts on the environment and is financially sustainable.

The Regional Fiscal Strategy helps to achieve long-term financial sustainability by carefully managing the Region's capital plan, reserves and debt. The strategy also influences the Region's annual budget, which includes a 10-year capital plan. Chapter G provides more information on estimated costs of the TMP and expected funding sources.

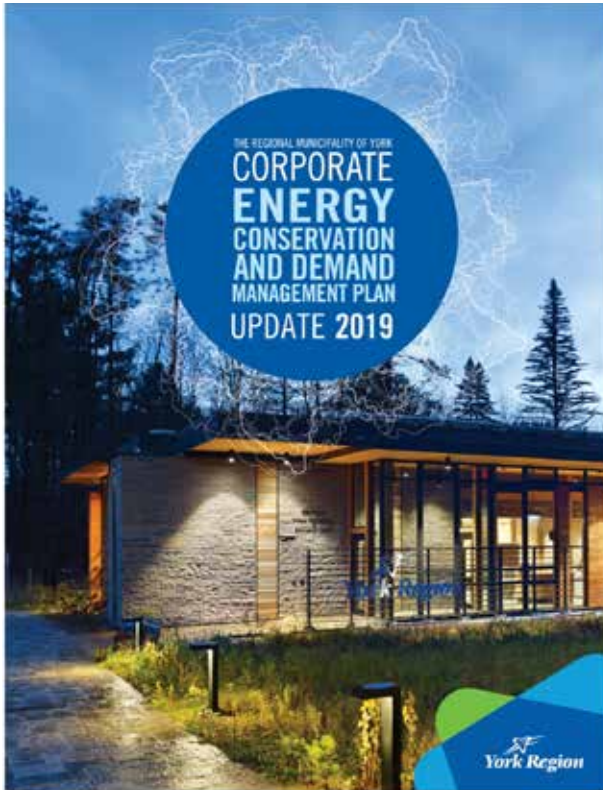
B2.2 Regional Official Plan

The [Regional Official Plan](#) outlines how future growth and development will be accommodated while meeting the needs of existing residents and businesses in the Region. Prepared with community input, it provides direction and policies guiding economic, environmental and community planning decisions. The official plans of each of the nine local municipalities must conform to the Regional Official Plan.

The Region's infrastructure plans, including the TMP and the Water and Wastewater Master Plan, are consistent with the Regional Official Plan. The infrastructure plans reflect the Regional Official Plan outlook for growth in population and employment. The Regional Official Plan is in turn informed by provincial growth plan forecasts.

Updates to infrastructure master plans are coordinated with updates to the Regional Official Plan in a process known as a Municipal Comprehensive Review. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing requires this process through the growth plan. Coordination helps to ensure consistent communication with interested parties and better integration of all plans to manage costs.

The 2022 TMP reflects the revised land use planning projections included in the Regional Official Plan updated in 2022 through the most recent Municipal Comprehensive Review.



▲ Cover page of the 2019 Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan.

The Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan (2019) identified a suite of projects, initiatives and other activities to position York Region to achieve its long-term aspirational goal of net-zero carbon emissions:

- > Develop an Electric Vehicle Strategy to migrate the Region's fleet of vehicles from gasoline / diesel to electricity to reduce emissions
- > Right size vehicles to match the need with the type of vehicle to ensure the most efficient vehicle is used at all times
- > Reduce fuel consumption through anti-idling and route optimization
- > Enable and maximize transportation through public transit, carpools, cycling or walking

B2.3 Climate change actions

In the face of higher-than-average temperatures and more extreme weather events, both of which can cause damage to infrastructure, communities and ecosystems, York Region recognizes the growing need to address climate change. This involves mitigation, which refers to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adaptation to reduce climate change risk and damage.

To help ease climate change, this TMP aims to increase the use of more active and eco-friendly modes of transportation that help to manage the demand put on the road network by single-occupant vehicles. It also supports the adoption of electric and low-emission vehicles by residents and businesses.

The Region's [Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan](#) identifies ways to reduce GHG emissions through Regional energy use. Transit buses, fleet vehicles, trucks and other work vehicles typically account for about three-quarters of the Region's corporate GHG emissions. One objective of this plan is to position York Region to achieve its long-term aspirational goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2051. For York Region achieving net-zero carbon emissions means that through day-to-day operations and construction practices the Region will decrease greenhouse gas emissions by building retrofits and fleet electrification and offset remaining emissions through activities like tree planting that capture and store carbon.

In [December 2020](#), York Regional Council endorsed plans to phase out fossil-fuel-powered vehicles by 2051 in both transit and corporate fleets. A short-term goal in the plan is to convert fleet automobiles to GHG emissions-free technology by 2030.



▲ York Region's charging stations for fleet vehicles and electric buses.



To date, almost 10% of the existing corporate fleet of 381 vehicles is either hybrid or fully electric. Steps are also underway to convert the Region's transit vehicles. By the end of 2021, the Region had bought and deployed 12 electric buses. The expectation is that electric versions of other vehicle types, like snowplows, will become available in the future.

Fleet electrification builds on other measures taken to reduce GHG emissions since the Region's Energy Conservation Plan was launched in 2016, such as changing operator behaviour and introducing in-vehicle technology to reduce idling and other emission sources, right-sizing vehicles and optimizing services through Mobility On-Request.

While Regional actions are important, individual residents and businesses will also need to act to achieve net-zero GHG emissions. York Region is developing a Climate Change Action Plan that identifies actions that can be taken across a range of priority areas to help address climate change. Some actions are aimed at reducing impacts, others at adapting to changes and some are designed to do both. These actions are both corporate-specific and at the community level.

The Climate Change Action Plan:

- Outlines the projected impacts of climate change on York Region
- Describes and prioritizes actions needed in three key areas: resilient communities and infrastructure, low-carbon living and supporting an equitable transition
- Identifies the role York Region will play in implementing actions
- Provides a framework for all levels of government, businesses and communities to work together

In addition to the measures described above, key actions associated with transportation include:

- Adopting emission reduction targets and guidelines for low-carbon construction practices
- Undertaking climate change vulnerability and risk assessments on all Region-owned infrastructure, systems and assets using a common methodology
- Prioritizing infrastructure and asset repairs in climate-vulnerable areas using the asset management framework

B2.4 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment

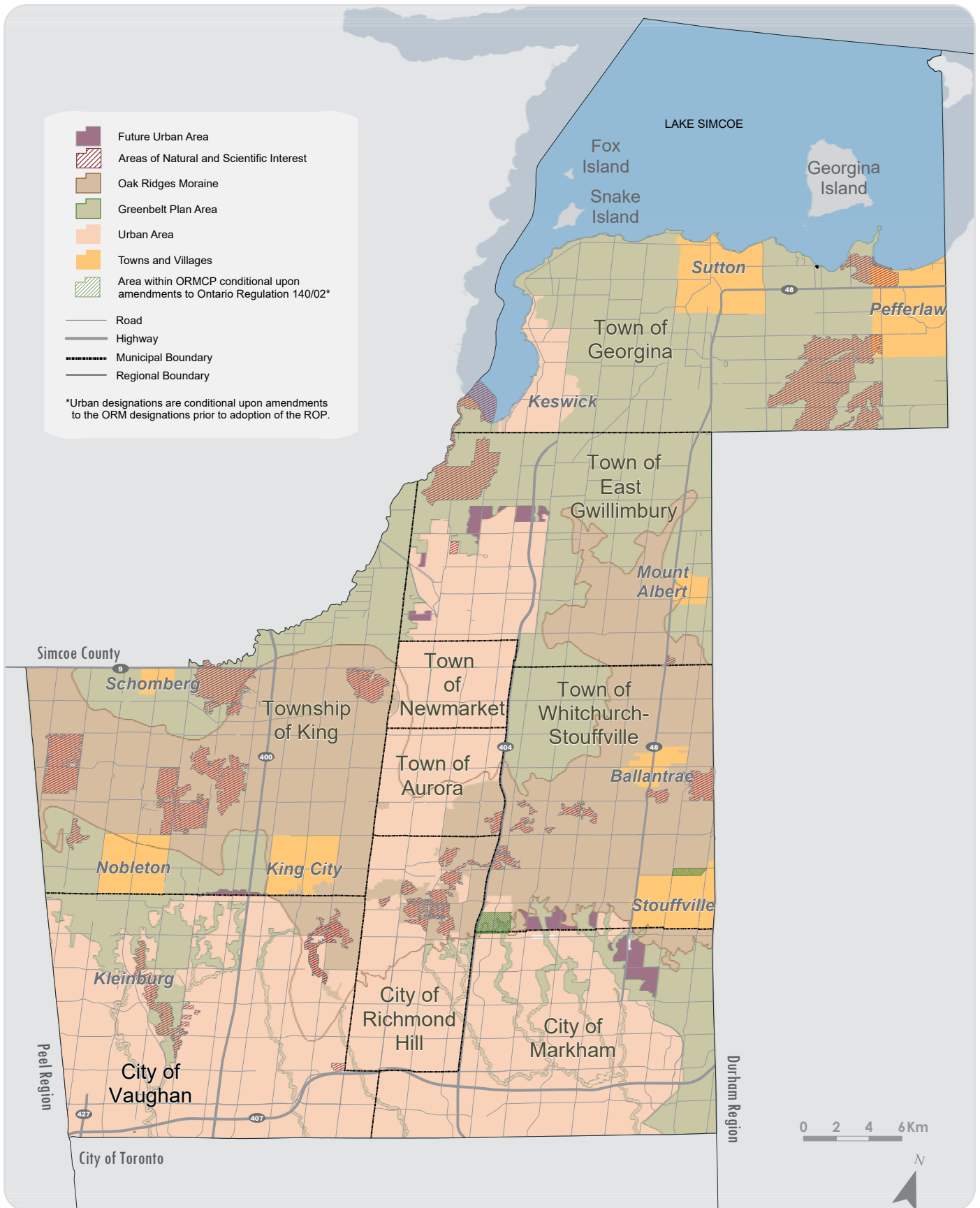
York Region has many natural heritage features. They include the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Greenbelt, Lake Simcoe Protection Plan area and numerous Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs), Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs), lakes, watercourses, wetlands and woodlots. The map shows the Oak Ridges Moraine, Greenbelt, and Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest in York Region. Further maps showing the Regional green lands system, key hydrologic features, woodlands, wellhead protection areas, Oak Ridges Moraine aquifer vulnerability areas and watershed boundaries as well as agricultural and rural areas are included in the York [Region Official Plan](#) and were referenced in the development of this TMP.

Natural heritage features, along with forestry, agriculture, source water areas, are a key consideration in the evaluation of road and transit projects. As described in Chapters C and G, for required projects, York Region is committed to completing phases 1 through 5 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for each transportation project in the TMP. Detailed assessment of the natural, social, and economic environments which are to be considered when reviewing the effects of each project.

York Region has created a Greening Strategy with the goal of fostering strong and sustainable communities with healthy natural environments. Green infrastructure takes many forms including natural environment lands and features, street trees, agricultural lands, green roofs and green walls, parks, gardens and stormwater ponds. These features provide health, environmental, social and economic benefits to communities. Studies have shown that forests improve air quality, provide natural shade, reduce urban heat island effects, lessen climate change, reduce energy consumption, reduce flood risks, improve water quality and water quantity and reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases. One part of its environmental land securement plan is to create natural heritage trail linkages.

Another element of the Greening Strategy is to create natural heritage trail links to help extend the active transportation network of pathways and trails. The Region owns and manages the 2,500 hectares made up of 24 forest tracts, which offer more than 150 kilometres of public trails.

The Region is working in partnership with local municipalities and other stakeholders to create links among all natural trails, also a goal of the 2022 TMP.



▲ This map shows the Oak Ridges Moraine, Greenbelt and Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest in York Region which are taken into consideration as part of environmental assessments for each project.

▼ Photo of pedestrians on a boardwalk overlooking the Holland Marsh near 2nd Concession, Town of East Gwillimbury.



B2.5 Collaboration and partnerships

York Region works with internal partners such as Public Health and York Regional Police and with local municipalities, school boards, Indigenous communities and other external partners to support a Regional transportation system that is safe, accessible and equitable.

Important goals of these partnerships include better health for people and communities, promoting active transportation to schools, making roads safer and encouraging cycling, carpooling and other eco-friendly travel options. Section D3.3 outlines how the TMP supports these goals.



In this chapter...

- C1 The Plan followed recommended processes
- C2 Consultation and engagement were key elements in updating the TMP
- C3 Indigenous Communities Engagement
- C4 Discover, Explore, Reveal
- C5 Approach to planning has evolved

▲ Aerial view of Major Mackenzie Drive West in the City of Vaughan including agricultural land and storm water management ponds.

Framework and approach

C1 The Plan followed recommended processes

The provincial [Environmental Assessment Act](#) provides a streamlined approval process, called the municipal class environmental assessment, for projects that are similar in nature, are carried out routinely, have a predictable range of environmental effects and respond to mitigating measures. The Region's transportation projects are typically completed under this framework.

The Municipal Engineers Association provides a manual to guide the municipal class environmental assessment process. The guidance defines master plans for infrastructure as "long range plans which integrate infrastructure requirements for existing and future land use with environmental assessment planning principles." Master plans are often updated in conjunction with other plans, as discussed in Chapter B.

The 2022 Transportation Master Plan:

- > Evaluates needs at a strategic, system-wide level, allowing the Region to look at the transportation system as a whole and make recommendations for improvements
- > Considers the broad land use and environmental context
- > Looks at infrastructure geographically and / or by function

- > Can be implemented through individual projects

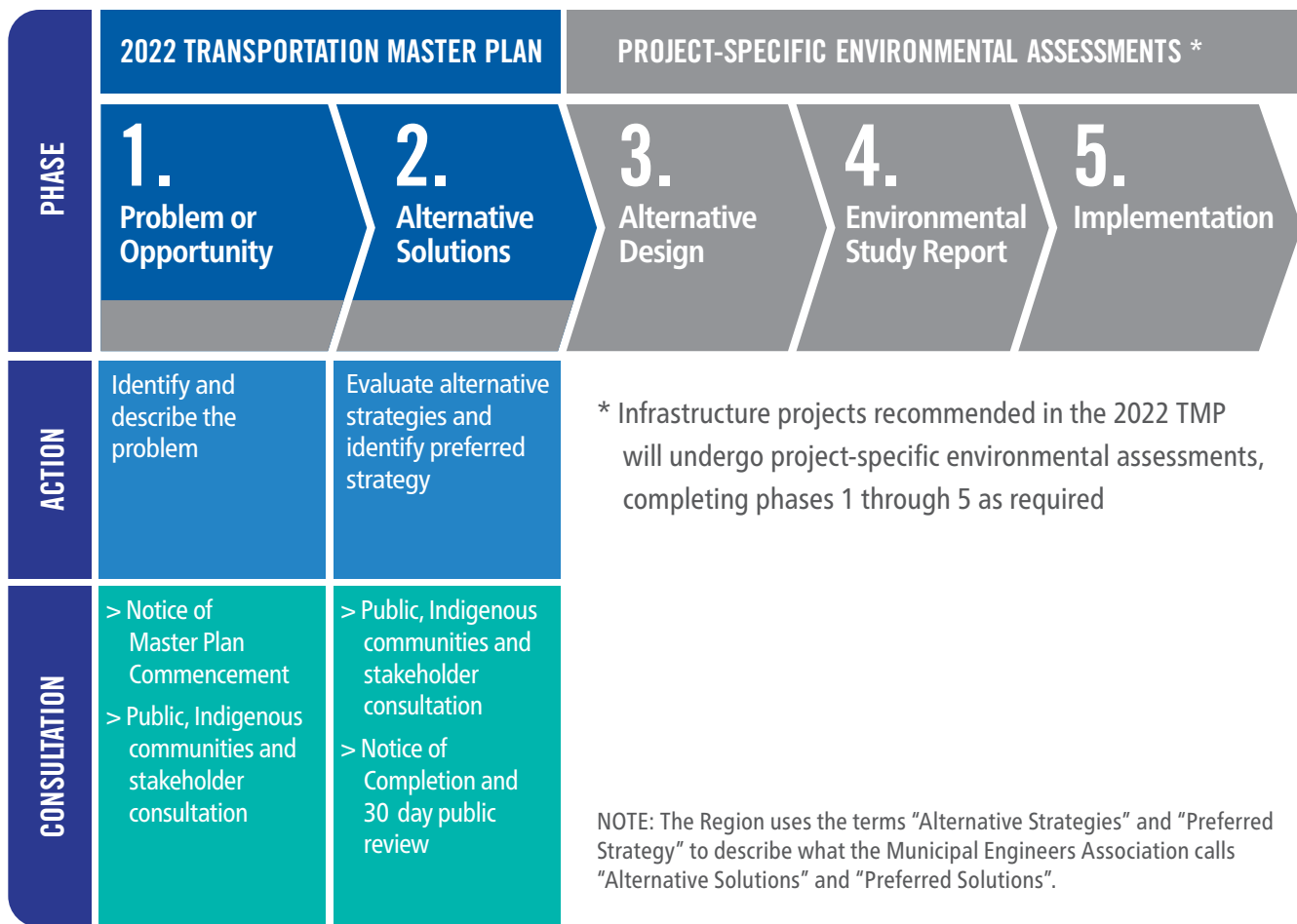
The outcome is a high-level plan identifying and justifying the need for future individual projects.

The municipal class environmental assessment process consists of five phases, and a master plan must address phases 1 and 2 at a minimum.

The Region followed Approach 1 for master plans set out in Appendix 4 of the Municipal Engineers Association Municipal Class Environmental Assessment document. This document fulfills the requirement in Approach 1 that decisions be documented at the end of Phase 2.

Approach 1 involves looking at the current road, transit and active transportation networks and expected needs to make recommendations on future projects. The foundation for understanding current conditions is the Transportation Tomorrow Survey, which is normally carried out every five years as a co-operative effort by local and provincial government agencies. Major trends are highlighted in Chapter D. Chapter E then presents a high-level discussion of projects to meet expected needs using tools, such as a model, to analyze travel demand and forecast the impacts of growth on the network.

The municipal class environmental assessment process requires more detailed investigation of each project as the plan is implemented, as outlined in phases 3, 4 and 5 in Figure 8 (see next page).



▲ FIGURE 8: Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Process.

C2 Consultation and engagement were key elements in updating the TMP

The Region consulted and engaged with a diverse and inclusive range of travellers, residents, Indigenous communities, community partners, stakeholders and other interested parties in updating the TMP.

The TMP utilized a variety of engagement tools to seek resident, local municipal and stakeholder input. Those identified as having an interest in the TMP were notified of opportunities to give feedback at each milestone. The engagement opportunities used during the TMP study included:

- > Three virtual public information centres (PIC) (July 2021, October 2021, April 2022), supporting advertisements, social media campaigns and email outreach
- > Public opinion and stakeholder group surveys
- > Government Agency Partnership Advisory group meetings and outreach (March 2021, September 2021, March 2022)
- > Meetings with York Region and local municipal accessibility advisory committees
- > Meetings with York Region's Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee
- > Presentations to local municipal councils

- > Meetings with Indigenous communities coordinated with the Municipal Comprehensive Review and Water and Wastewater Master Plan update
- > Meetings with BILD (Building Industry and Land Development) Association in conjunction with the Development Charges Bylaw
- > Regional Councillor and Heads of Council interviews

In-person events were not possible due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To better understand the needs of residents and businesses owners in York Region, a market research firm was hired to conduct randomized telephone and online Transportation and Community Values surveys. The surveys collected information about travel patterns, behaviours and transportation preferences today and how they may change in the future. The telephone survey sampled approximately 1,000 people across the Region's nine local municipalities and was designed to provide statistically valid results. Approximately 750 responses were also received through an online survey posted on the project web page. The rest of this chapter provides highlights of these findings. This survey was supplemented with targeted micro-surveys to further understand the needs of travellers of all ages, incomes, and abilities.

Feedback was taken into consideration when updating the TMP, as discussed in chapters E and F. All input about the TMP received throughout the consultation and engagement process was reviewed and considered for inclusion in the final plan. More information on the consultation and engagement approach and those identified as having an interest can be found in the plan's supporting documents, which are available upon request.

C3 Indigenous communities engagement

Engagement with Indigenous communities was coordinated through the Municipal Comprehensive Review process to update the Regional Official Plan and Transportation and Water and Wastewater master plans. The Region coordinated engagement with each community individually based on its interest, capacity and availability as there is currently no provincially approved framework for engaging Indigenous communities. This engagement was initiated specifically with this plan in addition to a consultant and Indigenous facilitator supported all engagement activities when meeting with Indigenous communities. The opportunity to engage with and learn from Indigenous communities was valuable, as the communities' unique historic and cultural relationship to the land and water gave rise to important perspectives on managing the natural environment and land resources. The Region looks forward to continuing these conversations.

Feedback was received from several Indigenous communities and is summarized below:

- Indigenous communities encourage York Region to develop lasting, long-term relationships; this would provide a more proactive approach to involve communities in projects and initiatives at the outset allowing time for meaningful engagement and input
- Many comments focused on protecting and sustaining the natural environment to address impacts arising from growth that may affect traditional Indigenous ways of life:
 - Understanding the cumulative impacts of development on lands
 - Protecting natural habitats in the transportation planning processes
 - Ensuring inclusion of Indigenous communities in archaeological studies
 - Opportunities to collaborate on presenting traditional travel routes along ancestral lands and natural heritage

York Region acknowledges the relationship Indigenous communities have with the natural environment and the central importance of land in the culture and lives of Indigenous people. York Region is committed to protection of the natural environment not only in the present, but also over the long term for future generations by:

- Sharing the importance of traditional lands and continued need for conservation and stewardship within its communities
- Continuing to deliver high-quality transportation services

Implementation of projects identified in the Master Plan will also recognize the archeological importance of the lands in York Region to Indigenous communities and will follow applicable regulatory requirements to consult and engage communities with Aboriginal or Treaty rights.

York Region notified the following Indigenous communities through PIC Notices, correspondence and meetings (where possible):

- Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation
- Chippewas of Mnjikaning First Nation (Chippewas of Rama First Nation)
- Coordinator Williams Treaties First Nations
- Beausoleil First Nation
- Hiawatha First Nation
- Curve Lake First Nation
- Alderville First Nation
- Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation
- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation
- Six Nations of the Grand River
- Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council
- Kawartha Nishnawbe First Nation
- Huron-Wendat Nation
- Métis Nation of Ontario

C4 Discover, Explore, Reveal

Engagement focused on three elements: discover, explore and reveal, as shown in Figure 9.

Discover: Needs and opportunities

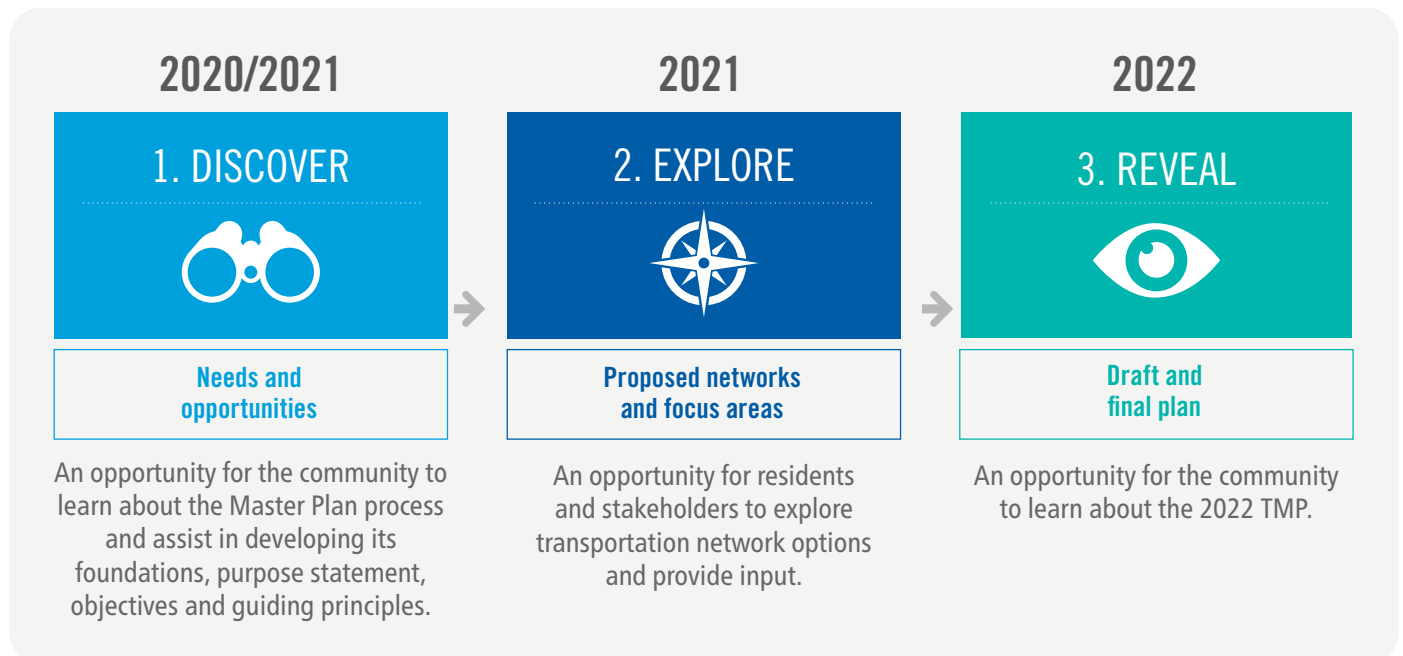
Discover was the first phase of the TMP study. It provided an opportunity for the community to learn about the master plan process and to envision the future of transportation in York Region. By first identifying transportation needs and future opportunities, this element of engagement focused on developing the foundations of the TMP:

- Purpose statement, which serves as the vision for the 2022 TMP, with all recommendations in the plan aiming to help achieve this vision

- Objectives, which support the purpose statement in the short to medium term as projects are delivered
- Guiding principles, which reflect the Region's values and guide how to realistically achieve the purpose statement

Chapter D provides more detail on each of these elements.

The TMP purpose statement: “Plan, build, operate and maintain a connected transportation network for all travellers that is safe, reliable, future-ready, sustainable and balances the needs of the unique communities we serve.”



▲ FIGURE 9: Three elements of focus during the engagement phase of the 2022 TMP.



Explore: Proposed networks and focus areas

This element focused on encouraging residents and interested parties to explore transportation network options and provide input through a variety of engagement tools including an interactive mapping tool and a virtual idea wall. This input helped shape the proposed active transportation, rapid transit and road networks described in Chapter E and areas of focus discussed in Chapter F.

Reveal: Draft and final plan

The third and last step was to reveal the outcomes of engagement, technical assessment, background studies, planning and other work that went into drafting the 2022 TMP, including:

- > The purpose, objectives and guiding principles
- > Recommended transportation networks
- > Areas of focus for further study and action
- > Approaches to funding and implementing the transportation plan

Through the engagement process, staff learned residents and stakeholders see connected communities and safe, sustainable and convenient travel options as high priorities. While most residents now travel mainly by car, many are interested in using other options.



▲ TOP: York Region staff discuss boulevard plans and drafting of Regional roads.
 BOTTOM: A cyclist and vehicles at the intersection of Keele Street and Major Mackenzie Drive in the City of Vaughan.



▲ Buses stop to pick up and drop off riders at the Allstate Parkway Vivastation on Highway 7 in the City of Richmond Hill.

C5 Approach to planning has evolved

Transportation Operations, Public Works gained valuable insights since the 2016 TMP and relied on those learnings when developing an approach to this Master Plan.

External factors with long-term impacts, including climate change, disruptive new technologies and the COVID-19 pandemic, served as a reminder that all plans are subject to uncertainty. In addition, the Region's fiscal capacity did not allow some proposed projects to move forward.

The Plan is therefore based on the following principles:

Be more flexible and agile.

Adapt to factors like changing travel behaviour and patterns, global events, technological innovation, shifting provincial priorities and regulatory changes as the plan is put into action. Also be ready for the future and able to change direction when entirely new ideas or approaches emerge.

Advocate for the big projects the Region needs.

This plan identifies all projects needed to serve future growth, while at the same time, it must be financially sustainable. The Region cannot independently fund several major projects discussed in this plan, including Regional interchanges with new, expanded or upgraded 400-series highways, the remaining portion of the bus rapid transit network, further subway extensions and complex projects to close gaps on Teston and Langstaff roads. These projects benefit not just the Region, but the economy of Ontario as a whole. Advocating for the provincial and federal governments and other potential funders to share in those costs will be crucial going forward.

Watch the fiscal and environmental bottom lines.

As previously mentioned, the TMP must align with the Region's ability to pay for it. Through its fiscal strategy, the Region reduced its reliance on borrowing funds and, as a result, saw its debt levels peak in 2017. Since then, however, the need to fund its share of

the subway extension to the City of Richmond Hill means it will face a new and higher debt peak in 2028. This calls for prudence in planning growth-related capital investments. Planning also needs to reflect the environmental impacts, both of constructing the network and how it will be used. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter G.

Seek out and respond to opportunities.

Respond to federal and provincial funding opportunities and explore public-private partnership opportunities. Potential public-private partnership opportunities include transit-oriented development around major transit hubs and new developments.

Engage more often and more broadly.

Use a variety of techniques / tools, such as online surveys, social media and virtual and post-pandemic in-person opportunities, to ensure as many voices as possible continue to be heard.



▲ TOP: York Region staff discuss and collect feedback on proposed changes to public transit system at a Public Information Centre held in 2019.

▼ BOTTOM: A screenshot of a virtual engagement and public consultation in 2022 using an interactive mapping tool to gather feedback from attendees on areas throughout York Region.





In this chapter...

- D1 Travel patterns are changing
- D2 Foundations of the 2022 Transportation Master Plan
- D3 2022 Transportation Master Plan reflects evolving attitudes and options

▲ Cyclist travels on separated bike path along St John's Sideroad in the Town of Aurora.

Listening and learning

Transportation is changing dramatically around the world and within York Region due to increasing urbanization, new technologies and climate risks. The pace of change makes it more important than ever to listen to users of the transportation network and learn from their ideas and expectations while updating the Transportation Master Plan.

D1 Travel patterns are changing

The engagement described in Chapter C made it clear residents understand the connection between how transportation is provided and how welcoming and livable a community is. While residents want to be able to easily get to transit hubs, schools and stores in their communities and even to further destinations using options other than their car, they want to feel safe and supported while doing so.

These themes are not new, as they have been raised in previous TMP updates. What is new, however, is the extent to which residents are not just talking about these changes — they are adopting them:

- People are walking or cycling more, especially for shorter and non-work-related trips:
 - Trips by walking and cycling grew by 30% between 2011 and 2016, after being near flat in the previous five years
 - The number of car trips of less than 2 kilometres fell by 21.6% from 2011 to 2016, reaching a level slightly below that in 2006

- Car use decreased from 86% to 83% of total non-work trips between 2011 and 2016

Source, [Transportation Tomorrow Survey](#)

Possible factors behind this major shift could include increasing traffic congestion, higher-density growth putting more destinations within easy reach, the availability of more transit options and more accessible sidewalk and cycling infrastructure.

Another notable trend is total trips by all modes not growing as fast as the population over the same period. This may be related to retirement: in the 2021 telephone survey carried out for the TMP, just over one in five residents said they were retired, with the highest proportion in the City of Richmond Hill at 28%. Another factor is that even before the COVID-19 pandemic, more people were working from home some or all of the time and doing more shopping online.

Over the longer term, there has been a trend towards greater use of transit. Data from the 2016 Transportation Tomorrow Survey show that transit mode shares have increased since 2001, while auto driver shares decreased. This means transit trips are increasing at a faster pace than car trips.

Recent transit ridership figures and traffic counters show:

- Ridership increased to 10.1 million in 2021, but continues to remain low compared to pre-pandemic ridership of 22.9 million in 2019
- At the onset of the pandemic, YRT ridership was approximately 20% of pre-pandemic ridership.



▲ Passengers board a York Region Transit bus at the SmartVMC Bus Terminal in the City of Vaughan.

- In 2022, YRT ridership was approximately 60% of pre-pandemic ridership and is expected to continue growing gradually
- GO Transit ridership in York Region was approximately 5% of pre-pandemic ridership. A Metrolinx survey in 2021 found that users expected their main transit use in the future would not be commuting to work but instead taking personal / pleasure trips
 - The TTC Line 1 Subway extension opened in December 2017 and provided 4.5 million passenger trips in York Region throughout 2019
 - The Highway 7 East and Davis Drive rapidways have proven to be a positive investment with ridership increasing approximately 23% and 55% respectively
 - Ridership declined on routes along rapidway construction corridors due to traffic delays. In 2019, ridership on routes along rapidway construction corridors decreased by about 1.1 million or 9%, compared to 2015
 - The Highway 7 West, Yonge Street North and Yonge Street South rapidways opened in November 2019, January 2020 and December 2020, respectively, but did not realize potential ridership gains due to the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Traffic on the road network also fell in early 2020, although recovery was quicker: by 2021, volumes were back near pre-pandemic levels. The pattern, however, had changed, with a flattening of the historic morning and evening peaks
 - Workplace closures and a shift to working from home sparked major interest in active transportation. Studies in 2020 estimated that for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area as a whole, walking and cycling trips during the morning rush hour increased by 83% from 2016. Visits to york.ca for cycling and trail information more than doubled between 2019 and 2020

Recent trends and survey data considered while updating the Master Plan are summarized in the following sections. For more information about the survey, visit york.ca/TMP.

► Individual working on laptop in home office.

D1.1 Most want to continue working from home at least part of the time

The longer-term impacts of the move to working from home are not yet clear, but [Statistics Canada surveys](#) show that most employees want to continue working from home at least some of the time after the COVID-19 pandemic. A survey by the Workforce Planning Board of York Region indicated that many employers also support working from home in industries where this is feasible.

At the time of the TMP telephone survey, more than half of those in the workforce were working from home, with 70% indicating they were both working from home and at a worksite (hybrid). Three in ten workers across the Region were working on-site only, the highest proportion being in the northern six communities. Overall, about 80% of those who travelled to a worksite used a private vehicle.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, travelling to a worksite was by far residents' main use of the transportation system and, as such, contributed to increased rush-hour congestion. A permanent shift to working from home for some business sectors would have profound impacts on the transportation system within and beyond the Region. For example, the Region's network of Bluetooth sensors showed travellers on the road system in the morning rush hour were able to travel 15% faster than before the COVID-19 pandemic, averaging 46 kilometres per hour. This reflects a flattening of the morning peak volume, with evening peak showing a similar decline.



D1.2 Interest in other travel options is growing

The telephone survey also carried out for the 2022 TMP found that 36% of respondents would like to travel to work or school by some means other than a private vehicle. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, upwards of 90% of trips to work or school were by private vehicle. Barriers identified in the survey to using other modes include the convenience of a car for making multiple stops and carrying groceries or sporting equipment, the extra time required to use another mode of transportation and a lack of cycling, walking and transit infrastructure.

Across the Region, the preference for options other than private vehicle travel was highest in the City of Richmond Hill, at 47%, with transit taking a 24% share against 18% for the rest of the Region. Cycling and walking were also more favoured in the City of Richmond Hill than in the Region as a whole.

Travelling to work or school by options other than private vehicle was favoured by more than half of the approximately 750 individuals who completed a similar survey online. Their ideal travel choices were transit, cycling and walking in that order, and the major barriers to using these were trip time and lack of infrastructure. These responses reflect an average younger age among online survey participants.

D1.3 A larger share of people both live and work in the Region

The percentage of people who both live and work in York Region has been gradually increasing for many years, reaching 56% in 2016. This trend may help explain the growth in morning peak car trips, despite strong ridership gains for the GO Transit system, which is oriented towards Toronto-bound commuters.

D1.4 A shift to electric is underway among car owners

Despite more walking and cycling for trips under 2 kilometres, car ownership is still considered high in the Region, with 88% of telephone survey respondents reporting they were car owners. This compares to roughly 72% across the City of Toronto, with ownership rates in its suburbs similar to the Region's but under 50% in some downtown areas. In York Region, however, there is no clear correlation between population density and car ownership.

Increasingly, cars on York Region's roads are powered by electricity instead of fossil fuels. Electric vehicles include hybrid, plug-in hybrid electric and electric vehicles where either a portion of or all of traditional combustion engine is replaced by an electric engine. Just under 10% of York Region car owners reported owning an electric or hybrid vehicle in the 2021 surveys carried out for the TMP, which is higher than the Canadian average.

While comparable Regional data from earlier years is not available, the adoption of hybrid and electric vehicles is growing rapidly in Canada. Hybrid, battery electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles accounted for 9.5% of total new registrations in the first half of 2021, up from 5.5% a year earlier, according to Statistics Canada.

The trend away from fossil fuel vehicles is likely to continue as the Government of Canada has set a mandatory target for all new light-duty cars and passenger trucks to be zero-emission by 2035, accelerating Canada's previous goal of 100% sales by 2040. Among survey respondents who do not already own an electric or hybrid vehicle, 43% of those surveyed by telephone and 58% of those surveyed online said it was somewhat or extremely likely they would choose an electric or hybrid option for their next vehicle. The likelihood rose with income level. The Federal Government through the [2030 Emissions Reduction Plan](#) has sales targets for zero-emission light-duty vehicles of 20% share by 2026, at least 60% by 2030 and 100% by 2035. The Region also continues to leverage federal funding to build electric vehicle charging stations at Regional facilities to support transition to electric vehicle. By the end of 2022, York Region will have 64 publicly accessible electric vehicle chargers across 12 locations.



By the end of 2022, York Region will have 64 publicly accessible electric vehicle chargers across 12 locations.

There are concerns that electric vehicles, while beneficial to the environment, could have negative impacts on the transportation system. If drivers of electric vehicles follow the same travel patterns as in the past, traffic congestion could continue to be a problem. The UK-based Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions suggests a switch to electric vehicles might worsen congestion because operating costs are low, meaning there is the potential for more vehicles on the roads taking more trips.

Electrification could both help the environment and manage congestion if e-scooters and other micromobility options were more widely used. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation regulates the use of e-bikes under the [Ontario Highway Traffic Act](#). They are permitted on roads and highways where conventional bikes are permitted, unless specifically prohibited by a local restriction. Beginning January 1, 2020, the ministry launched a five-year pilot framework to permit e-scooters.

York Regional Council approved a bylaw change in 2020 to allow e-scooters and e-bikes in Regionally designated bike lanes and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes in line with provincial guidance. This demonstrates the Region's commitment to allowing and encouraging more sustainable transportation options that get people out of their cars, especially during peak travel periods.

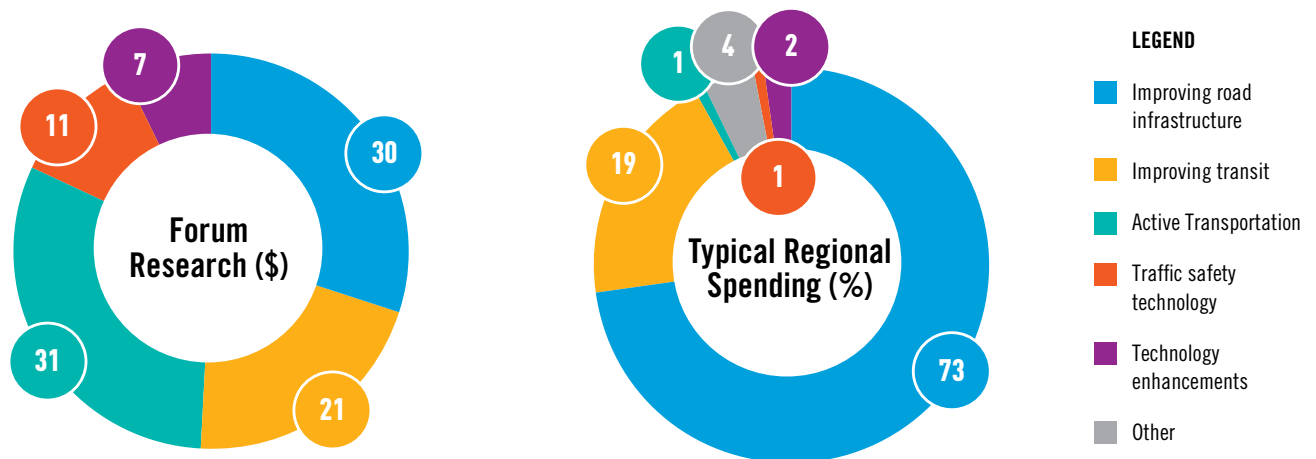
Chapter F discusses the consideration to extend their use to multi-use paths and trails.

D1.5 Respondents would invest half the budget in transit, walking and cycling options

Survey participants were asked how they would spend \$100 on transportation options. Investments in transit, pedestrian, cycling and multi-use path options were given a total of \$52 by telephone respondents and more by online respondents.

Improving road infrastructure was given \$30 on average by the telephone respondents, with the remaining \$18 going to technological improvements and safety measures.

Figure 10 shows a comparison of the survey results and York Regions 10-year roads and transit capital budgets. Although improving road infrastructure is shown as significantly higher at 73% compared to the



▲ FIGURE 10: As this comparison shows, survey respondents would spend more on active transportation and transit than in a typical Regional budget.

30% shown in the survey, the Region's roads projects include investments in active transportation and safety infrastructure, which bring the charts closer in practice. Based on feedback received through the TMP, the Plan identifies key transportation issues, or Focus Areas, for further study and exploration including Safety for all travellers, Reduce Car Travel, and the Role and Function of Regional Corridors, Transportation Equity and Environmental and Fiscal Sustainability. More information on the focus areas can be found in Chapter F.

D1.6 Youngest and oldest age groups least likely to own / drive a car

Mirroring a widespread trend, young people in York Region are now less likely to get a driver's licence soon after turning 16. In 1991, 82% of those aged 18 to 24 had a licence, but this figure had dropped to 69% by 2016. The telephone survey found that 58% of those aged 18-24 own a vehicle, significantly less than older respondents.

The current pattern, however, is that driving increases once people get their first job and form their own families. Survey results from 2016 show that among those aged 25 to 64, some 83% are drivers — the highest share of any age group. Driving then declines, falling to 76% in the 65-74 age group and 65% for those 75 and older.



▲ Transit riders taking a bus to school.

The cost of purchasing a car has also increased due to a supply challenge caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which may further contribute to fewer people owning cars.

The survey results have different implications for the transportation network, based on respondent age. Walking, cycling and transit are modes of transportation that most young people readily use instead of driving. The question is whether these will remain viable choices as they are employed and form their own households.

For older individuals who have driven their entire lives, giving up driving can feel like a major loss of freedom and the survey data suggests they are resistant to other options like transit, walking and cycling.

D1.7 Residents and stakeholders value fiscal prudence and innovative solutions

Feedback from the engagement process also stressed the importance of staying within the Region's budget by taking a "common sense" approach to spending. In addition, it was suggested the Region should work closely with its partners and explore opportunities for innovation in programs and infrastructure.

D2 Foundations of the 2022 Transportation Master Plan

The engagement, research and data collection described in Section D1 helped in the development of the strategic direction of this TMP by pinpointing what is important for the plan and why. The purpose statement, guiding principles and objectives below capture this direction.

These foundational elements in turn provide the basis for moving forward as outlined in Section D3, which sets out what the Region needs to do at a broad level, while Chapter F outlines focus areas for future work over the short term.



Guiding Principles: Reflect York Region's values and set the direction for realistically achieving the purpose statement.

Objectives: Guide the delivery of projects over the short and medium term.

Focus Areas: Identify short and medium term implementation priorities that support the objectives of the TMP.

▲ FIGURE 11: Pyramid demonstrating the 2022 TMP process.

D2.1 Purpose Statement

Plan, build, operate and maintain a connected transportation network for all travellers that is safe, reliable, future-ready, sustainable and balances the needs of the unique communities we serve.

The purpose statement serves as the vision for the 2022 TMP, and all recommendations in the plan aim to help achieve it. Feedback on the vision was positive, especially with the focus on safety, fiscal and environmental sustainability, connectivity, diversity and adaptability.

D2.2 Guiding Principles

The guiding principles reflect York Region's values and set the direction for realistically achieving the purpose statement. Future transportation initiatives should support one or more of the following principles:

- > **Safety:** Measures that help reduce transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries with a focus on vulnerable road users
- > **Inclusive and equitable:** Transportation infrastructure, programs and services that are available to all residents, regardless of location, personal abilities, age, gender, income, culture or faith
- > **Protect the environment:** Addresses transportation needs with consideration for social and environmental impacts
- > **Affordable today and tomorrow:** Balances the transportation costs and needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
- > **Balance the needs of communities and commuters:** Develop a transportation network that considers both the movement of people and

▷ **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Intersection of Highway 7 and Millway Avenue in the City of Vaughan showing vehicular traffic, buses, pedestrians and cyclists.

goods and the importance of community building and neighbourhood placemaking and paying particular attention to creative patterns of use and the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution

- > **Future-ready:** Transportation solutions and initiatives that are flexible and can be adapted to address changing needs, processes and technologies

The feedback from consultation and engagement through the TMP showed general agreement with the principles and approval of a focus on people (not just drivers) living and travelling safely in sustainable, complete communities. Complete communities are described in more detail in Section D3.3.

D2.3 Objectives

The objectives are intended to support the purpose statement in the short to medium term as projects are delivered.

- > **Make the best use of infrastructure and services:** Maximize the effectiveness of the existing road network
- > **Encourage all types of travel:** Design regional roads to accommodate all ages, abilities and modes of travel, including active transportation, transit, passenger vehicles and goods movement
- > **Provide a resilient and adaptable transportation network:** Adaptable to changing social, environmental, financial and technological landscapes

- > **Enhance partnerships:** Recognize the importance of collaborating with the public, business, non-profit organizations and public sector to provide transportation infrastructure, programs and services
- > **Actively engage and share information:** Learn from all residents and stakeholders
- > **Align project costs:** Ensure project costs are consistent with the Region's fiscal strategy and the 10-year capital plan and obtain Regional Council approval annually

The draft objectives were well received by stakeholders and comments indicated approval of focusing on resiliency, connectivity, a range of travel options and partnerships.

D3 2022 Transportation Master Plan reflects evolving attitudes and options

The engagement and surveys discussed in this chapter show travel patterns across the Region have been changing for some time and will continue to do so, especially where active and eco-friendly options are concerned. At the same time, new transportation options and ideas, like micromobility, are emerging.

The TMP process brought these streams together and used the principles and objectives outlined above to develop a plan that supports and guides progress towards the transportation system the Region will need over the next 30 years. This section outlines key themes, and Chapter G provides more details on future work that will continue to inform the Region's plans.



D3.1 Making life without a car an option

Not all residents can afford a car, or are willing or able to drive, as the telephone survey results showed:

- Those earning less than \$60,000 were significantly less likely to own a vehicle than higher-income earners
- Younger residents are less likely to drive compared to those aged 25-64 and are comfortable with other transportation options
- Older drivers might be at risk of losing their independence once driving is no longer an option

For those living on a low income, finding an affordable place to live in the Region can also be a challenge. From 2008 to 2020, average home resale prices increased by 155%, while household incomes rose by only 20%. In addition, York Region has the lowest share of rental units across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. The survey done for the Plan found that among those considering a move out of the Region, the cost of living and housing affordability were the top reasons.

The link between housing affordability and access to more travel options is a key factor in planning communities. If the only low-cost housing is far from workplaces and is poorly served by transit or other options, low-income residents may need to have one or more cars, which cuts further into their income.

The Region is helping to address this issue in its planning for urban centres and major transit station areas. The York Region Official Plan requires that 35% of new housing in these areas be affordable, while 25% of new housing be affordable outside these specified areas. The goal is to increase the percentage of affordable housing and give residents with the greatest need better access to work, school and other important destinations.

For many young people, the Region may not be the place where they will live long term: the survey found almost half of respondents aged 18 to 24 expect to leave. The most frequent reasons cited were the distance from school or work and the high cost of living, including housing. Keeping more young people in the Region may depend on creating communities where owning a car (a major expense) isn't necessary even after getting a job and forming a household.

▼ Pedestrians use a multi-use path in German Mills Settlers Park in the City of Markham.

The telephone survey also found that, compared to younger respondents, a far smaller number of those over 65 would consider a switch to transit, cycling or walking instead of driving. As they age, many residents are less inclined or able to drive. Without access to another way to travel, this severely limits their ability to get around and increases their risk of social isolation, both of which might make it hard for them to continue living independently. This is another instance where creating communities in which car ownership isn't needed is important.



D3.2 Making transportation healthier

York Region's transportation system has an important role to play in improving residents' health. Chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease are the main cause of illness and death in the developed world, including York Region, and physical inactivity is a major contributor.

Walking at the beginning or end of a trip taken by public transit is an excellent way to increase physical activity. Shifting away from vehicle use towards active transportation and public transit is also linked to less air pollution and a lower risk of traffic-related injuries.

Moving to an electrified transit and corporate fleet will also improve air quality and reduce noise pollution in communities, which will provide further health benefits.

As the survey results show, many residents would like to walk, cycle or take transit more but have concerns about how convenient it is, how much time it takes, if it's safe and whether the related infrastructure is in place.

D3.3 Creating complete communities and complete streets

York Region envisions a complete community as one that meets people's needs for daily living through all stages of life. Homes are close together, destinations like schools, natural areas, shops and workplaces are easy to get to by active or eco-friendly transportation and accessibility needs are met. Housing options are available at a range of price points and residents benefit from local jobs, services, clean water and air and great recreational opportunities. The built environment offers safe and connected transportation options that can be used in most weather conditions. As well as reducing the environmental impacts of growth, complete communities help residents to be more physically active and socially connected.



◀ Mother and children use a pedestrian crosswalk on Leslie Street in the Town of East Gwillimbury.

Creating complete communities requires integrated thinking. Land use needs to align with investments, for example, in active and eco-friendly transportation options. How and where human services are delivered through medical facilities, schools and community centres is another important consideration. Policies in the [Regional Official Plan](#) are designed to encourage coordination and collaboration that will result in complete communities.

A recent example of how transportation can support complete communities is a pilot program that started in 2021 in partnership with the Town of Newmarket and local school boards to encourage students and their parents to walk or cycle to school. The pilot, involving six schools, combines education, outreach and infrastructure and uses wayfinding, including markings on pavement and new curb markings,

to better control traffic in active school transportation areas, along with fun touches like hopscotch grids painted on sidewalks. The hope is that, in addition to giving children more opportunities to be active, the project will help manage traffic congestion and make school zones safer. If successful, the Region hopes to broaden and extend the initiative across its nine local municipalities.

“Complete streets” are an important element of complete communities. In 2017, Ontario adopted a policy requiring that streets be designed for all users. The Region subsequently developed two complementary documents, its [Pedestrian and Cycling Planning & Design](#) and [Designing Great Streets guidelines](#). Together, these shift the focus of road design from planning for vehicle capacity to planning streets everyone can use to better connect to the community. An important element when designing streets is including boulevards that run alongside them to provide safer cycling options.

Policies in the Regional Official Plan will help coordinate more detailed planning by the Region and local municipalities to create complete communities. Partnerships are needed to ensure that other initiatives, including public health programs, the [Region’s Seniors Strategy](#), and investments in green infrastructure, also support this direction.



In this chapter...

▲ York Region staff discuss plans at a road construction site.

- E1 How the proposed network was developed
- E2 Testing options
- E3 Recommended transportation networks for Active Transportation, Rapid Transit and Roads

Mapping the Region's transportation future

E1 How the proposed network was developed

The 2022 Transportation Master Plan responds to the need for a transportation network that offers travellers more options, protects the environment and fits within the Region's budget. It aims to achieve this by:

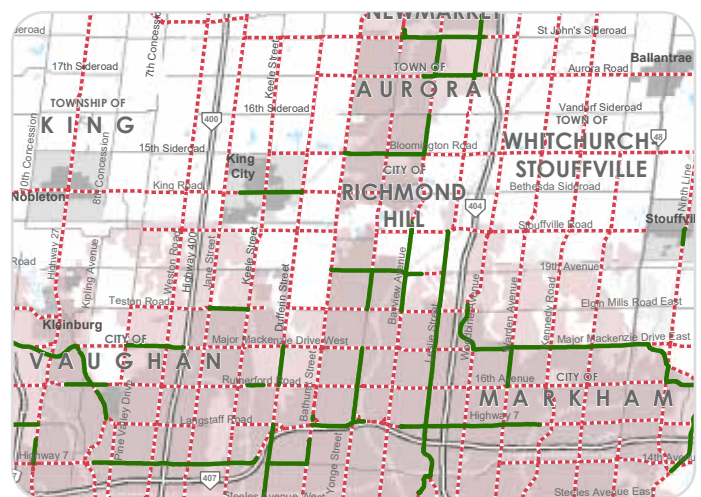
- Supporting a critical shift towards active and eco-friendly travel by making those options readily available to more residents
- Continuing to help make the entire transportation network safer for all users
- Focusing on the transportation needs of all road users, including drivers, passengers, transit riders, pedestrians and cyclists
- Using assets like boulevards along roads and underused public lands for active and eco-friendly travel

This chapter focuses on capital investments aimed at giving communities complete and connected transportation networks for all modes of travel, providing reliable and easy access to destinations and balancing the needs of various communities and travellers. It includes maps showing proposed cycling, rapid transit and road networks to provide a look at how all modes of travel are expected to evolve to support the Region's growth over the next 30 years.

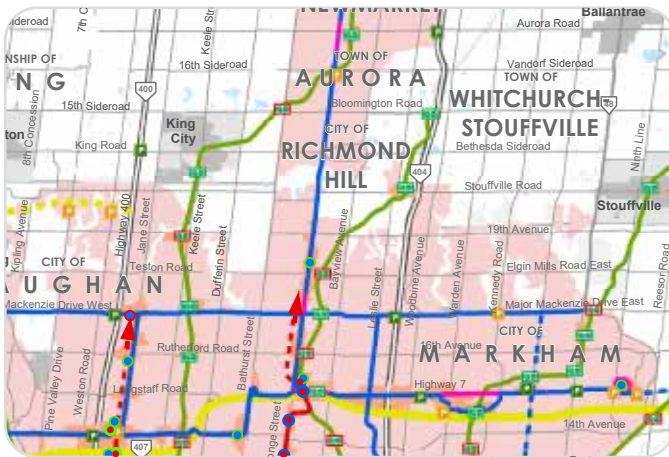
Chapter F (Strategic approach to change) discusses areas of focus that may help develop future transportation programs and initiatives, in line with the plan's purpose statement, principles and objectives.

As a long-term infrastructure plan, the TMP is made up of three main elements:

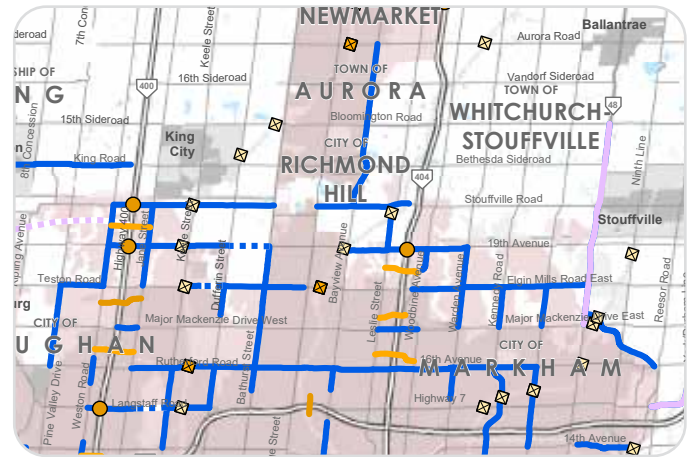
- 1. Active transportation:** Travellers are walking, cycling and using other human-powered options to get to work or school, run errands or simply enjoy being outdoors more often. The plan supports a well-integrated network of bike lanes, trails and multi-use paths to make these options easier and safer for all users. **(Maps 1 and 2 in [Appendix B](#))**



▲ Map 1 above and Map 2 show the proposed cycling and trail networks (see Appendix B for full map area).



▲ Map 3 shows proposed rapid transit network (see Appendix B for full map area).



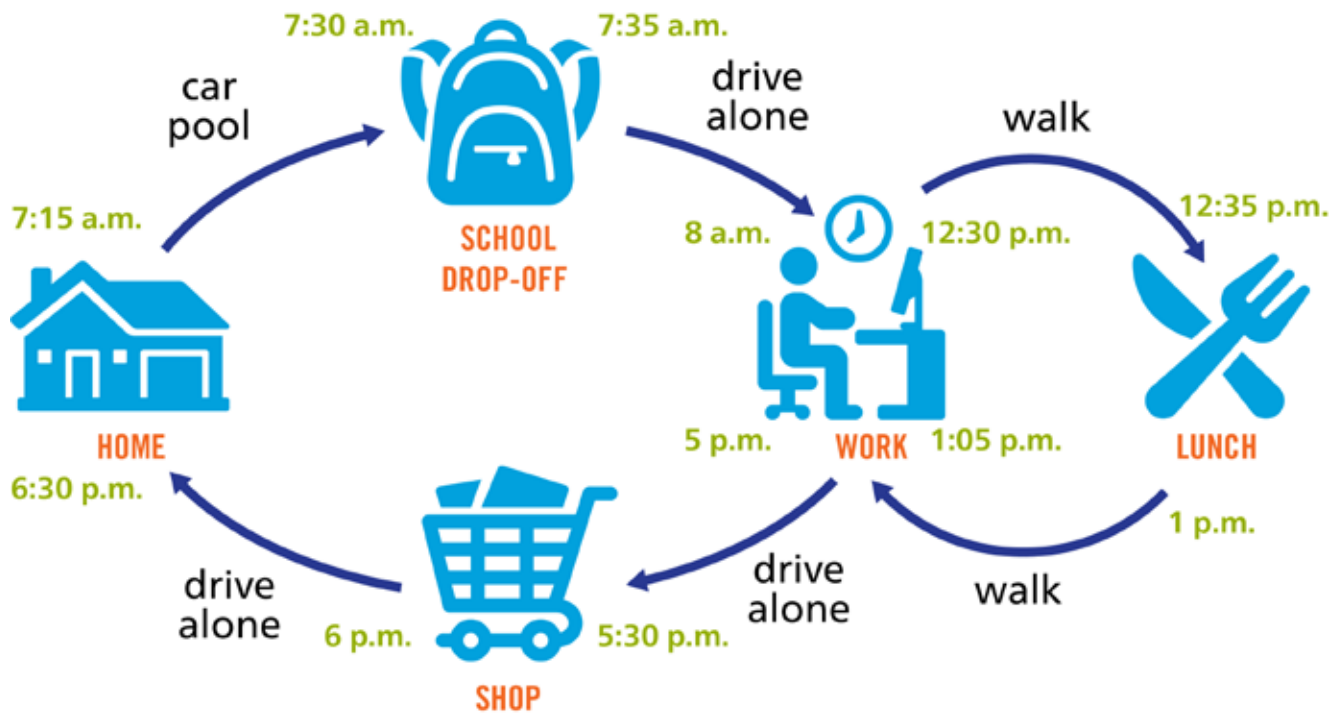
▲ Map 4 shows proposed road network (see Appendix B for full map area).

2. Rapid transit: Identifying and protecting corridors for rapid transit infrastructure, such as dedicated bus lanes, is critical as the Region grows. Recognizing changes since the release of Metrolinx’s 2041 Regional Transportation Plan in 2018, the 2022 TMP recommends additional rapid transit corridors to address the Region’s growth to 2051 and beyond. In addition, the updated Regional Official Plan identifies new major transit station areas that need to be supported with transportation infrastructure, such as new and improved bus rapid transit corridors, GO Transit rail stations and conventional transit service. **(Map 3 in Appendix B)**

3. Optimized road network: Investments in this TMP will generally target managing traffic flow in the Region’s most congested areas, improving roads in new development areas and enabling better access to freeways, Regional Centres, rapid transit and key links to major employment areas. The proposed road network focuses on what is

needed to make the best use of such existing assets as roads, lanes and intersections, as well as on investing in new projects. This process, also called optimizing the network, includes adjusting signal timing and making road or intersection upgrades to resolve bottlenecks and pinch points wherever possible, instead of undertaking major construction like road widenings. This approach goes hand in hand with other steps taken to manage demand by single-occupant vehicles on the road network by making options like active transportation more readily available. **(Map 4 in Appendix B)**

A shift to active transportation and sustainable transit makes the road network more efficient by managing the number of single-occupant cars it must accommodate as the Region grows. This results in financial benefits by reducing wear and tear on roads and reducing the need for widenings and other costly road projects.



▲ FIGURE 12: York Region's activity-based model estimates all trips over a 24-hour period to help forecast the impacts of growth on the transit and roads networks.

E2 Testing options

Decisions about transportation investments reflect the feedback and factors outlined in the previous chapter, forecasts for growth and employment to 2051, current capacity of the transportation network, how various factors might change and what the impacts will be.

The Region uses an activity-based model to analyze travel demand and forecast the impacts of growth on the network. Reflecting data gathered in the 2016 Transportation Tomorrow Survey and Cordon Count Program, it simulates the daily travel patterns of drivers, carpoolers, pedestrians, cyclists and users of transit, including GO Transit bus and rail, in York Region and the rest of the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area.

The model considers key factors that determine trip-making patterns, such as changes in household makeup over time, availability of cars to household members, how and where employment will grow, how people organize their trips in sequence and the extent to which traffic congestion will cause drivers to shift to other modes of transportation such as transit, walking or cycling.

For the Region, population and employment forecasts included in the updated Regional Official Plan are key considerations and help determine which transportation projects should be invested in and when. Chapters A and B provide more detail.

► Cars and a bus travel along Major Mackenzie Drive in the City of Vaughan.

A 2051 base network model was developed reflecting current Regional and provincial plans, including the 2016 TMP and Ministry of Transportation's [Southern Highways Program](#). Most of the existing 400-series highways serving the Region, including highways 400, 404, 407 and 427, will be extended and / or expanded. Plans for new roads include Highway 413 (GTA West Corridor), which would cross the City of Vaughan from Peel Region to Highway 400, and a bypass that would connect Highway 404 to Highway 400 (commonly referred to as the Bradford Bypass) in the north. The impacts of these projects on the Regional road network were considered during the planning process.

The model then tested how the network would perform given the location of population and employment projected for 2051.

Assumptions could be changed to create a range of scenarios to find a better fit between capacity, costs and transportation options. Six scenarios were tested for the 2022 TMP update. The first three scenarios would involve policy and / or funding from the Region and its partners or would have financial impacts on residents. These scenarios were:

1. Providing more frequent YRT bus service.
2. Eliminating transit fares.
3. Charging for parking in high-demand areas where transit is available as an alternative.

Scenarios 1 to 3 resulted in the reduction of traffic congestion; however, the financial impacts on the Region would vary for each.



The next three scenarios would depend on changes in resident behaviour and would involve little or no policy changes or funding from the Region:

1. Half of trips taken under 5 kilometres would be completed by walking or cycling.
2. 25% of the labour force would continue to work from home and daily shopping trips would fall by 15% due to online shopping.
3. Travellers would avoid morning and evening traffic peaks and spread trips out over the day.

Scenarios 4 to 6 would reduce traffic congestion with minimal impacts on the Region's infrastructure investments. Of the three, scenario 4 — more active transportation like walking or cycling for short trips — is the most feasible, based on current information. The [Transportation Tomorrow Survey](#) data show a growing interest in active transportation among York Region residents, and this trend is expected to continue over the next 30 years.

The Region's roles in helping to make it happen include adding active transportation infrastructure and planning complete communities.

For more information on the development of the recommended transportation networks, please visit york.ca/TMP



▲ Cyclist uses on-street dedicated bike lanes alongside vehicular traffic on Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket.

E3 Recommended transportation networks for Active Transportation, Rapid Transit and Roads

The transportation improvements recommended in the following sections for active transportation, rapid transit and roads are designed to support regional growth to 2051. These programs are directly linked to the pace of growth and provide the infrastructure needed to support new development. As described in Section G3 (Balancing services with financial needs) and Section G5 (Approach to implementation) with the completion and adoption of the 2022 TMP, 10-year programs for roads and transit capital investments will provide more details. The recommended networks are shown in Maps 1 to 4 in Appendix B.

E3.1 A larger, more integrated active transportation network

A well-planned active transportation network lets people move within and beyond the Region in ways that are convenient and safe for everyone and connects off-road trails to lanes and pathways on or beside roads.

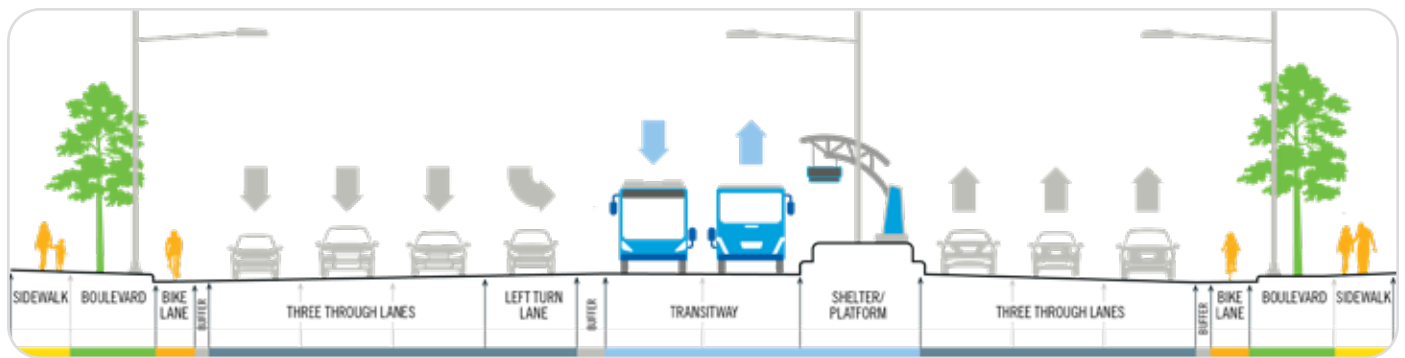
The active transportation network should provide direct connections to workplaces, schools, libraries,

shopping, recreation and other destinations, as well as link to transit for longer trips. Enabling more travellers to reach major transit stations and hubs as well as local transit stops by walking, cycling or micromobility means is an important part of managing traffic congestion in urban areas.

Collaboration is essential in creating and expanding the network. York Region has formed important partnerships with the provincial government, local municipalities, neighbouring municipalities, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, as well as with school boards, advocates and other interested parties.

Updating the active transportation network was guided by the following goals:

- Active transportation users should feel safe throughout the network, including where there is a highway interchange on a Regional road (in partnership with the Province), at intersections and along roads with faster traffic speeds or more traffic
- All Regional roads should accommodate all modes of travel, including walking and cycling, and design should reflect the Region's Pedestrian and Cycling Planning & Design Guidelines



▲ FIGURE 13: Illustration of typical rapid transit corridor cross-section.

- Where possible, cycling lanes should be located off the road rather than on the road next to vehicle traffic
- The network should consider underused or unused land to expand, such as hydro corridors or old rail lines
- Active transportation, such as walking and cycling, should be an option for everyone
- Outreach to encourage the shift to active transportation should target areas where new cycling / walking features are available or planned, as well as to more general audiences

The active transportation networks are shown on two maps — the Regional cycling network and the Regional trail network. While both maps are needed to provide the level of detail required for this plan, the Region views routes on the road network and on trails as one, forming a connected network for commuting and recreational use.

Multi-use paths on Regional roads allow for multiple users, including pedestrians, and the trail network is open to walking, hiking and cycling. Sidewalks, which also form part of the active transportation network, are a local municipal responsibility and as such are not shown on the maps.

Regional road cycling network (Map 1)

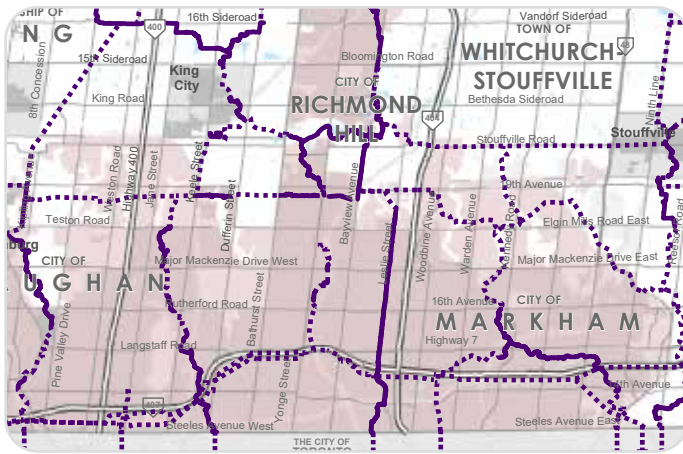
This map shows the existing and proposed Regional road cycling network. Green indicates existing multi-use paths and cycling tracks separated from the roadway and dedicated on-street bike lanes. The dotted red lines show where these new features might be in the future. The road-based cycling network will be expanded by Regional road projects, in partnership with stakeholders and through the review of new development applications. Where a lane or path within the Region will reach a border, the Region will work with neighbouring municipalities to identify logical connections so cyclists and pedestrians can continue their journey safely.

Trail network in York Region (Map 2)

Trails enable cyclists and others to connect to neighbouring municipalities as well as destinations within the Region. Arrows show conceptual connections that can be further explored in collaboration with our neighbouring municipalities. Solid lines show existing trails and dotted lines indicate trails that are under development, planned or being explored in partnership with local municipalities and conservation authorities.

Two trails of significance are:

- The Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail, which will provide a 121-kilometre link from Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario with connections to other major trails when complete. As of 2022, the portion of the route in York Region is more than 85% complete



▲ Map 2 showing proposed trail network (see Appendix B for full map area).

- The future South York Greenway cycling, pedestrian and micromobility corridor, which will parallel Highway 407, providing connections to subway stations, other major mobility hubs and existing and future communities. When complete, it will run more than 50 kilometres from the City of Vaughan to the eastern limits of the City of Markham

These routes will provide a safe and largely separated travel network for potentially thousands of cyclists, pedestrians and micromobility users in the most heavily populated areas of the Region, which will help reduce automobile pressure on major arterial roadways.

Active transportation network improvements, such as the construction of walking, cycling or multi-use paths, will be considered in capital road improvements and included in accordance with the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment as described in Chapter C in partnership with local municipalities. When road projects do not include active transportation, design elements for the road project such as utility locations, placement of street trees, and intersection design should not preclude the future implementation of active transportation.



▲ Bus serving travellers at Vivastation along Yonge Street in the City of Richmond Hill.

E3.2 More rapid transit corridors

The proposed 2051 rapid transit network, shown on Map 3 in Appendix B, identifies and protects rapid transit corridors to support York Region's planned growth needs. Rapid transit infrastructure may include physically separated lanes for the exclusive use of buses or light-rail vehicles. In York Region these are also referred to as "rapidways".

Because the TMP guides long-term capital investment, the proposed rapid transit network focuses on infrastructure needs, including bus rapidways and the Yonge North Subway Extension. However, this does not preclude investment in more frequent transit service on regional roads. The capital needs of other transit services, like changes to the Frequent Transit Network, local bus routes and Mobility On-Request, are adjusted in response to shorter-term demand and reflected in annual service plans, YRT's five-year plans and the 10-year capital plans in the Region's budget. For more information, visit yrt.ca

The proposed rapid transit network is consistent with the 2016 Transportation Master Plan, with some adjustment to reflect budgeting needs. Its foundation is a body of background knowledge, including approved environmental assessments and technical analysis in provincial plans and previous Regional TMPs.

While the rapid transit network plan generally aligns with [Metrolinx's 2041 Regional Transportation Plan](#) that was released in 2018, it also recognizes that long-term planning has since evolved:

- > In the provincial [Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan](#), the Ministry of Transportation is moving towards including parallel transitway corridors along new or extended 400-series highways
- > The provincial government has also signalled an interest in shifting from the current mode of focusing all rapid transit on Union Station to one that includes a loop to bypass Toronto's downtown core and connects new major transit hubs, including Richmond Hill Centre, with Toronto Pearson International Airport and other important destinations
- > Infrastructure investments also reflect new forecasts for population and employment growth in the updated Regional Official Plan and the Region's designation of new major transit station areas

The rapid transit network includes the following infrastructure elements that could be added to the network by 2051:

Subway

The rapid transit network map reflects the Yonge North Subway Extension to connect the Richmond Hill / Langstaff urban growth centre with the existing TTC subway at Finch Station. The provincial government, through Metrolinx, is leading planning of the project, including route alignment and construction of the line and stations. Both this line and the line currently ending at the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre might be extended further north in the future, subject to further study.



GO Transit

In addition to improvements along the Barrie, Richmond Hill and Stouffville GO Transit lines, the rapid transit network map also includes the Bolton rail corridor in west Vaughan and Havelock rail corridor in east Markham. These were identified in the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan as potential projects beyond 2041. The Plan also identifies future GO Rail stations to support the Region's growth to 2051.

- ◀ OPPOSITE PAGE: TTC rider waits for subway train; train travels along tracks; transit rider purchases ticket from fare station.
 ▼ Aerial view of Yonge Street and Gamble Road intersection in the City of Richmond Hill.



York Region Bus Rapid Transit

Building on the success of 34 kilometres of bus rapid transit (or Viva) completed to date, remaining segments totalling more than 100 kilometres are needed to complete the YRT rapid transit network of dedicated bus lanes, including 10 kilometres that are subject to further studies. This would include building out the rapid transit network westward along Highway 7 to connect to Peel Region bus rapid transit, making it easier to get to Toronto Pearson International Airport.

A future study will also consider the extension of the Leslie Street Rapid Transit Corridor via Major Mackenzie Drive and/or Woodbine Avenue to support the employment lands in the Markham Innovation Exchange (MiX) district.

Other rapid transit

Additional rapid transit could include parallel transitways on new and extended 400-series highways, including highways 427 and 407 and the proposed Highway 413 (GTA West Corridor). The proposed transitway on Highway 407 would be another option to link York Region to the Toronto Pearson International Airport. Metrolinx has also

identified 37 kilometres of future planned rapid transit along Steeles Avenue.

Via Rail, in partnership with Transport Canada, is also exploring a new possible high-frequency rail corridor that would run between the cities of Toronto and Ottawa in Ontario. The project may use the existing Canadian Pacific Railway line through Peterborough known as the Havelock corridor.

The Region is also working with the provincial government to explore a potential rapid transit loop to bypass Toronto's downtown core. The [Ministry of Transportation plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe](#) and future updates to [Metrolinx's Regional Transportation Plan](#) will provide more details.

The proposed number of commuter parking lots to support YRT and / or GO Transit services has been reduced since 2016. This was based on focusing on parking lots that would directly enable a connection from a private vehicle to transit at a significant YRT or GO Transit bus stop, terminal or station.

The proposed rapid transit network was refined through discussions with internal partners, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation and consultation with the public.

E3.3 A more strategic approach to the road network

The development of the 2051 road network included:

- > Building on the extensive work done annually for the 10-year roads and transit capital construction program
- > Recognizing financial constraints and better aligning with the Regional Fiscal Strategy
- > Using data-driven decision making

Decisions about specific projects considered growth-related needs, expected impact, project costs and commitments of partners, such as local municipalities and the Ministry of Transportation. With respect to the ministry, York Region has also identified improvements needed on several roads under provincial jurisdiction, such as portions of highways 48, 9 and 7, and advocates for these to be priorities in updates to the Southern Highways Program.

Evaluating potential Regional road improvements

For improvements to Regional roads, staff reviewed the technical recommendations of the 2016 TMP and examined the results of the proposed demand on the transportation network using the Region's travel demand forecasting model discussed in Section E2.

Projects were then ranked using the Region's priority-setting model, a process endorsed by York Regional Council, that determines the benefit scores of each project, looking at such aspects as how much the road capacity would be increased, what type and intensity of development is expected nearby, whether the road is close to important destinations

or freeways and what uses — such as trucking, transit and car travel — the road will support.

The priority-setting model was valuable for initially ranking projects based on historical and forecasted traffic volumes, then refined qualitatively in consultation with subject-matter experts looking at factors such as making the overall network more efficient by including eco-friendly and active transportation infrastructure.

To align with the principle "Affordable today and tomorrow" and the Regional Fiscal Strategy, projects identified in the 2016 TMP were removed from the recommended network. The recommended 2051 road network is summarized in the following subsections and depicted in Map 4 in Appendix B.

Implementing transportation Improvements through the Rouge Urban National Urban Park

Extending from the shores of Lake Ontario in the City of Toronto and encompassing eastern portions of the City of Markham, the 47-square-kilometre Rouge National Urban Park provides York Region's residents with a rich assembly of natural, cultural and agricultural landscapes, amazing active transportation opportunities and human history dating back over 10,000 years, including some of Canada's oldest known Indigenous sites.

By law, national parks are protected for public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment, while being maintained in an unimpaired state for future generations. This may present York Region with construction and implementation challenges related to building and managing infrastructure within the park boundaries.

The park will require York Region and Parks Canada to navigate the need for new and improved active transportation, transit and road improvements through the park corridor to support continued growth in Canada's largest urban area.

York Region is committed to working with Parks Canada in developing context sensitive and sustainable design solutions while supporting the implementation of the Rouge National Park. The key transportation improvements close to the Rouge National Park include:

- > Extension of Highway 7 bus rapid transit to Durham Region
- > Improving Highway 7 and 14th Avenue, including future grade separations at the Canadian Pacific Havelock corridor, Steeles Avenue, 16th Avenue and Elgin Mills Road
- > Arterial road improvements to support the future Pickering Airport
- > South York Greenway, Cycling, Pedestrian and Micromobility corridor which would connect active transportation users east-west across the Region and into Rouge National Urban Park

- > Future Highway 407 Transitway
- > Via Rail's high-frequency rail project on the Havelock corridor and potential future GO service on the same line
- > Other projects to expand GO Transit train service

Protecting for new Rail to Road Grade Separations

The 2051 road network includes separations between Regional roads and rail lines used by Metrolinx's GO Transit commuter trains, as well as Canadian Pacific Railway and / or Canadian National Railway. These separations, also known as grade separations, support GO Transit's expansion plan for two-way service and for all GO Transit lines to carry more trains.

Recent experience in the Region and elsewhere in the Greater Toronto Area shows that a crossing typically costs more than \$100 million to build. Construction is disruptive for communities and, once built, these crossings become barriers within communities and are very costly to maintain. The significant construction and operating costs might not justify the traffic benefits.

Grade separations included in the Region's 2016 TMP but not yet underway continue to be protected from development in the 2022 TMP. Since projects



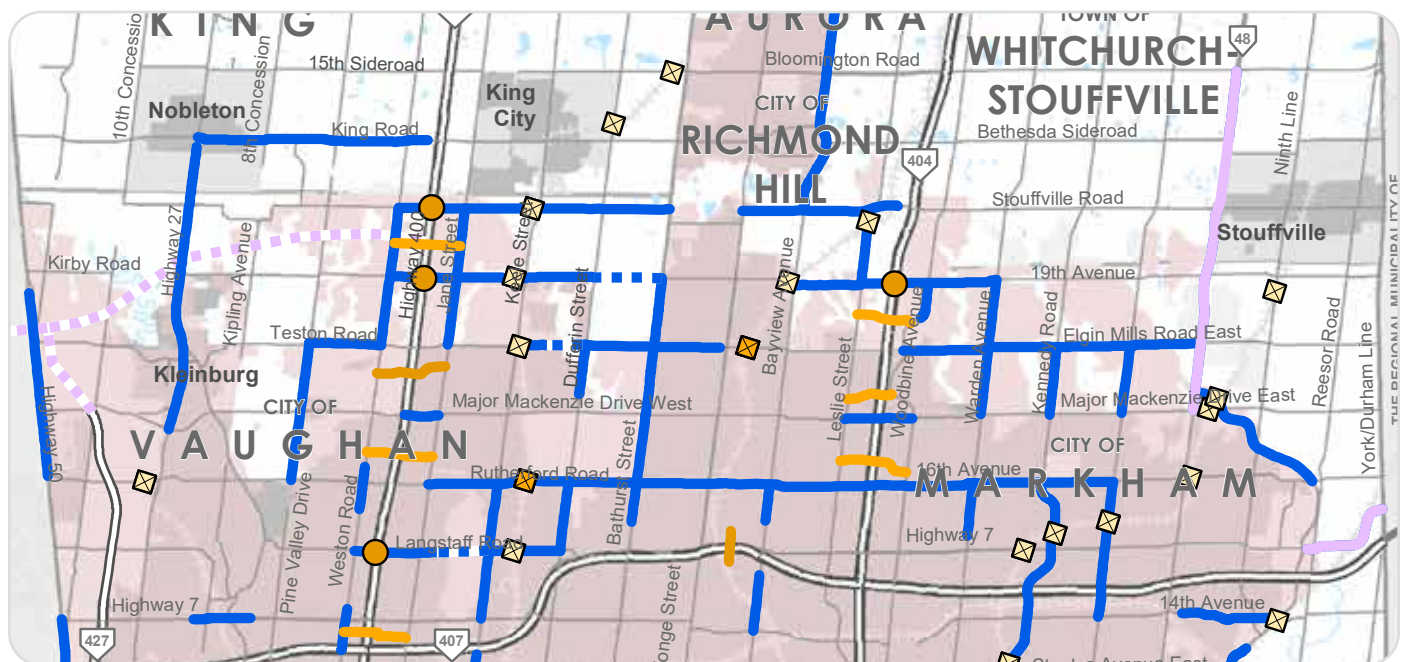
▲ Transit rider makes GO Train station connection to YRT service in the Town of Aurora.

of this nature involve shared jurisdiction, the Region typically works with Metrolinx and other rail authorities to plan for and prioritize them. Negotiation will be needed to determine roles, responsibilities and cost contributions, the last of which will also be subject to assessing priorities in the Region's capital and operating budgets.

Recommended 2051 road network

As **Map 4 in Appendix B** shows, the proposed 2051 road network focuses on:

- Improving roads located near new development areas and in the most congested core urban areas
- Building mid-block crossings (crossings over freeways between interchanges) and completing missing links in mature urban areas to offer more route options
- Constructing of a new section of Teston Road between Keele and Dufferin streets
- Continuing to advocate for interchanges required to support growth and considered by the Ministry of Transportation to be a Regional or local municipal responsibility, including three linking to Highway 404 (at 19th Avenue, St. John's Sideroad and Doane Road) and one to Highway 400 (at King-Vaughan Road), as well as improving the partial interchange at Mulock Drive and Highway 404
- Protecting the areas around planned grade separations between Regional roads and rail lines and completing four projects already underway: on Rutherford Road east of Keele Street and Wellington Street east of Yonge Street on the



▲ Map 4 showing proposed road network (see Appendix B for full map area).

Barrie GO Transit line, Elgin Mills Road east of Yonge Street on the Richmond Hill GO Transit / CN line, and Steeles Avenue east of Kennedy Road on the Stouffville GO Transit line

The Region is undertaking an environmental assessment for a new section of Langstaff Road to cross the Canadian National Railway MacMillan Yard. This is included on a contingency basis as it could proceed only if additional funding were available from third parties.

The 2022 TMP identified the need for one interchange with Highway 400 north of Teston Road, which could be at either King-Vaughan Road or Kirby Road. The preferred option is subject to further study and consultation with local municipalities and the Ministry of Transportation, as either location would be affected by options to connect Highway 400 to Highway 413.

The 2010 Regional Official Plan included a potential westward extension of Donald Cousens Parkway, which currently runs from Fieldside Street (north of Steeles Avenue) to Major Mackenzie Drive. A section of Ninth Line between Steeles Avenue and Fieldside Street is in the Region's program to be widened to four lanes in the near future, completing the southern end of the Donald Cousens Parkway within the Region. The 2016 TMP provided more details of this potential four-lane arterial road that would connect to an interchange at Highway 404 at 19th Avenue. The 2022 TMP proposes that the capacity that would have been provided by the extension be provided by expanding the existing road network around its planned route instead.



▲ Construction of Rutherford GO rail grade separation on Rutherford Road in the City of Vaughan.

E3.4 Transportation needs continue to evolve to support changing land use

The TMP recommends transit, active transportation and road investments to support planned and approved development. However, the Plan recognizes the recommendations discussed in Chapter E (Mapping the Region's transportation future) and in the accompanying maps in Appendix B are only a snapshot in time. This is why the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process requires master plans be reviewed every five years.

The TMP recognizes the Region, Province (through Minister Zoning Orders) and municipalities (through Secondary Plans), are continuing to review how to implement transit supportive, complete communities and economic sectors. The changing land use in these development areas requires future review of the transportation infrastructure needed to support the development needs. York Region commits to continuing to work with all levels of government to continue to review the rapid transit, active transportation, and road improvements and to meet the evolving needs of these communities.



▲ Early phase of construction of Major Mackenzie Drive West bus terminal near Canada's Wonderland in the City of Vaughan.



In this chapter...

▲ Pedestrians use the crosswalk at Highway 7 and Chalmers Road in the City of Markham.

- F1 New and evolving areas of focus
- F2 Safety for all travellers
- F3 Transportation equity and inclusion
- F4 Reduce car travel
- F5 Fiscal and environmental sustainability
- F6 Reviewing roles and functions in Regional corridors

Strategic approach to change

F1 New and evolving areas of focus

The TMP identified five focus areas, each of which brings together several related priorities:

- > Safety for all travellers
- > Transportation equity and inclusion
- > Reduce car travel, especially during rush hours
- > Fiscal and environmental sustainability
- > Role and function of Regional corridors

The focus areas replace the many transportation policies and actions included in the 2016 TMP, because the Regional Official Plan is the major policy document for managing growth and development. The TMP focuses on setting and maintaining direction for transportation in York Region through initiatives, guidelines and operating procedures that support the Regional Official Plan, as well as the Region's Vision and the Strategic Plan.

F1.2 Focus areas

Each focus area will require further study by Regional staff and potentially additional engagement with agency partners, as discussed in the balance of this chapter. Proposed actions and initiatives will be brought forward to York Regional Council for review and endorsement over its next four-year term.

Safety for all travellers

- > Although safety is always top of mind for transportation projects and initiatives, the need for a Regional plan for traveller safety will be explored

Transportation equity and inclusion

- > Attention will be given to transportation options that are inclusive of all ages, abilities, income levels, genders, races, cultures, etc

Reduce Car Travel, especially during rush hours

- > Options that allow travellers who are able and interested to use methods of travel other than car, especially during the busiest travel times, will be assessed

Fiscal and Environmental Sustainability

- > Ensuring transportation investment decisions are affordable and consider environmental impacts

Review the role and function of Regional Corridors

- > A number of important actions will be explored, including: ownership of cycling facilities; micromobility; the effectiveness of HOV and transit lanes; parking and goods movement

F1.3 Alignment of Focus Areas with Objectives

The TMP's objectives are identified in Section D2 (Foundations of the 2022 Transportation Master Plan).

The following icons represent these objectives and appear in sections F2 to F6 to demonstrate the alignment between each focus area and the objectives. Each focus area aligns with at least three objectives. This will help maximize the value of actions and initiatives related to the focus areas.



Make the best use of infrastructure and services



Enhance partnerships



Encourage all types of travel



Actively engage and share information



Provide a resilient and adaptable transportation network



Align project costs

▲ FIGURE 14: Icons representing objectives of the 2022 TMP.



F2 Safety for all travellers

Safety is a long-standing priority of the Region. As the transportation network evolves and changes, there will be opportunities for the Region and its partners to help make it even safer for all travellers. The 2022 TMP outlines specific investments and commitments to increase safety. In addition, Transportation Operations, Public Works expects to propose a traveller safety strategy to York Regional Council in 2023.

Additional initiatives may include:

- Reviewing posted speed limits to ensure they are consistent with the goals of more active transportation and livable communities
- Using communication campaigns to share information with road users and build awareness of safe behaviour, such as the [“Be Visible. Be Seen.”](#) campaign that provides tips for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists
- Implementing engineering measures and initiatives to improve safety for all travellers
- Using safety-oriented planning and design and providing safety enhancements for pedestrians and cyclists by using the Region’s Pedestrian and Cycling Planning & Design Guidelines, including:
 - Protected bike lanes, also called cycle tracks, with physical barriers to separate cyclists from both cars and sidewalks
 - Permanent two-stage left-turn queue bike boxes in boulevards at several intersections on Highway 7 to allow cyclists to complete a left turn across multiple lanes of traffic safely



▲ TOP: Two students at a sidewalk decal that is part of the Be Visible. Be Seen. safety campaign. BOTTOM: Dedicated off-street bike lanes and sidewalks along Highway 7 in the City of Markham.

- Pedestrian crossings, like the pedestrian bridge over the Holland River and GO Barrie rail corridor, to eliminate the need for pedestrians and cyclists to cross at street level



F3 Transportation equity and inclusion

The Region designs transportation options and assets to make it easier for people of all ages, income levels, abilities and identities to use services. This aligns with [York Region's Inclusion Charter](#), which has the goal of making all people feel they belong and have access to the same opportunities and moving towards recognizing mobility as a right. It is important to note the distinction between what is meant by transportation equity versus transportation equality. Equality ensures each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities, whereas equity recognizes each person has different circumstances and ensures everyone is provided with what they need to reach an equal outcome.

A central goal of transportation is to facilitate social and economic opportunities by providing equitable levels of access to affordable and reliable transportation options based on the needs of the populations being served, particularly populations that are traditionally underserved, or which current trends in mobility could disadvantage¹. By recognizing the inequities present within our transportation system, the Region will work to apply an equity lens to future projects to ensure transportation networks are inclusive and recognize diversity of personal abilities, ages, genders, incomes, races and cultures. This focus area will explore whether there are opportunities for all travellers to access transportation in York Region and identify whether new policies or initiatives are needed.

▲ Transportation options aim to serve York Region's diverse population and be inclusive.

¹ World Road Association, "Call for Proposals: Social equity and social accessibility of transport systems", March 2022.



▲ Mobility on-request client exits vehicle; mother with stroller and child exiting a bus.

Current initiatives like the [MyRide Travel Training Program](#) are designed to help make customers, including seniors, newcomers to the Region and people with disabilities, more comfortable by providing additional knowledge and skills needed to help them use YRT independently.

YRT offers fare discounts for senior citizens, children and youth, and children under five years of age ride for free. The Region is also piloting a [Transit Assistance Program](#) to make transit more affordable for eligible adults.

Other initiatives to support greater transportation equity and inclusion include:

- > Building on York Region's understanding and definition of transportation equity and inclusion
- > Expanding Mobility On-Request to provide transit services to more rural communities and new riders in areas without access to large-scale transportation systems or mobility hubs

- > Accepting more payment methods so it is easier to pay fares and use the system
- > Expanding transportation options available to residents and commuters
- > Making transit more convenient by offering better fare and service integration with neighbouring systems and aligning transit options with traveller needs
- > Ensuring intersections comply with provincial accessibility requirements
- > Communicating in more ways to ensure messages reach as many people as possible

- ▼ York Region Transit bus travels in dedicated bus lane along Highway 7 at the Town Centre vivastation in the City of Markham.



F4 Reduce car travel, especially during rush hours

The road network, air quality and the environment would benefit from having fewer cars on the road, especially during rush hours, as the population and economic activity increase.

There are many ways to build on the growing interest in walking, cycling, transit, carpooling and other eco-friendlier options, including non-travel

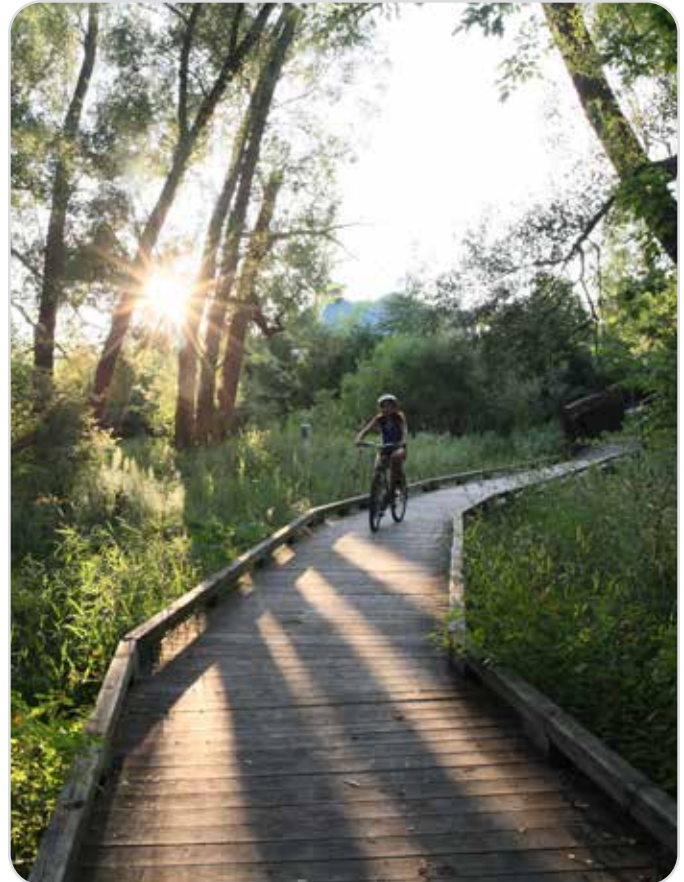
alternatives such as working from home. For example, a developer will work with York Region and local municipalities to provide transit incentives and sustainable transportation information to residents and businesses to help reduce the dependence on automobiles.

The 2022 TMP continues York Region's commitment to managing traffic congestion, including looking at new ideas and approaches.

▼ TOP: Cyclist travels along multi-use path between Woodland Hills Boulevard and Cliff Trail in the Town of Aurora. BOTTOM: Cyclists and pedestrian travel along multi-use path in the City of Markham.

A key element will be encouraging a shift to more active and eco-friendly options. Examples of how to achieve this include:

- Supporting transit ridership recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic with marketing efforts, enhanced cleaning programs and actions to address overcrowding in high ridership areas
- Adding more active transportation infrastructure (such as cycle tracks and multi-use paths)
- Advancing the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail and South York Greenway project and building stronger links throughout the trails network
- Better understanding the opportunities for transportation over short distances via eco-friendly, single-person vehicles such as e-scooters and e-bikes and how to accommodate their use in the transportation network
- Working with the development community to ensure new communities are designed to be walkable and provide eco-friendly options through urban design elements such as window streets to avoid reverse lot frontage and sound reduction walls, pedestrian connections between streets and to trail systems and lower parking space requirements
- Creating a comprehensive transportation demand management strategy, building on such initiatives as Smart Commute, including its website and app, carpooling, MyTrip and Active School Travel pilot programs, encouragement of walking, cycling and other eco-friendly options for the first / last kilometre of longer trips and providing access to major mobility hubs by transit or active transportation





F5 Fiscal and environmental sustainability

The 2022 TMP looks at sustainability from both an environmental and financial lens. For environmental sustainability, York Region considers natural heritage features as well as agricultural and rural lands to avoid any negative impacts of capital projects where possible and applies context-sensitive mitigation solutions when necessary. For example, preserving the 70,000 trees planted on Regional roads and rights-of-way is considered as part of the road project planning process and when trees must be removed, they are replaced.

Section B2.3 discusses York Region's commitment to meet net-zero targets by moving to full electrification of the transit and corporate vehicle fleets.

Financial sustainability ensures that York Region can keep the cost of growth affordable while maintaining its existing infrastructure in a state of good repair. It means preserving fiscal flexibility in the face of changing needs and being able to effectively respond to unforeseeable events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In updating the Regional Official Plan, the Region also strengthened policies on coordinating the timing of projects with growth to improve efficiency and phasing the construction needed for future communities to ensure costs stay within the Region's means. Policies throughout the Regional Official Plan were updated to highlight the importance of integrating land use, infrastructure and financial planning. More information on how York Region proposes to implement the TMP can be found in sections G3 and G4.



▲ One of 12 electric buses that YRT has piloted along Davis Drive in the Town of Newmarket since the launch in February 2020.

There are additional ways to lessen environmental impacts of the transportation network and support fiscal sustainability. Examples of such initiatives include:

- > Improving the way priorities for capital projects are set by updating the definition of a project's benefits, building in financial constraints, looking at benefit / cost ratios and assessing the ability to lessen environmental impacts, for example by reducing GHG emissions and waste by re-using construction materials (where appropriate)
- > Managing assets to minimize costs and environmental impacts over their service lives
- > Coordinating the Region's transportation networks with those of local and adjacent municipalities to minimize infrastructure needs and enhance the natural environment
- > Advocating for provincial and federal governments to support programs to reduce GHG emissions from transportation and their community impacts
- > Identifying partnership and pilot programs to help support electric vehicle technology as a method to reduce the community impacts of GHG emissions



▲ TOP: Providing meadows along Regional boulevards helps protect natural heritage features. BOTTOM: Maintaining Regional vehicles promotes fiscal and environmental sustainability.



F6 Reviewing roles and functions in Regional corridors

As the transportation network evolves, York Region needs to consider issues around ownership, new technologies for micromobility and measures to manage demand on the system. This focus area looks at the complex relationship between Regional roads and how the corridors, the public space between private development on opposite sides of the road, support our communities, placemaking and how travellers use and envision the corridor space.

The Master Plan has identified the following five sub-focus areas to outline the key priorities around corridors. The term “corridor” refers to the travel lanes for vehicles, active transportation corridors, boulevards and streetscaping features or ditches and above and below ground utilities. The corridor extends from the property line on one side of the roadway to the property line on the opposite side. In Ontario, the [Municipal Act](#) prescribes that York Region is responsible for the ownership and

maintenance of some elements in the corridor and the nine local municipalities are responsible for other elements of the corridor, including.

- > Ownership and use of boulevard
- > Micromobility
- > HOV lanes / transit lanes
- > Parking
- > Movement of goods using large trucks

Each of these focus areas is further defined below.

F6.1 Ownership and use of boulevard

Elements in boulevards (the strips of land located between the road curb and private property) include cycling paths, sidewalks, streetscaping and lighting. The ***Municipal Act*** does not explicitly define the respective responsibilities of York Region and its local municipalities for all boulevard elements. For example, along a Regional road, York Region is responsible for drainage such as ditches or storm sewers, street trees, street lighting at intersections and maintaining the grass and Regionally owned streetscaping, whereas the local municipality is responsible for the sidewalks and the street lighting between intersections.

◀ OPPOSITE PAGE: Vehicles travel along Major Mackenzie Drive West in the City of Vaughan.

However, responsibilities for other features, including multi-use and cycling paths, are not defined. This creates uncertainty about ownership and maintenance, especially as the Region is moving to shift cycling facilities from the road into the boulevard for greater safety.

Examples of initiatives York Region will explore include:

- Working with its partners to clearly define boulevard roles and responsibilities, especially where the goal is providing safer and more comfortable options for active and eco-friendly transportation, reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and making the road network more efficient
- Considering what needs to be included on boulevards and what could go onto the road to make more space available for trees and other features as many utilities are contained above and below the ground

F6.2 Micromobility

New micromobility choices, such as e-bikes and e-scooters, are gaining in popularity among York Region's residents. As noted in Section D3, they offer convenience as well as benefits on both the environmental and the traffic congestion fronts. Users can cover longer distances compared to walking or cycling, the devices take up less space on the road than a car and it is easier to connect to mobility hubs or key destinations as parking is less of a concern.

Successful integration of these devices into Regional and local networks will require collaboration and communication. Particular attention must be given to



▲ Travellers using e-scooters and ebikes along separated sidewalks and bike lanes.

how they would be safely integrated into sidewalks or trail systems that see high volumes of pedestrians.

Going forward:

- The Region and its partners will work to define pedestrian, cyclist and micromobility infrastructure to support both safety for all travellers and the shift away from single-occupant car trips
- Special consideration will need to be given to issues such as municipal and / or third-party rental e-bikes and e-scooters as they are introduced into the marketplace, pick-up / drop-off locations, winter maintenance, charging facilities, age restrictions, speed limits in some settings, enforcement and legal / risk issues



▲ Travellers carpool and vehicles park on Main Street/Highway 48 in the City of Markham.

F6.3 HOV lanes / transit lanes

High-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes are reserved for public transit, emergency vehicles, taxis and private vehicles carrying more than one person. Their main purpose on Regional roads is to increase the total number of people moving through the corridor.

A Regional standard for six-lane roads requires the inclusion of two all-purpose travel lanes in each direction, an HOV lane and a dedicated 1.5-metre cycling lane, at a minimum.

The Regional Official Plan includes a policy to “require transit or high-occupancy vehicle lanes and cycling facilities within the rights-of-way of existing and future six-lane Regional roads based on established thresholds and criteria.” Consistent with that policy, this focus area will explore opportunities to redefine how HOV lanes are proposed and implemented across the Region’s existing four- and six-lane and future six-lane roads.

Potential work in this area could include:

- > Carpooling lane incentives
- > Building additional bus-only lanes on major Regional corridors
- > Reviewing Regional policy on six-lane roads

F6.4 Parking

In York Region, local municipalities are largely responsible for managing on-street parking through official and secondary plans, zoning of new developments and parking bylaws. The Region, however, has two closely related functions:

- > Its [Official Plan](#) directs growth largely to Regional Centres and Corridors
- > It is working on several fronts to make active and eco-friendly travel options more attractive

These roles are linked. Effective parking policies and programs can help achieve transportation goals like encouraging people to walk, cycle and use micromobility, especially in high-density areas.

Parking on a Regional road is considered only when all the following criteria are met:

- > It would be located within or along the Region’s designated Centres and Corridors or in a Major Transit Station Area
- > It would be part of an overall parking strategy for those locations, not a stand-alone provision
- > It would be safe and not impact pedestrian and cycling facilities, sightlines, streetscaping, access, intersection operations or the road’s integrity

Additional work may include:

- Looking at a broad-based policy and standards around parking on Regional roads to support the goals of the 2022 TMP
- Charging for on-street parking in some areas

F6.5 Movement of goods using large trucks

Trucks of all sizes are allowed on all Regional roads, supporting the economy as well as moving people. The 2014 Ministry of Transportation of Ontario Commercial Vehicle Survey (CVS) found that 21% of weekly truck trips in Ontario originated from, were going to, or crossed through York Region. An update to the survey started in 2019, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately \$3.8 billion worth of goods are moved in the Region weekly.

Truck traffic in the City of Vaughan accounts for more than half of all truck travel to and from the Region. This is because two major rail freight hubs, Canadian National Railway MacMillan Yard and Canadian Pacific Railway Vaughan Intermodal Terminal and several major distribution centres are located in the City of Vaughan. Truck volumes are also higher around key employment areas along provincial highways, in the cities of Markham and Richmond Hill as well as Vaughan.

The Region has been working to improve goods movement, manage congestion and reduce conflicts between road users through:

- **Greater efficiency.** The Regional Official Plan recommends the Region work with the provincial government, local municipalities and nearby jurisdictions on an efficient, multimodal goods movement network that uses rail corridors, provincial highways and Regional roads to meet current and future needs. This is reflected in such projects as the proposed widening of Langstaff Road to six lanes between Weston Road and Dufferin Street and potential crossing of the MacMillan Yard (contingent on third-party funding)
- **Operational practices.** Section D3.3 discusses the Region's Designing Great Streets Guidelines focused on road design for all users. One concern is ensuring the turn radius, also known as curb return radius, at intersections used by trucks is sized right to minimize conflicts with opposing traffic and pedestrians



▲ A transport truck turns onto Jane Street from Rutherford Road in the City of Vaughan.

York Region is collaborating with Peel Region and several academic partners on the [Smart Freight Centre](#), a centre of excellence for goods movement. The goal of the Smart Freight Centre is to provide innovative evidence-based research, decision support, advocacy, training, and monitoring to coordinate transportation infrastructure, land development, regulation, technology tools, and resources that improve goods movement activities.

Through this partnership, York Region will apply the learnings from projects such as Peel Region's Off-Peak Delivery Pilot Project, in delivering similar solutions. The pilot project, completed in partnership with major retailers, found that making deliveries outside of peak traffic periods can help reduce congestion.



▲ Transport trucks stop at a red traffic light on Highway 7 at Creditstone Road in the City of Vaughan.



In this chapter...

- G1 Cost of the Plan
- G2 Funding the Plan
- G3 Balancing services with financial needs
- G4 How asset management supports growth
- G5 Approach to implementation
- G6 Total costs of the transportation network
- G7 Measuring and monitoring performance
- G8 Updating the Transportation Master Plan

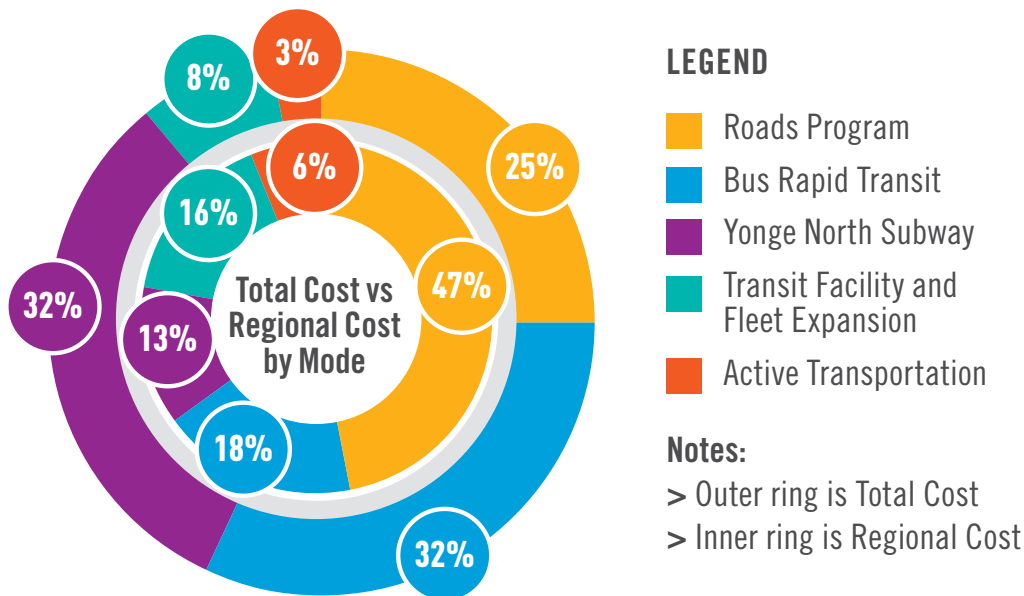
▲ Road surface improvements along Bathurst Steet just north of Bloomington Road in the Town of Aurora.

From plan to action

G1 Cost of the Plan

This TMP identifies the need for both specific and groups of projects to meet the needs of growth and provides an estimate of total costs of these projects. The cost of a project may be shared in part or fully by local municipalities, rail authorities and senior levels of government. The following section discusses funding sources, including contributions from other levels of government. The estimated costs of the networks and related programs recommended in this update

are \$12.4 billion for transit, \$496 million for active transportation and \$4.2 billion for roads. Additional cost would be required for annual rehabilitation, maintenance and end-of-life replacement of existing infrastructure such as reconstructing a road, replacing a bridge or a transit vehicle. It is anticipated that where technology is available the Region's existing fleet of fossil fueled vehicles will be replaced with a new hybrid or electric vehicle. This cost would be included in the Region's asset management program.



▲ FIGURE 15: TMP projects are delivered in partnership with the Province of Ontario and local municipalities. The two graphs show the percentage of capital cost between transit, active transportation and roads and York Region's share of those costs.

| Estimated Plan Capital Cost (Millions \$)* | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| Component | Total Cost | Regional Cost |
| Transit | | |
| Bus Rapid Transit corridors | 5,445 | 1,565 |
| Yonge North Subway Extension | 5,600 | 1,120 |
| Transit facilities / fleet (expansion) | 1,385 | 1,385 |
| Subtotal | 12,429 | 4,069 |
| Active Transportation | | |
| Subtotal | 496 | 496 |
| Roads | | |
| Road improvements | 2,267 | 2,200 |
| New road links | 190 | 190 |
| Mid-block crossings | 289 | 98 |
| Interchanges | 121 | 121 |
| Grade separations | 76 | 71 |
| Minor and miscellaneous capital | 839 | 838 |
| Transportation Demand Management | 72 | 72 |
| Programs and Growth Management Studies | 29 | 29 |
| Fleet and maintenance facilities | 353 | 353 |
| Subtotal | 4,237 | 3,971 |
| Total Cost | 17,162 | 8,536 |

* Totals may not add up due to rounding

By 2051, York Region's \$8.5 billion contribution to the \$17.2 billion investment in the active transportation, transit and road networks will:

- > Expand the active transportation system including completion of The Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail, South York Greenway micromobility corridor and constructing missing links in the network
- > Extend the Yonge North Subway to Highway 7
- > Expand the Regional Bus Rapid Transit Network
- > Connect communities across barriers such as 400 series highways by constructing mid-block crossings or constructing missing links in the road network
- > Implement road improvements considering the needs of the local community
- > Prioritize road improvements in congested areas and growing communities
- > Contribute to provincial investments such as rail-to-road grade separations and new and improved freeway interchanges

York Region's \$8.5 billion investment in transportation could increase over the next 30 years depending on the number of future highway interchanges and road-rail grade separations initiated by the Province of Ontario or others.

G2 Funding the Plan

Growth-related infrastructure is mainly funded by development charges (DC). These fees are collected from developers to build water, wastewater and transportation-related infrastructure to support new residential and non-residential development.

The [Development Charges Act, 1997](#) provides the legislative framework for development charges. As required by the Act, municipalities set out development charges in a bylaw that is updated at least every five years.

The [2022 Development Charges Bylaw and Background Study](#) are aligned with the TMP, and reflects \$11.2 billion in growth-related transportation projects, of which \$5.2 billion is eligible for cost recovery within the 2041 planning horizon of the 2022 bylaw, and \$0.9 billion is eligible for cost recovery under future DC bylaws and the remainder will be funded through non-DC sources such as tax levies, grants and subsidies. The 2022 Development Charges Bylaw helps fund the Region's share of the Yonge North Subway Extension, as well as Bus Rapid Transit investments, and investments in roads.

While the 2022 Development Charges Bylaw provides a funding source for growth-related projects, the annual budget provides the spending authority for projects through the annual budget.

G3 Balancing services with financial needs

York Region plans according to funds available, as it must remain financially self-sufficient while providing services to more people and jobs in the Region, especially in growing areas.

The Region's financial plan, also known as the Regional Fiscal Strategy, is designed to strike the right balance between the needs of the community and funds available by carefully managing when infrastructure is built, saving funds in reserves for future needs and limiting the borrowing of funds that come with additional expenses like interest, which is repaid from development charges when received.

Through the [Municipal Comprehensive Review](#) and updates to the master plans, two key goals were identified. The first is to direct growth to local municipalities that have existing infrastructure like roads, transit and sidewalks that can be further built upon to support an increasing population rather than to local municipalities where new infrastructure would need to be constructed. The second is to time new construction projects with actual growth rather than with forecasts. Based on the fiscal strategy, these goals are in line with principles endorsed by York Regional Council in June 2019 and are key to creating the fiscal room needed for the next generation of infrastructure projects, including the Region's share of the Yonge North Subway Extension.

In updating the Regional Official Plan, the Region also strengthened policies on coordinating the timing of projects with growth to improve efficiency and phasing the construction needed for future communities to ensure costs stay within the Region's means.

Policies throughout the Regional Official Plan were updated to highlight the importance of integrated land use, infrastructure and financial planning. The TMP follows this direction by addressing transportation needs while being responsible to both current and future residents:

- > Making cost-effective investments while major road and rapid transit projects will be needed over the next 30 years, the plan also includes less costly ways of carrying more travellers, such as multi-use paths and bike lanes
- > Watching for trends that support new, more eco-friendly directions. For example, the use of e-bikes and e-scooters, which help manage traffic congestion and reduce GHG emissions, is on the rise, and the Region will encourage these and similar trends, while also adding more electric vehicles to the YRT and corporate fleets
- > Monitoring road and traffic conditions, along with the pace and location of growth, to adjust 10-year capital plans as needed

These activities will help provide the right service at the right time. To further ensure costs are managed responsibly, capital and operating plans will help to minimize the total costs of the transportation

network now and as it grows to meet the needs of higher population and employment as well as the longer-term lifecycle cost of the regional infrastructure. Sections G4 and G5 discuss this and other implementation challenges in more detail.

G4 How asset management supports growth

York Region manages existing and invests in new assets, including roads, transit vehicles and more, that serve our nine local municipalities. Proper management and investment of these assets, through growth and renewal, serves and supports strong, caring and safe communities. York Region identifies and invests in new assets, such as constructing new roads or purchasing new buses, through its Growth Portfolio, which falls under the annual capital program. Expanding existing assets, such as widening roads or replacing small buses with larger buses, helps to expand services to meet the needs of a growing community. Before constructing new assets, a comprehensive review is done to determine if the Region can afford to own, operate and maintain it. For example, a new or widened road requires more funds to snow plow, paint lines and keep in good condition. Tax levy budgets are adjusted to reflect the cost of operating and maintaining new assets.

When a new asset is built through the annual capital program, York Region takes ownership of the asset and it is added to the renewal portfolio, which is focused on investing in existing assets. Much like buying a new car, when York Region purchases a new bus, ongoing investments include oil changes, tires and engine

Project Phases



Average span of time needed to complete a major road widening

▲ FIGURE 16: Time line for roads and transit capital investments.

tune ups to ensure it continues to operate efficiently. Roads also require maintenance including the upkeep of the road surface and prevention of cracks in the pavement. This proactive care prevents more costly repairs and extend the lifespan of the road to support residents and businesses now and in the future. Short-, medium- and long-term investment plans help maximize the return on investment from the tax levy and development charge contributions and offers the best service delivery to communities for dollars spent.

Because the Region's asset portfolio grows every year, asset management is of the utmost importance.

Each year, growth and renewal capital projects support the nine local municipalities and optimize investment across the entire Region. While communities across the Region are forecast to see differing rates of growth, all benefit from the renewal program, which aims to ensure assets provide optimal service over time.

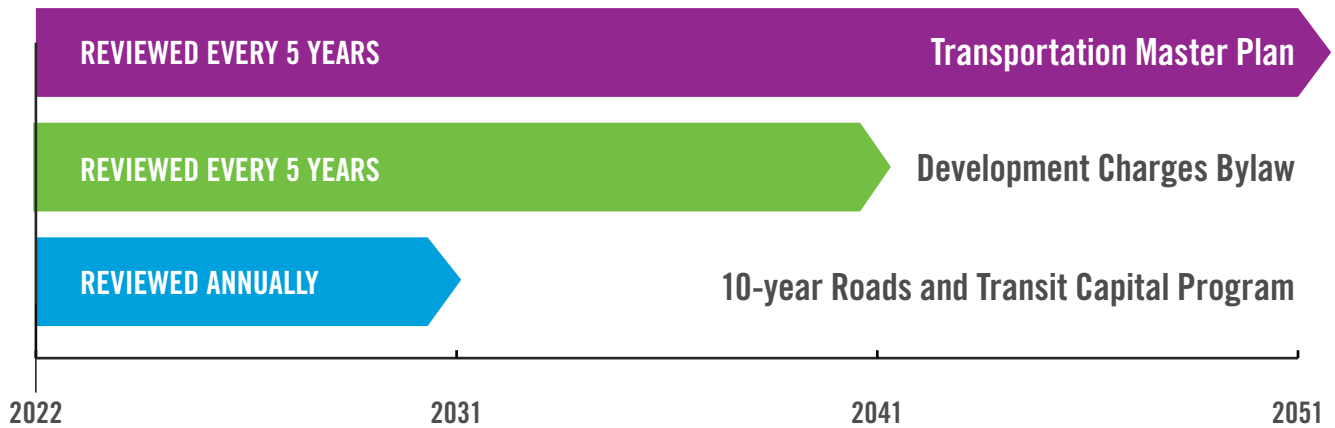
G5 Approach to implementation

With the adoption of the TMP, 10-year programs for roads, active transportation and transit capital investments provide more details about implementation. These programs are directly linked to the pace of growth by providing the infrastructure needed to support new development.

The programs also consider the time to complete construction. On average, it takes eight to ten years to complete a major road improvement, like adding regular traffic lanes or dedicated bus lanes to an existing road. Planning, environmental assessments, design and construction are all part of the process and take time to complete. For major projects like extending the subway line, which involves multiple levels of government, getting funding commitments and coordinating plans can add several more years.

The road, active transportation and transit capital programs feed into the 10-year capital plan in York Region's annual budget. Through the budget process, the 10-year capital plan may be adjusted as needed to reflect available funds, regulatory or construction delays, growth that is different from the forecasts and other factors.

Long Term Planning, Funding and Delivery of Capital Projects



▲ FIGURE 17: Time line for long-term planning, funding and delivery of capital projects.

As noted in Section E3.4, changes made by third parties, especially the provincial government, can impact planning. For example, a Minister's Zoning Order to change the allowed use of a specific piece of land from employment to residential would change travel patterns and needs of the area. In addition, reversing previous direction on expanding provincial highways extensions, like those discussed in Section E2, could also affect the Region's plans for how land is used and serviced.

These unknown or unplanned changes could require York Region to fund and deliver additional capital projects and related long-term operating costs. This would affect the Region's fiscal capacity and might result in other planned projects being deferred.

Although the TMP defines the need for improvements to a corridor it does not predetermine the recommended solution. For each project, York Region is committed to re-evaluating Phase 1 (Problem or Opportunity) and Phase 2 (Alternative Solutions) of the MCEA as described in Section C1 of this plan.

This will include working directly with local stakeholders on evaluating the transportation solution in their neighbourhood to ensure interested individuals have an opportunity to comment on projects that may affect them. This process also includes considerations and decisions about design. To reduce the total cost of a project and disruption to the public, the Region also aims to combine growth with rehabilitation projects and to coordinate all work within a transportation corridor.



▲ Aerial view of Highway 7 in the City of Markham.

G6 Total costs of the transportation network

York Region owns \$4.1 billion in road assets, such as pavement, bridges and traffic signals, and \$2.0 billion in transit assets, including bus garages, buses, transit stops and terminals.

Each year, over \$260 million is needed to operate and maintain the Regional road network and an additional \$250 million is needed for the transit network.

Examples of day-to-day operations include clearing snow, cutting grass along boulevards, filling potholes, providing transit services and maintaining buses.

As described in Section G4, the Region's existing road, active transportation and transit infrastructure have annual maintenance and rehabilitation and ultimately need to be replaced. Together, rehabilitation and replacement are often referred to as renewal costs. Each year, on average, the Region spends \$150 million on renewing transportation assets.

These figures demonstrate the importance of planning for the ongoing costs of new infrastructure. As soon as an asset goes into service, the Region draws up a plan to operate and maintain it and plans for its eventual replacement.

The road projects in the TMP will increase the department's operating and asset management budget by roughly \$6 million a year from 2022 to 2031, rising to \$13.6 million a year from 2032 to 2041 and \$21.2 million a year for the following decade. This reflects higher operations, maintenance, preservation and asset management costs over the current operating outlook and is in addition to up-front construction costs. The incremental cost of the 2051 rapid transit network is \$48.1 million a year.

The incremental cost figures include funds that would need to be set aside in reserves for asset management. The Region follows two provincial regulations on maintaining assets in a state of good repair. One, under the Infrastructure for [Jobs and Prosperity Act](#), guides how municipalities plan the management of all major assets. The other, under the *Municipal Act*, sets out maintenance standards for municipal highways. Asset management is important for maintaining service quality and keeping costs in line. It helps the Region ensure safe and reliable road and transit systems, extends the life of assets and reduces total costs over their life cycle.



▲ Resurfacing of Mulock Drive, East of Yonge Street in the Town of Newmarket.

This also extends the life of a road before full replacement is needed.

For instance, every dollar spent on pavement preservation, including resurfacing, results in spending five to ten times less in future rehabilitation or reconstruction costs. This also helps maintain the capacity of the road by reducing the instances of potholes, the need for preventative construction and major rehabilitation, and extends the life of the road before replacement is needed. Another important consideration is the impact of invasive plant species in the Region. Invasive plants such as Japanese knotweed are known to grow through materials such as asphalt and concrete, while Phragmites (European common reed) fill ditches and plug culverts, resulting in drainage issues and flooding. Although the impacts of invasive species can be mitigated, the cumulative impact of climate change on the expansion of invasive species in range and growth rates will continue to pose a threat to the Region's infrastructure.

As part of the Region's corporate asset management initiative, the Transportation Operations, Public Works Department maintains a 100-year forecast of the maintenance, rehabilitation and replacement needs of roads, bridges and transit assets. This helps determine how many dollars of the tax levy need to be placed in the asset management reserve.

G7 Measuring and monitoring performance

It is important for York Regional Council, stakeholders, partners and the public to see progress being made towards the TMP's vision, goals and objectives.

Progress will be monitored through an annual TMP status update and a lengthier progress report every five years that help determine when the next update is needed.

The annual update will show the status of all focus area initiatives and actions in the TMP. It will keep York Regional Council and the public informed about the work the Region has done and plans to do. The status update will also be used by staff in annual work planning and budgeting.



Developing progress indicators and a framework for reporting will be key initiatives of the first status update as measurement is key to evaluating effectiveness. The indicators are intended to be:

- > **Meaningful:** Reflect the community priorities as set out in the TMP purpose statement and objectives
- > **Timely:** Prioritize what can be delivered in the short term while keeping line of sight to the medium- and longer-term priorities based on the evolving environment for transportation
- > **Achievable:** Ensure objectives are within the Region's ability to deliver, control or influence
- > **Measurable:** Be based on readily available information and data

G8 Updating the Transportation Master Plan

The TMP is reviewed every five years. Two other factors influence reviews:

> **TMP Progress Report:** The annual progress report described in the previous section will be used to gauge how the plan is performing and how extensive of a review or more comprehensive update to the TMP is needed

> **York Region Official Plan Review:** Provincial legislation requires a review and update of the Regional Official Plan at least every ten years. Major infrastructure plans, including the TMP, are typically updated at the same time to inform the Official Plan update



▲ Aerial view of Yonge Street and Eagle Street intersection in the Town of Newmarket.

Appendix A
Glossary

Boulevards are the strips of land located between the road curb and private property that can include cycling paths, sidewalks, streetscaping and lighting.

Centres and Corridors, as defined in the Regional Official Plan, are the primary locations for the most intensive and greatest mix of development (high, medium and low density residential, commercial, employment, etc) within the Region. Regional Centres expand on the urban growth centre and anchor hub concepts, as detailed in the provincial, A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan: The Big Move.

Commuter parking lot refers to a parking facility which allows a commuter to park their own personal vehicle and then transfer to / from a different mode of travel (e.g., public transit) to complete their commute.

Cycling facility refers to pieces of infrastructure that are shared or specifically designated for use by bicycles or other designated forms of transportation. Examples can include (but are not limited to) bike lanes or multi-use paths.

Dedicated / separated facilities refers to bike lanes or shared paths designed for use by cyclists and are separated from motor vehicles by signage, markings and / or barriers.

Facilities refers to a place, amenity or piece of equipment provided for a particular purpose, e.g., bike lanes, bus rapid transit, road widenings, streetscaping, etc.

GO Transit rail corridor refers to a commuter rail service within a right-of-way, operated by Metrolinx.

GO Transit rail station is a regular stopping place on a GO train route, which includes platforms and often one or more buildings, operated by Metrolinx.

GO Transit rail station subject to further study is a future GO rail station identified for further review.

Grade separation refers to an underpass / tunnel or an overpass / bridge that allows a road or rail line to travel over or under the other, without the need for vehicles travelling on the road to stop.

Grade separation (capital program) refers to a grade separation between road and rail, identified as part of York Region's 10-year roads and transit capital construction program.

Grade separation (prioritized) refers to a grade separation identified as a priority, but not currently included in the 10-year capital construction program.

High-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane refers to a reserved right-of-way or dedicated lane in a road for use by public transit vehicles and other vehicles such as emergency vehicles, taxis or multiple-person vehicles.

Interchange is a crossing of a Regional road over or under a provincial freeway with connecting ramps for traffic turning between the intersecting freeway and roadway.

Interchange (municipal initiative) is an interchange requested by a municipality and not within the Region's or provincial government's capital construction plan.

Major transit station area refers to the area including and around selected existing or planned higher-order transit stations or stops (bus rapid transit stations, GO stations and subway stations) within a settlement area. Major transit station areas generally are defined as the area within an approximate 500- to 800-metre radius of a transit station or stop, representing about a 10-minute walk. A minimum density target and boundary delineation are assigned to all protected major transit station areas in the Regional Official Plan.

Micromobility is transportation over short distances provided by eco-friendly, usually single-person vehicles such as electric bicycles and scooters

Mid-block crossing is a road connection over or under a major highway without ramp access.

Mobility hub consists of major transit stations and the surrounding area. They serve a critical function in the Regional transportation system as the origin, destination, or transfer point for a significant portion of transit trips. They are places of connectivity where different modes of transportation – from walking to riding transit – come together seamlessly and where there is an intense concentration of working, living, shopping and / or playing.

New road link is a new road designed to provide continuous access across communities.

Neighbourhood placemaking refers to strengthening connections between residents and the places they share through better urban design, including designing roads and other transportation infrastructure to encourage physical activity, make people feel safer and widen travel options.

Official Plan comprises a municipality's policies on how land should be used. Prepared with community input, it helps ensure that future planning and development will meet the specific needs of the community and growth forecasts prescribed by the provincial government. The Official Plan prepared for York Region is typically referred to as the Regional Official Plan. Each of the nine local municipalities within the Region has its own Official Plan.

Provincial freeway refers to an express highway with controlled access, such as highways 400, 404 and 427, maintained by the provincial government, and Highway 407, maintained by ETR 407.

Provincial highway is a road connecting regions, counties and / or cities, maintained by the provincial government. Provincial highways in York Region include Highway 9 west of Highway 400 and Highway 48.

Rapid transit corridor refers to transit infrastructure where lanes are for the exclusive use of buses or light-rail vehicles and are physically separated from other modes of travel within its own section. In York Region, a rapid transit corridor may also be referred to as a "rapidway."

Rapid transit subject to further study refers to a future rapid transit corridor identified for further review.

Rapidway is a dedicated lane in the centre of the road for use by YRT bus rapid transit vehicles (Viva) and emergency services.

Regional Centres and Corridors See Centres and Corridors.

Regional Official Plan See Official Plan.

Regional trail network is a connected series of shared facilities typically located outside the roadway for use by cyclists, pedestrians and other forms of active transportation.

Road improvement refers to a change to a road and / or its elements, including widening, reconfiguring and / or adding new structures or facilities such as bike lanes, cycle paths, high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) or transit lanes to improve travel options and traveller experience.

Road improvements (provincial jurisdiction) refers to a change to the road and / or its elements, including widening, reducing, re-configuring and / or adding new structures on a provincial highway.

Transit hub See mobility hub.

Transitway on existing / proposed provincial highway refers to transit infrastructure that is either adjacent to or separated from parallel provincial 400-series highways and is exclusively dedicated for buses or light-rail vehicles to accommodate longer-distance (express) passenger needs.

Transportation Tomorrow Survey is a co-operative effort by local and provincial government agencies to collect information about urban travel in southern Ontario. The survey has been undertaken every five years since 1986 to collect household travel data about travel origins and destinations, travel mode, trip purpose and more. The data collected helps local and regional governments, as well as the provincial government and its agencies, make informed transportation decisions on future planning and investment for roads, public transit and other transportation facilities.

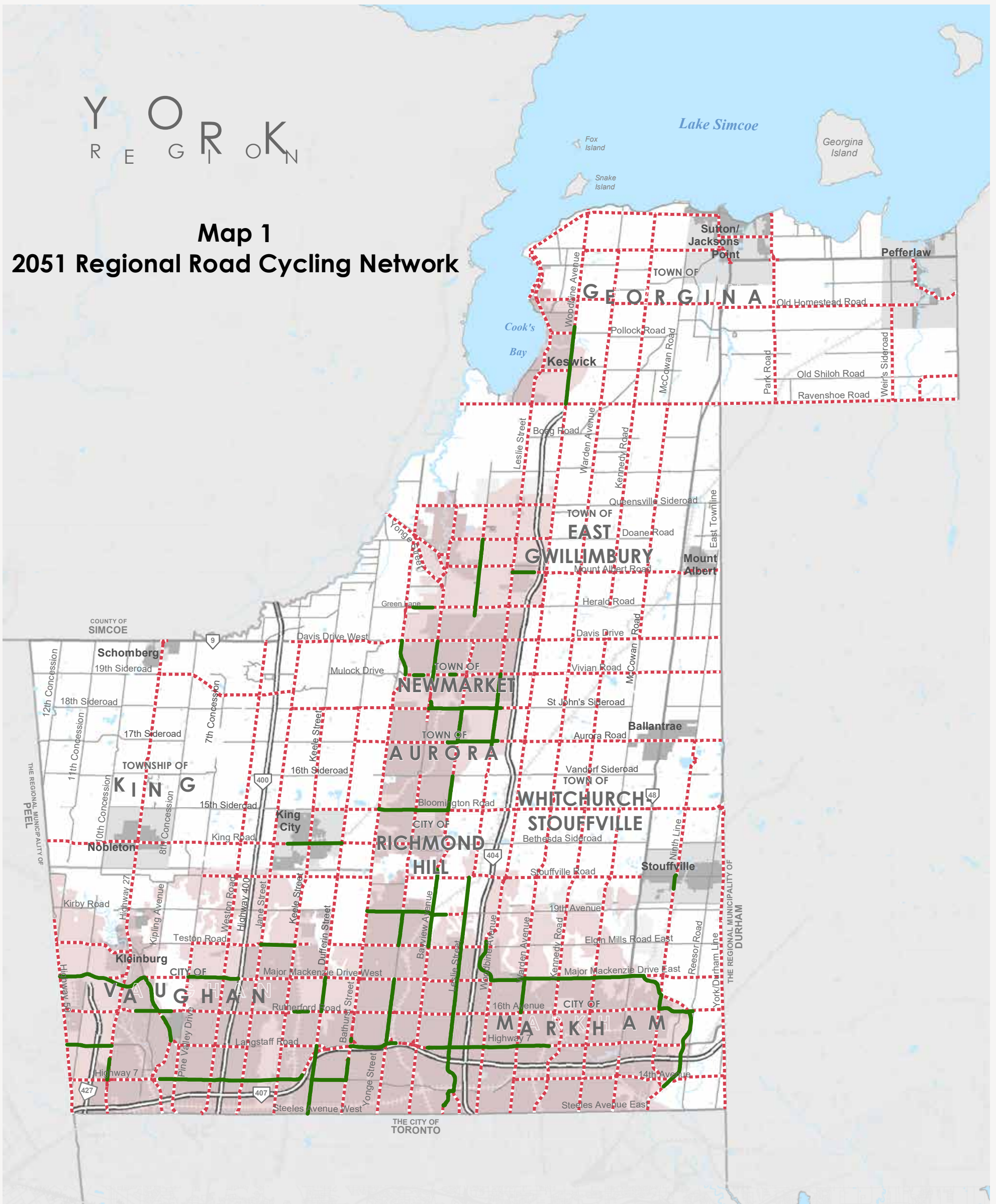
Urban area refers to an area identified for existing or future urban uses.

Urban boundary defines the limit for development within an urban area serviced with infrastructure like public transit, water and sewage pipes and recreation facilities to help control urban sprawl.

Window street is a road carrying traffic parallel to but not necessarily adjoining a highway.

Appendix B
Maps

Map 1 2051 Regional Road Cycling Network



Existing Network*

Dedicated/Separated Facilities (Protected Bike Lane, Shared Pathway, Bike Lane)

Proposed Cycling Facilities

Cycling facility to be determined in consultation with Pedestrian and Cycling Planning and Design Guidelines

BASE MAP INFORMATION

- Provincial Freeway
- Provincial Highway
- Road
- Railway
- Urban Boundary
- Built-up Area
- Designated Urban Area



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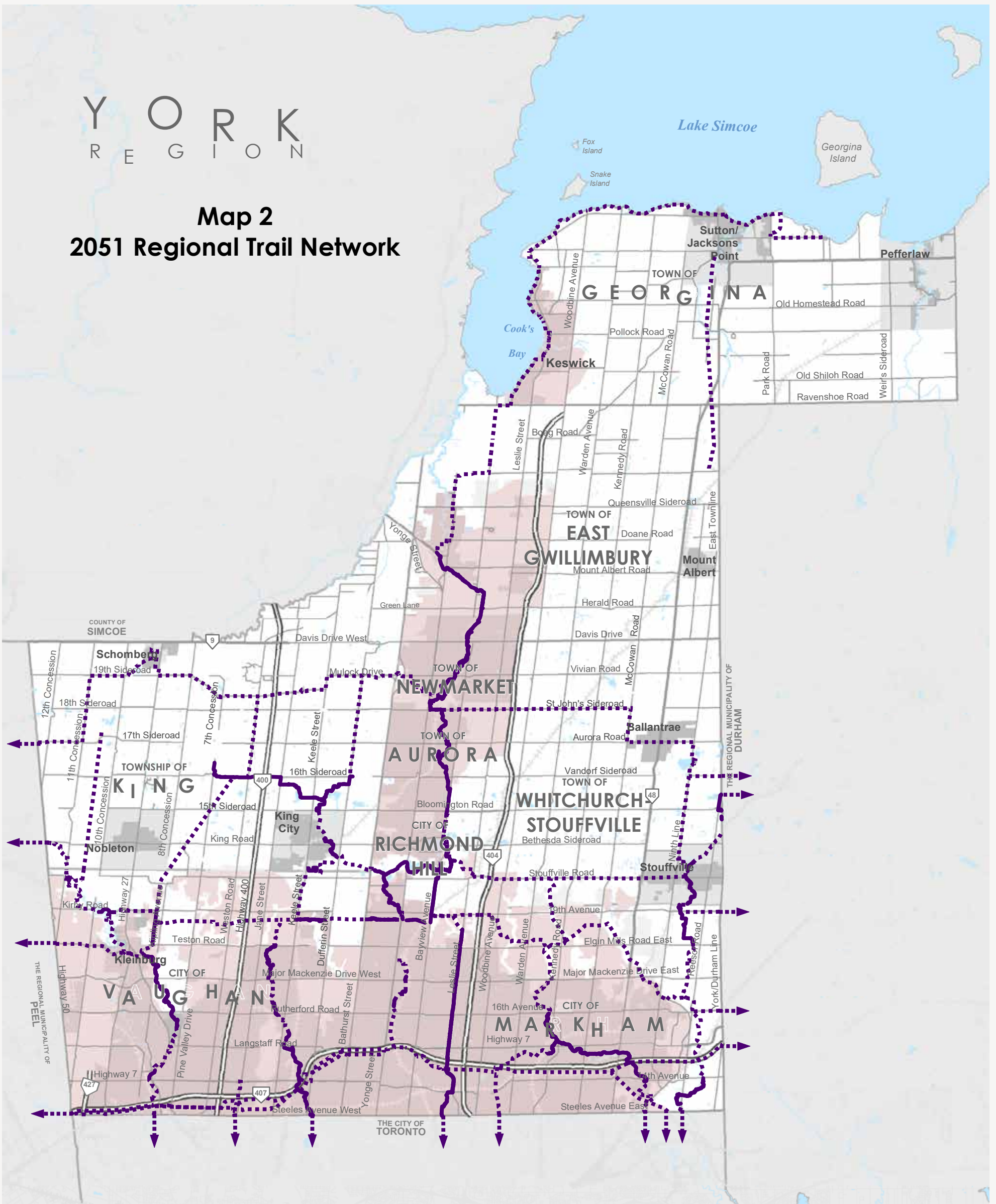
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Date: 1 June 2022

*Wherever possible, existing cycling network is subject to infrastructure improvements in order to align with the Pedestrian and Cycling Planning and Design Guidelines.

YORK REGION

Map 2 2051 Regional Trail Network



Trails of Regional Significance

- Existing Region-Wide Trail Network
- Proposed Region-Wide Trail Network

BASE MAP INFORMATION

- Provincial Freeway
- Provincial Highway
- Road
- Railway
- Urban Boundary
- Built-up Area
- Designated Urban Area

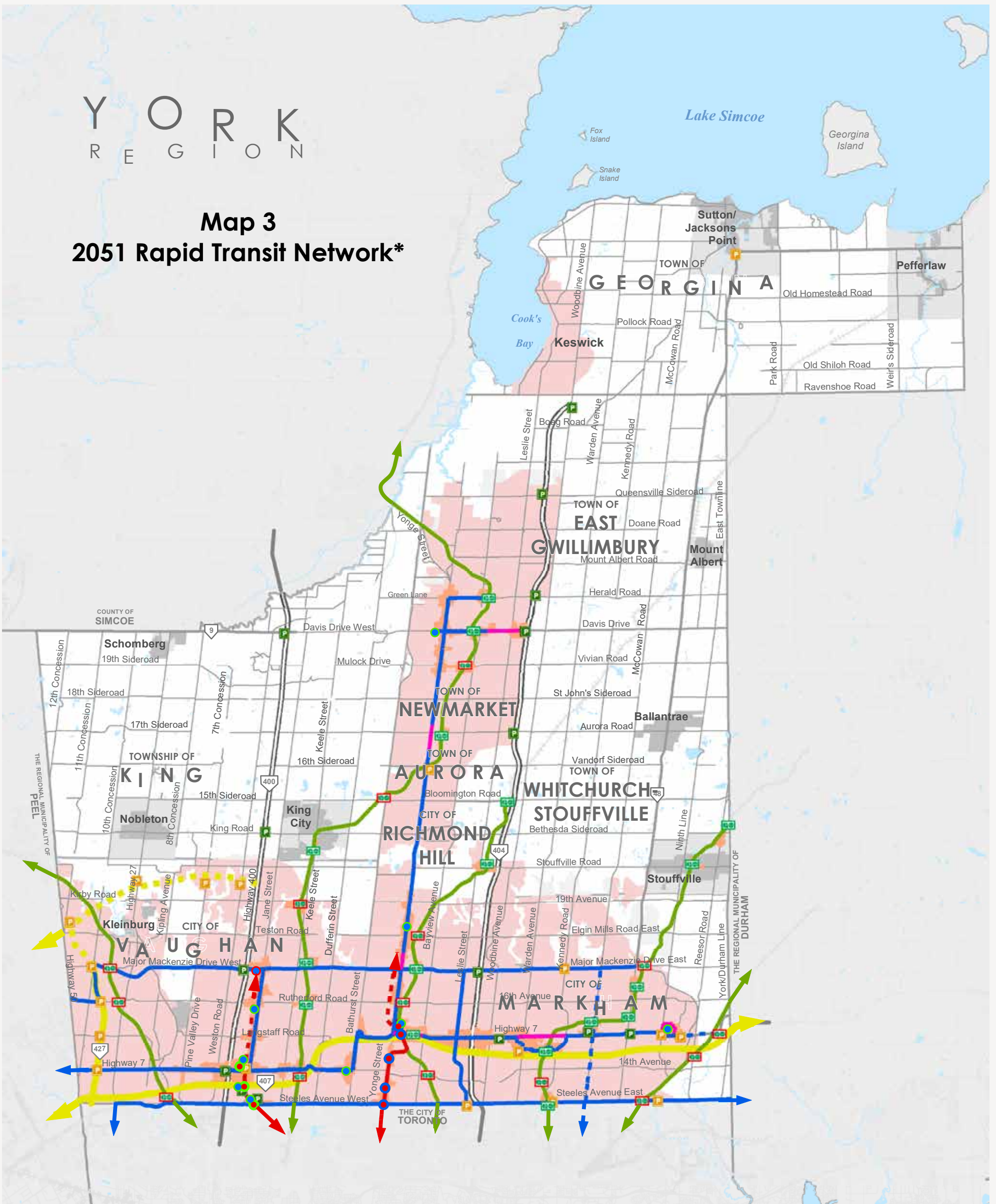


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Date: 1 June 2022

Map 3 2051 Rapid Transit Network*



Legend

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| Bus Terminals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Existing Bus Terminal ● Future Bus Terminal | Commuter Parking Lots <ul style="list-style-type: none"> P Existing Lot P Potential Lot | Provincial GO Rail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — GO Rail Corridor |
| Subway Stations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposed Subway Station ● Existing Subway Station | Rapid Transit Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Rapid Transit Corridor — Rapid Transit subject to further study — BRT Curbside Service | Transitway Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Transitway Alongside Existing Provincial Highway — Transitway Alongside Proposed Provincial Highway |
| GO Rail Stations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + GO Rail Station + GO Rail Station subject to further study | Subway Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Subway — Subway subject to further study | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Major Transit Station Area |

BASE MAP INFORMATION

- Provincial Freeway
- Provincial Highway
- Road
- Railway
- Urban Boundary
- Built-up Area
- Designated Urban Area



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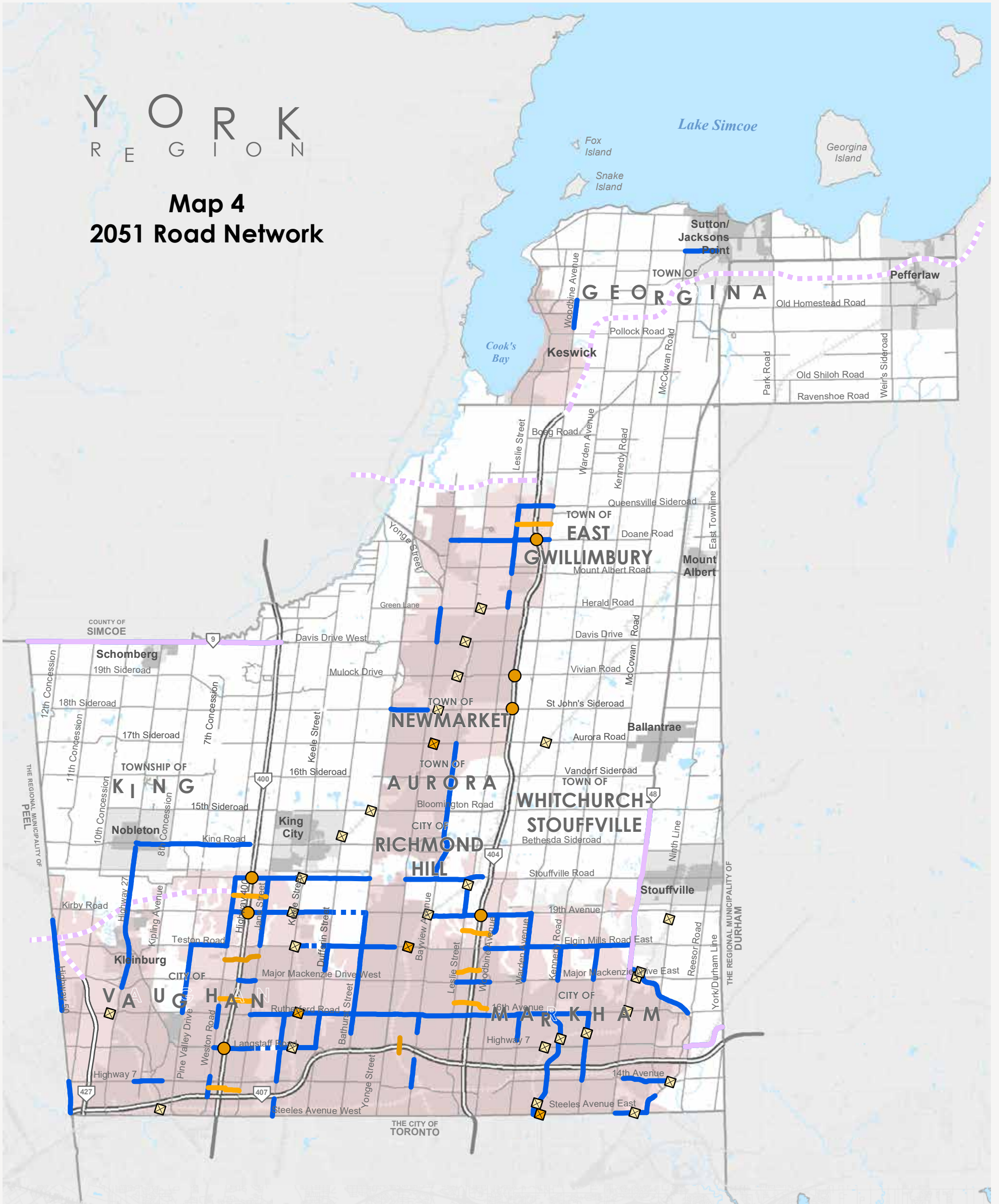
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Last Updated: 25 May 2022

* Note: This map represents the long-term transit plan for the Region.
For more information on current transit services, please visit www.yrt.ca.

YORK REGION

Map 4 2051 Road Network



Legend

Road Projects

- Midblock Crossing
- Road Improvements
- - - - New Road Link
- Road Improvements (Provincial Jurisdiction)
- - - - Future Highway

Grade Separations

- ⊠ Grade Separation (Included in 10-Year Capital Program)
- ⊠ Grade Separation (Subject to Future Study)

Interchanges

- Potential Interchange or Interchange Improvements

BASE MAP INFORMATION

- Provincial Freeway
- Provincial Highway
- Road
- Railway
- Urban Boundary
- Built-up Area
- Designated Urban Area



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Date: 1 June 2022

Transportation Operations, Public Works

Phone: 1 877 464-9675 ext. 75000

TTY: 1 866 512 6228

Email: transportation@york.ca

Website: york.ca

From: [Switzer, Barbara](#) on behalf of [Regional Clerk](#)
To: [Simon Granat](#)
Subject: Regional Council Decision - Town of Newmarket Resolution - Inn from the Cold Development Funding
Date: October 3, 2022 3:20:59 PM

CAUTION: This email originated outside of the Town of Newmarket. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and trusted content.

On September 29, 2022 Regional Council received your communication dated September 8, 2022 and adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS Inn from the Cold (IFTC), located in the Town of Newmarket, is a long-standing service provider and provides services and programs for residents experiencing homelessness in York Region; and

WHEREAS IFTC is planning to build a new facility on land that it has purchased, and which includes a portion of land that has been provided by the Town of Newmarket at 17046 Yonge Street; and

WHEREAS the development will include 26 emergency housing beds and 18 transitional housing units which will provide additional capacity in York Region; and

WHEREAS this facility will provide specialized supports to residents that are living unsheltered and have a history of chronic homelessness; and

WHEREAS the matter is time sensitive because:

- Capital support provided by York Region will strengthen the IFTC's application to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Co-Investment Fund for approximately \$6.5 million to supplement the total estimated capital budget of approximately \$12 million
- Their current lease is expected to end in October 2024 and it is unknown, at this time, if the lease can be further extended
- Pending various expedited zoning/permit applications, IFTC is aiming to open in fall 2024 to ensure no gap between the potential end of the lease and availability of beds / loss of shelter capacity in the Region
- The development timeline requires that funding be confirmed as soon as possible; and

WHEREAS The Region's Surplus Management Policy requires that any operating surplus be allocated to the target balances of the Region's Working Capital Reserve, Contingent Liability Reserves, General Capital Reserve, Fuel Cost Stabilization Reserve, and the Debt Reduction Reserve.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. York Region provide \$1 million in capital funding, to be drawn from the Social Housing Development Reserve, to IFTC to support the development of the new emergency and transitional housing facility targeting people who are chronically homeless.
2. The approval of \$1 million in capital funding to IFTC does not commit York

Region to providing any additional capital or operating funding.

3. The \$1 million capital funding from York Region be contingent on the execution of a funding agreement between the Region and IFTC.
4. Any 2022 operating surplus be first allocated, up to \$1 million, to the Social Housing Development Reserve, before allocating any remaining surplus in accordance with the Region's Surplus Management Policy.

Regards,

Christopher Raynor (he/him) | Regional Clerk, Regional Clerk's Office, Corporate Services Department

The Regional Municipality of York | 17250 Yonge Street | Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1
O: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71300 | christopher.raynor@york.ca | york.ca

Our Mission: **Working together to serve our thriving communities – today and tomorrow**

From: [McPhail, Roxanne](#) on behalf of [Regional Clerk](#)
Subject: Regional Council Decision - Vacant Homes Tax to Support Affordable Housing Update
Date: October 3, 2022 3:17:24 PM
Attachments: [Vacant Homes Tax to Support Affordable Housing Update.pdf](#)

CAUTION: This email originated outside of the Town of Newmarket. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and trusted content.

On September 29, 2022 Regional Council made the following decision:

1. Council direct staff to continue its work on a potential Vacant Homes Tax and report back during the first quarter of 2023 with a proposed program design and a draft bylaw.
2. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the local municipalities.

The original staff report is attached for your information.

Please contact Edward Hankins, Director, Treasury Office and Deputy Treasurer at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71644 if you have any questions with respect to this matter.

Regards,

Christopher Raynor (he/him) | Regional Clerk, Regional Clerk's Office, Corporate Services Department

The Regional Municipality of York | 17250 Yonge Street | Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1
O: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71300 | christopher.raynor@york.ca | york.ca

Our Mission: **Working together to serve our thriving communities – today and tomorrow**

The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole
Finance and Administration
September 8, 2022

Report of the Commissioner of Finance, the Commissioner of Community and Health Services, and the Chief Planner

Vacant Homes Tax to Support Affordable Housing Update

1. Recommendations

Council direct staff to continue its work on a potential Vacant Homes Tax and report back during the first quarter of 2023 with a proposed program design and a draft bylaw.

2. Summary

In October 2021, Regional Council directed staff to undertake a feasibility study and public benefits review of implementing a Vacant Homes Tax (VHT). Council also directed that any revenues resulting from the VHT, net of costs, would be used for future affordable housing initiatives.

This report provides an update on the work completed so far on a potential VHT for the Region and includes three consultant reports, identified as Attachments 1- 3: 'A Review of Issues to be Considered for the Taxation of Vacant Homes in York Region' (Attachment 1), 'A Review of Housing Market Conditions Within York Region' (Attachment 2), and 'Evaluating a Vacant Homes Tax - What We Heard' (Attachment 3).

Key Points:

- A VHT is levied on vacant, non-principal/investment, residential properties with the primary objective being to return more housing supply to the marketplace
- Beginning in 2017, designated municipalities in Ontario were permitted to levy a VHT and thus far only Ottawa (levying the tax beginning this year) and Hamilton have received provincial designation. Toronto, which is also now levying a VHT, did not require designation to implement. Vancouver was the first Canadian jurisdiction to levy a VHT (called an Empty Homes Tax)
- Initial estimates from KPMG indicate there could be up to 7,250 vacant homes in York Region, of which over 1,600 could be subject to a VHT
- During the spring and summer of 2022, a multi-platformed information/ engagement campaign was used to determine general support for a VHT as well as the potential policy design parameters

- Stakeholders consulted included residents, property owners, ratepayer groups, the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, finance and planning staff at local municipalities, members of the Planning Advisory Committee, the York Region Local Municipal Staff Housing Working Group, members of local Chambers of Commerce/Boards of Trade and the Building Industry and Land Development Association – York Chapter (BILD)
- From June 24 to July 13, the Region hosted an online survey seeking feedback on a potential VHT from residents and property owners. Of the over 2,750 surveys received, nearly 88% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that York Region is facing housing affordability challenges and nearly 80% believed the Region should levy a VHT to help address these challenges, with just over 50% believing the rate should be 2% or higher
- A Region-wide VHT, with a tax rate between 1% and 2%, could generate between \$13.4 million and \$26.8 million in the first year. It is estimated that this would require approximately \$6.5 million to implement, with operational costs estimated to be \$3.5 million annually
- It is recommended that staff report back during the first quarter of 2023 with a proposed detailed program design, draft VHT Bylaw, and a potential recommendation seeking designation by the Province, which could enable the Region to begin implementing this tax in 2023

3. Background

Council established the Housing Affordability Task Force in 2021 to help address challenges in the Region

As reported in the [Affordable Housing in York Region – 2021 Measuring and Monitoring report](#) from May of 2022, housing affordability is an ongoing challenge in the Region. Only 4% of new units built in 2021 were identified as affordable¹, which represents a decrease from 8% in 2020. In addition, between 2011 and 2021, while average resale home price increased by 139% (from approximately \$542,841 to \$1,292,351), the average family income increased by only 24% (from approximately \$89,960 to \$111,295). In 2021 to help address these challenges, Regional Council established the [Housing Affordability Task Force](#) with a mandate to identify solutions, including the use of all available tools (legislative or otherwise).

¹ Note: Includes ownership housing where the purchase price results in annual accommodation costs not exceeding 30 per cent of gross annual household income for low- and moderate-income households, and all purpose-built rental housing.

Amendments to the *Municipal Act, 2001* in 2017 now permit a designated municipality to impose a VHT

As part of the Province's Fair Housing Plan (Plan) in 2017 the *Municipal Act, 2001* (Act), was amended to allow designated municipalities² to, by way of bylaw, impose a VHT. A VHT is a levy on a vacant non-principal/investment residence which is intended to discourage homes from being left vacant over a long period of time. The ultimate policy outcome of the tax would see more housing supply being returned to the marketplace, either by way of additional rental or ownership opportunities. In fact, Finance Minister Bethlenfalvy, in an August 22nd interview at the Association of Municipalities 2022 Conference, was [noted](#) as saying that a number of municipalities are looking to use the VHT as a tool to help address housing affordability challenges.

Seeking designation, by way of request to the Minister of Finance, does not bind a municipal Council to levy a VHT, it is rather a procedural step ensuring that the municipality has the authority to pass a VHT Bylaw, should it so choose. Upon being designated, any VHT Bylaw must state the tax rate and the conditions of vacancy (e.g., vacant for 6 months). The Bylaw may also provide exemptions to vacancy, identification processes and how appeals/disputes are to be resolved. Finally, with respect to two tiered municipalities like the Region, an upper-tier municipality may implement a VHT that is applied in all, or some, local municipalities.

A VHT could also help combat housing speculation not addressed by the Non-Resident Speculation Tax

On April 21, 2017, the Province of Ontario implemented a 15% tax on the purchase of homes in the Greater Golden Horseshoe by non-resident non-Canadian individuals and corporations. The tax applies to the purchase price of the home. In March of 2022, the Province increased the tax to 20% and expanded it to the entire Province. While this tax may deter foreign buyers, it does not address speculative activity by Canadians. Preliminary analysis, as well as the Region's online VHT survey, shows most multi-property owners reside within the same general area in which they own properties.

Vancouver became the first Canadian municipality to levy a VHT in 2017, with Toronto and Ottawa joining in 2022 and Hamilton proceeding to implementation

The City of Vancouver was the first municipality in Canada to implement a VHT (called an Empty Homes Tax), in the 2017 taxation year. The initial tax rate was 1%; it gradually increased to 5% for 2023. Since implementation, the tax has generated \$86.6 million in net proceeds to support affordable housing programs. The city has also experienced a 26% decline in vacancies during that time.

² The City of Toronto is not required to seek a designation

Effective in 2022, the cities of Toronto and Ottawa implemented a 1% tax on vacant homes, with first taxes to be received in 2023. Key details of their respective tax policy designs are summarized in Table 1 below.

In February 2022 the City of Hamilton requested designation from the Province, which was provided on May 3, 2022. The city is now proceeding with implementation of a VHT. The Regions of Peel and Halton have conducted feasibility studies and have instructed their staff to design a VHT for their regions.

Table 1
Summary of key provisions of the Toronto and Ottawa VHT

| Policy area | Municipality | |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| | Toronto | Ottawa |
| Tax rate | 1% of assessed value | |
| Tax revenue utilization | | |
| time vacant | 6 months | |
| Key exemptions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sale or transfer of ownership • death of registered owner • property undergoing redevelopment or major renovation • occupant is residing in hospital, long-term care facility • court order prohibiting occupancy of the unit is in place | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • property is used as a cottage rental in the rural area, with a valid host permit • property has a combination of tenanted and |

In October 2021, Regional Council directed staff to develop a feasibility study and public benefits review of a VHT in York Region

On October 14, 2021 Council [directed](#) staff to conduct a feasibility study and public benefits review for a potential VHT in York Region. The purpose of these studies is to determine the number of vacant units in the Region, potential revenues and costs associated with a VHT, support for the tax, examination of what neighboring municipalities have done, and to assist in a preliminary policy design for the tax.

Council also directed that any revenues from a VHT, net of costs, be used for future affordable housing initiatives. The October report noted that, based on consultations with the province, the following steps be followed to meet 'best practices' in an effort to seek potential designation by the Minister of Finance:

- Provide evidence of public consultation
- Provide evidence of local and upper-tier engagement
- Illustrate revenue yields

Finally, the report noted staff would need to procure a consultant to assist with the work on the VHT.

KPMG LLP and Creative PROCESS was retained as consultants on the project

During the spring of 2022, staff began working with KPMG LLP (KPMG) and Creative PROCESS (PROCESS) on the VHT.

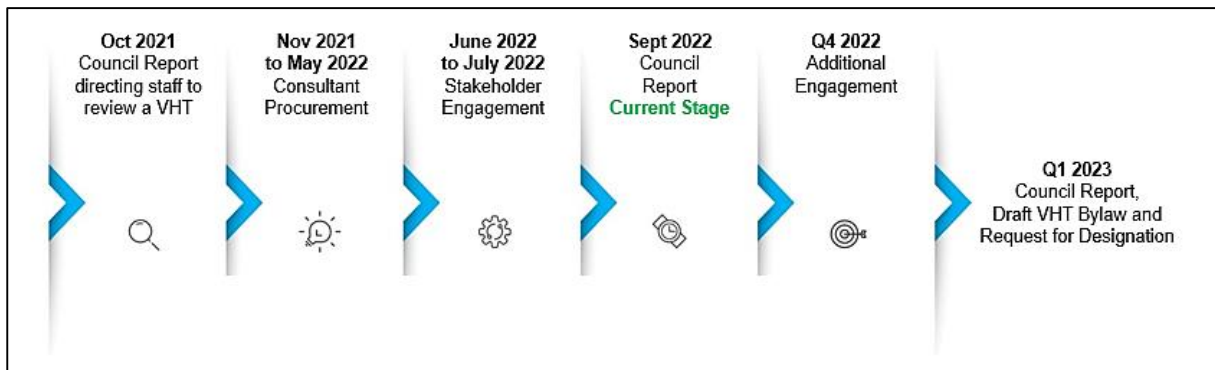
KPMG previously worked with the City of Toronto on their VHT and a review of new revenue tools, with York Region on the implementation of a Corporate Asset Management Risk System, and with the City of Vaughan on their Development Review Process Program Review. In addition to providing peer review and advisory services for this project, KPMG prepared the 'A Review of Issues to be Considered for the Taxation of Vacant Homes in York Region' and 'A Review of Housing Market Conditions Within York Region' (Attachments 1 and 2).

PROCESS is a team of strategists, professional urban planners, engagement specialists, communications and public relations experts, evaluation practitioners, and policymakers. PROCESS most recently worked with York Region helping to facilitate consultation in support of the Municipal Comprehensive Review. They have also worked with many local and neighboring municipalities, including the City of Markham, Town of Newmarket, the City of Barrie, and the Town of Whitby. PROCESS prepared the 'Evaluating a Vacant Homes Tax - What We Heard' report (Attachment 3).

This update report is a step in the process to develop and recommend a VHT program and draft Bylaw

Figure 1 provides a timeline for a VHT Bylaw. Additional engagement with stakeholders (particularly the local municipalities) during the fourth quarter of 2022 would allow for focused discussions on a VHT policy design and draft Bylaw as well an implementation model, which would come to Council for consideration during the first quarter of 2023. This timeline would allow Council upon designation and if it so chooses, begin levying the tax in 2023 and collecting in 2024³.

Figure 1
VHT Bylaw Timeline



4. Analysis

The review of housing market conditions within York Region, prepared by KPMG, confirms continued housing affordability challenges

As noted above, to get an updated understanding of the housing market in York Region, KPMG prepared 'A Review of Housing Market Conditions Within York Region'. Their review confirmed the continued housing affordability challenges and the need to explore all tools, including a VHT, to help address these challenges. Key findings of the report include:

- Housing prices in York Region reached record highs in March 2022, with a reported benchmark price of \$1,571,900 in York Region based on the MLS Home Price Index. While rising interest rates have resulted in a modest decline in housing prices, the benchmark remained relatively high at \$1,307,857 in June 2022
- Between 2006 and 2016, York Region median household income grew by only 17%, or approximately 1.7% per year, meanwhile median monthly payments for rented dwellings increased by 146%, or approximately 14.6% per year

³ Note: A VHT Bylaw can only be passed by a designated municipality. Therefore, upon designation, the draft Bylaw, as presented to Committee and Council in Q1-2023, would be back brought to Council for passage and enactment at a later date.

- 27% of renters in York Region spend 50% or more of their total income on housing costs. This level of spending is significantly higher than the 30% share of total gross income that has traditionally been viewed as the benchmark for housing affordability

KPMG estimates there could be up to 7,250 vacant homes in York Region with over 1,600 homes potentially subject to a VHT

KMPG considered several approaches when estimating the number of vacant homes in the Region but concluded that homes reported as “not occupied by usual residents” from the 2021 Census, would be the most reliable starting point for their analysis⁴. Using the ratio of Vancouver's share of private dwellings not occupied by usual residents as reported in the 2016 census to the number of homes ultimately subject to the tax in 2017 (the first year of its version of the VHT), KPMG estimated that approximately 1,600 homes could potentially be subject to the VHT in York Region.

Table 2 summarizes the estimated number of vacant homes by local municipality and those that could be taxed.

Table 2
York Region – Estimated Vacant Homes

| Municipality | Number of Vacant Homes | Potentially Exempted Vacant Homes* | Potentially Taxable |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Aurora | 386 | 304 | 82 |
| East Gwillimbury | 218 | 180 | 38 |
| Georgina | 572 | 464 | 108 |
| King | 195 | 160 | 35 |
| Markham | 2,089 | 1,605 | 484 |
| Newmarket | 485 | 383 | 102 |
| Richmond Hill | 1,397 | 1,060 | 337 |
| Vaughan | 1,677 | 1,302 | 375 |
| Whitchurch-Stouffville | 231 | 187 | 44 |
| TOTAL | 7,250 | 5,645 | 1,605 |

*Note: Estimated using vacancy rates by property type reported in Vancouver

⁴ Note: Water and electrical usage data could not be used to determine vacancy due to privacy concerns.

A multi-platform communications campaign was used to inform and seek feedback from the public about a potential VHT

Beginning in early June, the Region began a multi-platform communications campaign and outreach to inform stakeholders about a potential VHT, seek feedback and inform the potential policy design. Key amongst these initiatives was the development of a dedicated campaign webpage at www.york.ca/vacanthomestax to inform and provide a link to the Region's VHT survey (which was made available between June 24 and July 13⁵). As of the date of writing this report, this webpage has had nearly 20,000 unique webpage visitors which indicates the communications campaign has been effective. Table 3 provides a summary of key informational/engagement initiatives undertaken so far, and Attachment 4 provides examples.

Table 3
VHT Information and Engagement Initiatives

| Information/Engagement Initiative | Detail(s) |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Targeted email blasts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 114 organizations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local ratepayer organizations ○ Seniors' organizations and snowbird advocacy groups (e.g., Canadian Association of Retired Persons) ○ Planning Advisory Committee ○ Affordable Housing advocacy groups (e.g., Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association, Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services) ○ Local Boards of Trade/Chambers of Commerce ○ Real estate advocacy organizations (e.g., Ontario Real Estate Association, Canadian Real Estate Association) |
| Social Media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posts on York Region Facebook and Twitter page, story on York Region Instagram • Ad-buys on Facebook and Twitter |
| Virtual Town Halls | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 7 (5-6 pm) and 11 (5-6 pm) |
| Regional Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair messaging on VHT on June 30 meeting of Regional Council • Information provided with July 5 Council Highlights |
| Online – York.ca and Newsroom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information link added to www.york.ca main page • Summary and link to campaign website at www.york.ca/newsroom |

⁵ Note: Initially the survey was to close on July 11. However, due to the Rogers network outage on July 8, the deadline to complete the survey was extended until July 13.

| Information/Engagement Initiative | Detail(s) |
|---|--|
| Online – York Region Media Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banner advertisements all day June 30 – linking to website |
| Building Industry and Land Development Association –York Chapter (“BILD”) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacant Homes Tax website and survey link in June 28, 2022, BILD newsletter; consultation on July 5 |
| Local municipalities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation session held at July 15 meeting of the York Region Local Municipal Housing Working Group Local municipal attendees included Planning Directors and Commissioners, planners, housing staff, Area Treasurers, tax staff, and development finance staff Posts on various local municipal social media (e.g., City of Vaughan LinkedIn) Posts on various local municipal websites (e.g., City of Vaughan Economic Development) |
| Radio interview | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 6 interview on 105.9 FM – The Region |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> online edition of the Toronto Star July 26 interview with Newmarket Today; July 27 article |

Nearly 80% of survey respondents believe the Region should levy a VHT

Whether through virtual townhalls, engagement with BILD and local municipal staff, or the over 2,750 responses to the online survey⁶, stakeholder feedback has largely been positive and in favour of using a VHT to help address the Region’s housing affordability challenges. The key findings of the consultation and outreach are summarized in the ‘Evaluating a Vacant Homes Tax - What We Heard’ report (Attachment 3).

The Region’s two townhalls, held on July 7 and 11, had nearly 50 attendees representing a broad and diverse set of demographic backgrounds. While the Region received feedback both in favour of the tax and in opposition, most of the feedback was in support.

⁶ Note: On a per capita basis, this response rate was equivalent to that of the City of Toronto’s VHT survey. PROCESS has also indicated that based on the population of York Region, 2,500 survey respondents provide a sample size that aligns with a 95% confidence level (with a 2% margin of error). The confidence level indicates the level of reliability and means if the same survey were to be repeated 100 times under the same conditions, 95 times out of 100 the measure would lie somewhere within the margin of error.

Of the survey respondents, nearly 88% strongly or somewhat agreed York Region is facing housing affordability challenges and nearly 80% believed the Region should levy a VHT to help address these challenges. As noted in the 'Evaluating a Vacant Homes Tax - What We Heard' report (Attachment 3, page 17), "the Vacant Homes Tax has strong support in York Region, despite the tax eliciting polarising responses. Perhaps due to a firm understanding that there is an affordable housing crisis in York Region, most participants in our consultation sessions were in favour of implementing a VHT in York Region".

Table 4 below provides a sample of qualitative responses from the town halls and the survey.

Table 4
Sample of VHT Qualitative Responses – Surveys and Townhalls

| In Support of a VHT (~80% of survey respondents) | Concerns with a VHT (~18% of survey respondents)* |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • York Region is not affordable at all, hopefully this will help but there is a long way to go. • Homes should be made available for people who live and work in York Region. Vacant home tax will deter investors from using housing for profit. Housing is a basic human right - it should be accessible to all. • Houses should not be left sitting empty when there is a shortage of rental properties. Some of these properties are unkept and would be better kept if someone lived in them. Please implement a vacancy tax. • Perhaps a VHT will incentivize owners to sell their property or at least rent it out • York Region[s] real estate [is] being listed on Airbnb. York Region real estate should either be rented out or owned to live in. • Empty houses negatively affect the look of a community but most importantly, the feel of it... Thank you for embarking on this process to make owning a house in York Region something to be proud of, not just something to make money off of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People should be free to do whatever they please to do with their homes. Whether it be occupied or vacant. It will be an additional responsibility for residents to declare their status which takes time. • People may own two homes and use one as a cottage. Why should this second property be taxed as a penalty? • It's not the government's business if someone wants to keep a residential property vacant. • There is no doubt there is a lack of affordable housing. I am unsure however if you can solve this. • Would harm the real estate market, especially for investors. • How will the law protect people who fall into grey zones... who are trying to rent out their home, but no one wants to rent their home? • It would depend on how long it is empty. As a landlord, it sometimes takes a few months to repair, renovate and re-rent our property. It wouldn't be fair to be taxed in such a situation. |

| In Support of a VHT (~80% of survey respondents) | Concerns with a VHT (~18% of survey respondents)* |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I want to live in York Region, to have kids and raise them here. However, you walk in what are amazing neighbourhoods and there are houses sitting empty. There is nowhere to actually live. People are buying houses and they are just sitting empty. It's awful and sad. | |

*Note: Approximately 2% of survey respondents were neutral

Consultation and survey results have provided the basis for a preliminary VHT policy design

In reviewing what other municipalities have done, feedback from the consultation sessions and the survey results, staff developed preliminary VHT policy features. Table 5 below summarizes key policy features, including tax rate, use of revenues, duration of vacancy, and methods of identifying vacancy. These results will help form the basis of additional consultation during the next phase of the project.

Table 5
Preliminary policy options - VHT

| Policy area | Potential Policy and Level of support |
|---------------------------|---|
| Tax rate | Nearly 51% of survey respondents felt the Region should apply a tax rate of over 2%, with an additional 16% of respondents supporting a tax rate of between 1 and 2% |
| Exemptions | <p>Top exemptions, based on survey results, in order, were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. occupant residing in healthcare facility 2. death of registered owner 3. court order prohibiting occupancy/rental 4. property undergoing redevelopment or major renovation 5. extenuating circumstances (e.g., pandemic, natural disaster) |
| Vacancy duration | Through the town halls vacancy due to seasonal use (e.g., cottages) was identified as a potential exemption |
| Vacancy duration | Over 62% of respondents felt a property should be vacant 3-6 months in the taxation year for the VHT to be levied |
| Identification mechanisms | <i>Mandatory Declaration</i> means residential property owners in York Region would be required to declare to the Region if their home is occupied or vacant each year. If property owners do not declare |

| Policy area | Potential Policy and Level of support |
|-------------------------------|--|
| | <p>vacancy status to the Region, they would automatically be taxed for the VHT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 70% of survey respondents felt the Region should require property owners to declare if their property is occupied or vacant <p><i>Complaint Identification</i> means the Region would only be able to identify a vacant property if they are notified through a tip or a complaint that has been verified</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearly 47% of survey respondents felt the Region determine vacancy based on verified complaints, however just over 40% disagreed with this approach. This was the least popular approach in consultation with BILD and the local municipalities <p><i>Voluntary Declaration</i> means residential property owners in York Region self-identify vacant units and must declare if they own a vacant property each year. If a property owner does not declare their vacancy status, the property would be assumed to be occupied</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just over 25% of survey respondents felt the Region should use this to determine vacancy while just over 62% of respondents disagreed with this approach |
| Occupancy declaration options | <p>Nearly 70% of survey respondents felt occupancy submissions should be done online</p> <p>Through the town halls it was identified that declaring by way of mail, or in person, should also be considered to accommodate seniors or people with disabilities</p> |
| Tax revenue use | <p>As previously directed by Council, VHT revenues, net of implementation and operating costs, would be allocated to support affordable housing initiatives by the Region, and if revenues are shared with Local Municipalities, by the local municipality</p> <p>Nearly 60% of survey respondents felt any VHT revenues should go to housing initiatives</p> <p>Town hall participants were also generally in favour of revenues (net of costs) being used to support affordable housing initiatives</p> |

The Region continues to work with local municipal staff to develop a potential implementation model

As part of the consultation efforts, staff met with local municipal staff to discuss policy design features of a VHT, including potential implementation models. Two models have been developed as the basis for ongoing discussions during the next phase of the project:

1. Local municipalities to be responsible for all operating and implementation activities (reporting, collection, communication, compliance audits, etc.). This may lead to duplication of efforts related to compliance audits and inconsistencies in communications programs between each municipality. It would however take advantage of, and be in line with, how property taxes are currently administered
2. Region and local municipality share responsibilities for all operating and implementation activities - local municipality may be responsible for reporting and collections; the Region would handle compliance audits and communications. This could limit duplication of effort related to functionality and ensure consistent messaging while leveraging local municipal property tax payment mechanisms

Based on initial consultation, the shared responsibility model (option 2) is preferred.

Enhancements to municipal revenue sources and powers are needed to help support the Region's housing affordability objectives

Since 2018, the Region has [requested](#) that the Province allocate funds from the Non-Resident Speculation Tax (NRST) collected in York Region, currently estimated at \$215M (from inception in April 2017 to July 2022), to support Regional affordable housing incentives. As of the date of writing this report, the Region has yet to receive a formal response from the Province.

In addition to the NRST, beginning in 2015 the Region requested the power to levy a Municipal Land Transfer Tax (MLTT), the revenues of which could be used to help fund affordable housing initiatives. In 2018 the Region received official notice from Province that it would not be providing new revenue-raising powers at that time. A subsequent [request](#) was made in 2020, for which no response was received. It is estimated that a MLTT matching the provincial Land Transfer Tax structure could generate \$220 to \$440 million annually in the Region.

Continued advocacy, during the next Council term, for these revenue sources and powers, could help the Region achieve its housing affordability objectives.

5. Financial

A Region-wide VHT between 1% and 2%, could generate between \$13.4 million and \$26.8 million in the first year but will likely decline as vacant homes become occupied

To estimate the potential revenue from a VHT, KPMG assumed a range of tax rates between 1 and 2%. One percent was the initial rate implemented by Vancouver, Ottawa, and Toronto. The public consultations have indicated a strong support for a tax rate of 1% or more, with the majority of respondents supporting a rate of 2% or higher.

Table 6 summarizes the potential revenues for a Region-wide VHT at three different tax rates.

Table 6
Potential VHT Revenues

| Number of Dwellings | Estimated Non-Exempt Vacant Homes | Tax Revenue at 1% Rate (million) | Tax Revenue at 1.5% Rate (million) | Tax Revenue at 2% Rate (million) |
|----------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| 405,313 | 1,605 | \$13.4 | \$20.1 | \$26.8 |

There would also be one time implementation costs of approximately \$6.5 million with ongoing annual costs, estimated at approximately \$3.5 million

If an VHT is adopted, KPMG anticipates that there would be an implementation cost for the Region and its local municipalities of approximately \$6.5 million, including expenditures for information technology, project management and communications. Ongoing operating costs are currently projected to be approximately \$3.5 million for administration, audit, communications, and information technology expenses. These estimates are in line with Vancouver's experience and proportional to estimated amounts reported by Halton and Peel staff.

While Council has directed that VHT revenues be directed towards affordable housing, potential revenue sharing options could be considered

If the Region were to introduce a VHT, regardless of the implementation model chosen, all costs incurred by the Region and local municipalities would be offset from VHT revenues.

While Council previously directed that net VHT revenues be directed towards supporting affordable housing, consultations with the local municipalities indicated that revenue sharing options could be considered (though still directed towards supporting affordable housing initiatives). Staff, working with KPMG, will develop potential revenue sharing options and, if directed by Council to continue work on the VHT, will consult further with the local municipalities.

6. Local Impact

York Region strives to provide opportunities for a full range of housing options for people of all ages, abilities, income levels and stages of life. The housing affordability crisis challenges this goal and has become a significant concern across all nine local municipalities.

Throughout the third quarter of 2021, local municipal staff have been engaged on the VHT project. Local municipal consultation has continued during this phase and is a vital component for any potential VHT to be successful. Pending Council direction to continue work on the VHT, consultation with local municipalities during the fourth quarter of 2022 would help develop the potential policy design, including a potential implementation model as well as how revenues, net of costs, could be shared.

7. Conclusion

In 2021, Regional Council declared a housing affordability crisis and later established the Housing Affordability Task Force. The VHT is one potential tool the Region may use to help address housing affordability challenges.

This report updates Council on the work done so far on the VHT and seeks Council direction to continue the work on the VHT.

If directed to continue to work on the VHT, staff will conduct additional consultations during the remainder of 2022. Staff would then report back during the first quarter of 2023 with a detailed program design and a draft VHT Bylaw for Council's consideration.

For more information on this report, please contact Edward Hankins, Director, Treasury Office and Deputy Treasurer at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71644. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



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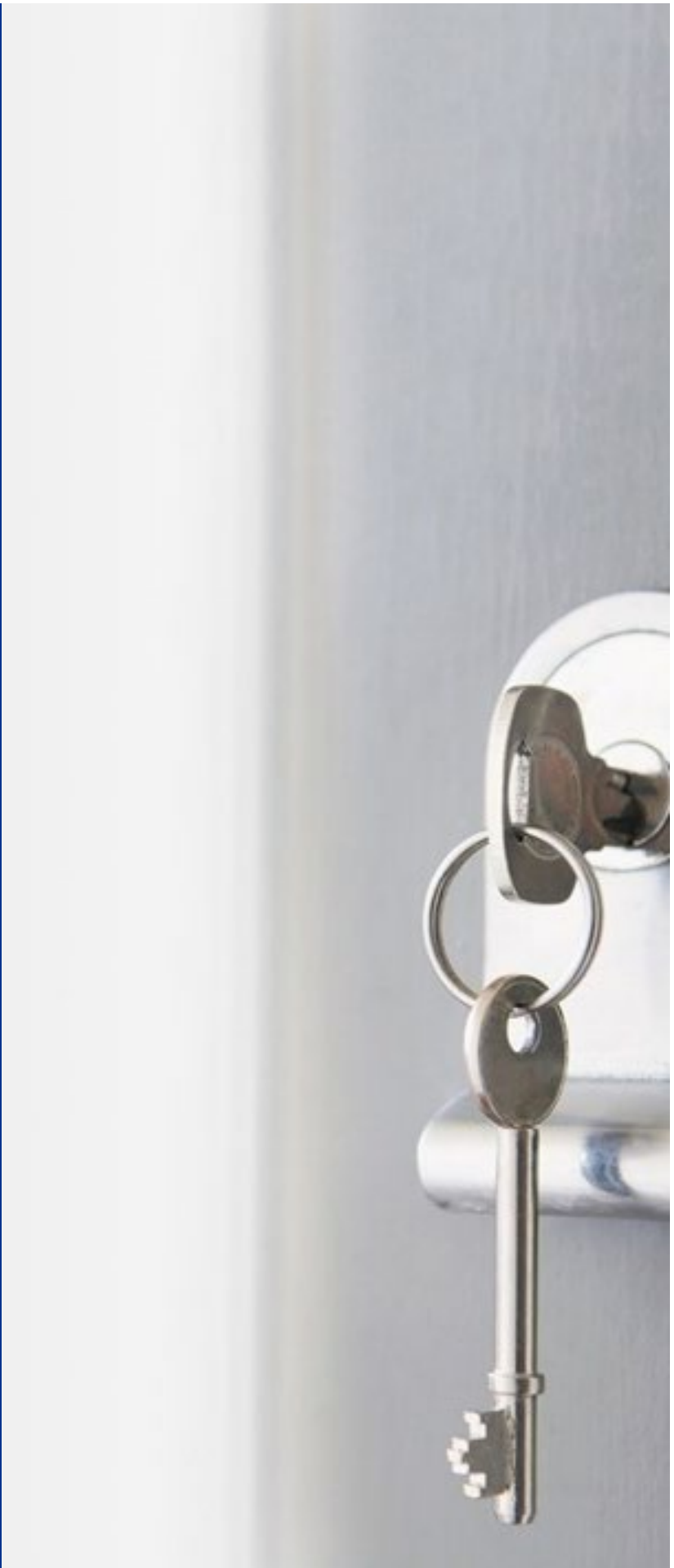


York Region VHT

A REVIEW OF
ISSUES TO BE
CONSIDERED FOR
THE TAXATION OF
VACANT HOMES IN
YORK REGION

PREPARED FOR THE
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF YORK

AUGUST 24, 2022



Disclaimer

This report has been prepared by KPMG LLP (“KPMG”) for the **Regional Municipality of York** (the “Client”) pursuant to the terms of our engagement agreement dated April 29, 2022 (the “Engagement Agreement”).

Our review was based on research and analysis of publicly available sources and data, Region-provided information, and select stakeholder consultations.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| DISCLAIMER | I |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | III |
| 1 INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 2 RATIONALE FOR A VHT | 3 |
| 3 VHT PROGRAM DESIGN | 8 |
| 4 CASE STUDIES | 19 |
| 5 VACANCY AND FINANCIAL ESTIMATES FOR YORK REGION | 29 |
| APPENDIX A – DETAILED CASE STUDIES | 39 |
| APPENDIX B - REFERENCES | 65 |

Executive Summary

In April 2022, the Regional Municipality of York (“York Region” or the “Region”) engaged KPMG LLP (“KPMG”) to perform independent research and provide evidence-based advice on issues related to the Region’s consideration and potential implementation of a Vacant Homes Tax (“VHT”). This included:

- Supporting the Region with public consultation;
- Supporting the Region with local and upper tier engagement;
- Performing an analysis of the potential vacant homes in the Region and associated revenue potential under a VHT; and
- Identifying other considerations applicable to drafting a VHT bylaw and implementing the tax, such as conditions of vacancy, exemptions, administration of the tax and revenue sharing.

This document presents a high-level review of:

- The public policy rationale for a VHT;
- The estimated prevalence of vacant homes within the York Region real estate market;
- Potential design features of an effective and efficient vacant home tax program;
- Case studies from other major cities that have considered a comparable VHT, including four case studies of highly relevant examples (Vancouver, Melbourne, Toronto, and the Peel & Halton regions); and
- Potential qualitative and quantitative impacts of a VHT (e.g., alignment to stated policy objectives of increasing the supply of housing and affordable rents).

As part of the assessment, it was determined that an estimated 7,250 dwellings in York Region are vacant, of which approximately 1,600 are eligible to be taxed under a VHT. Taking into consideration estimated home values and based on an associated tax rate of between one and two percent, potential first year gross revenues generated by the VHT are estimated to range between \$13.4 million and \$26.8 million.

While the implementation of a VHT in York Region appears to be feasible from the initial revenue estimates, there is still work to be done by the Region and local municipalities to establish an appropriate implementation plan for the tax, roles and responsibilities in the administration of the tax and mechanisms for revenue sharing between York Region and the local municipalities. The remainder of this executive summary provides a high-level overview of the report and the associated methodology behind the VHT-related estimates (i.e., revenues, costs, etc.) along with a summary of considerations for implementing a VHT in York Region.

York Region housing market assessment

York Region’s housing market – like much of Canada’s – is at an inflection point. Demand for housing is at record highs, while vacancy rates remain low. Increasing housing prices, rising personal debt, and personal incomes that have not increased in-step are limiting the purchasing power of would-be homeowners. Additionally, the supply of housing is being continually outpaced by demand. These factors are negatively impacting those looking to purchase or rent residential properties. As a result, government is looking at policy measures to make housing more affordable.

Homes that are kept vacant effectively reduce the supply of housing on the market, which – with all else equal – creates upward pressure on housing prices. This has a negative effect on housing affordability, but also

indirectly impacts “affordable housing” by forcing buyers and renters into different tiers of housing, which can crowd out low-income residents from the market.

Using data from the 2021 census, it was estimated that of the 405,863 private dwellings in York Region, approximately 391,034 of them are occupied by usual residents.¹ This analysis suggests that approximately 3.6% of all dwellings analyzed or approximately 15,000 units were vacant (i.e., not occupied by usual residents at the date of assessment). This figure is similar to 2021 census vacancy rates from other neighbouring jurisdictions, as illustrated in Figure 1, however, this analysis likely over-estimates the number of vacant units in York that will be subject to a VHT as it only considers occupancy at a single point in time. In comparison, most VHTs that have been implemented or proposed in other jurisdictions (e.g., Vancouver, Melbourne, Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton) apply to homes that are left vacant for a minimum duration of time over a specified reference period (e.g., a VHT will only apply to houses that have been left vacant for at least six months of the calendar year).²

Figure 1: GTA municipality vacancy rates

| Jurisdiction / Municipality | Toronto | Peel | Halton Region | York Region |
|-----------------------------|---------|------|---------------|-------------|
| Vacancy Rate | 5.6% | 3.7% | 2.6% | 3.6% |

An overview of the current and historical housing market conditions within York Region, including vacancy rates and rent prices, is included in a separate report prepared by KPMG to support the assessment and consideration of a potential VHT, titled “*A review of housing market conditions within York Region*”.

Rationale for a VHT

There are two primary objectives for implementing a VHT:

- Transitioning vacant homes to the housing market, and;
- Raising revenue for municipal programs, initiatives, public policy objectives.

A VHT is a fiscal policy instrument that can increase housing availability and affordability under certain market conditions, such as those associated with a shortage of housing options for widespread portions of the population. A VHT that is set sufficiently high will disincentivize some owners of vacant homes, such as speculative investors, from leaving properties vacant by introducing financial disincentives and eroding potential returns. If it becomes more expensive to keep a unit empty because of a VHT, vacant homeowners may choose to release units into the rental market while they hold them, or potentially sell them outright. Additionally, the administrative and financial burdens associated with VHTs may induce such owners not to invest in the first place in a unit that they would have otherwise held empty. In line with the principles of supply and demand, with more units on the market, there should be a positive impact on housing affordability.

In addition to the policy objectives of a VHT, revenues generated from the tax could be directed towards supporting municipal programs, initiatives, and public policy objectives, such as developing affordable housing. For example, Vancouver allocates all net revenues from its VHT – the Empty Homes Tax (“EHT”), to affordable housing initiatives, which has totaled more than \$86 million since its inception in 2017. In 2021 alone, Vancouver’s EHT generated more than \$26 million for affordable housing initiatives. Similarly, Toronto City Council directed City staff to allocate all VHT net revenues towards affordable housing initiatives through

¹ (Statistics Canada, 2022)

² The “reference period” is a defined period of time (typically one year) against which a property’s occupancy is assessed. For example, a calendar year reference period would mean that property vacancy would be assessed between January 1st and December 31st of a given year. Properties deemed to have been vacant for a minimum duration during this period for a time (e.g., properties that are vacant for at least six months during a one-year reference period) and not granted an exemption would then be subject to taxation during the following year.

the annual operating and capital budget approval process. York Region has taken a similar approach. In October 2021, Regional Council directed that all net VHT revenues be directed to affordable housing initiatives.

The data obtained from the tax can be leveraged by housing and municipal planners to better understand whether particular neighbourhoods or developments are being targeted by speculative investors, allowing them to modify or update their policies and approaches to the benefit of the municipality and urban landscape more broadly.

Stakeholder engagement & what we heard

A core element of the scope of work associated with the feasibility assessment of a VHT was a robust stakeholder engagement process that involved several outreach sessions and approaches. The purpose of the consultation was to:

- Gauge the level of public support for the potential implementation of a VHT;
- Invite feedback and input from residents to inform the implementation of a VHT;
- Learn more about resident priorities and residential property vacancies;
- Identify potential impacts a VHT might have on the building and development industry in York Region;
- Discuss how VHT administration might be integrated into existing Regional and municipal processes; and
- Inform the development of the tax policy, bylaw and approach to implementation and revenue allocation.

Consultation consisted of a number of different activities, including:

- An online survey & project website;
- Interviews and working groups with key stakeholders; and
- Public meetings.

Across the consultation activities, the majority of participants were largely in favour of the VHT and aligned with the purpose of disincentivizing real estate speculation. Most participants support the idea of using tax revenue to fund affordable housing initiatives. Key findings from the stakeholder engagement exercise are incorporated into the assessment and this report. Additional information, including a detailed methodology and set of consultation findings, is included in a separate report prepared by KPMG and PROCESS Consultants to support the assessment and consideration of a potential VHT, titled *“Evaluating a Vacant Homes Tax – What We Heard Report”*.

Jurisdictional benchmarking

As part of the scope of work, a jurisdictional benchmarking exercise was taken to identify features and lessons learned from municipalities with experience implementing VHTs across the country and the globe. Vancouver, Melbourne, and Toronto are illustrative examples comparable to the York Region context. All three are large municipalities; have growing populations; and have experienced rapidly appreciating residential property values and rents, leading to challenges with housing availability and affordability for large portions of the population.

A high-level overview of these case studies is summarized in the table below. Additional detail about each, along with other comparator examples can be found in Section 4 of the report, along with Appendix A.

Table 1: Summary of case study VHT features

| Features | Vancouver Empty Homes Tax (EHT) | Melbourne Vacant Residential Land Tax (VRLT) | Toronto Vacant Home Tax |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---|
| Implementation date | January 1, 2017 | January 1, 2018 | January 1, 2022 |
| Tax rate | 3% of assessed property value (to be raised to 5% in 2023; previously 1% and 1.25%) | 1% of assessed property value | 1% of assessed property value |
| Definition of vacant | Unoccupied for more than six months during the prior calendar year (i.e., the vacancy reference period) | | |
| Declaration method | All residential property owners are required to make a declaration (“mandatory declaration”) | Only residential property owners with vacant properties are required to make a declaration (“self-identification”) | All residential property owners are required to make a declaration (“mandatory declaration”) |
| Audit methods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Random checks – Audits selected based on risk assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Random checks – Tips and notifications from general public – Audits selected based on risk assessment and data from other state/federal agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Random checks – Audits selected based on risk assessment |
| Implementation cost | \$7.4 million | Information not publicly available | \$11.0 million (estimated) |
| Annual admin. cost | \$2.9 million | Information not publicly available | \$3.1 million (estimated) |
| Revenue generation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2017: \$38.0 million – 2018: \$39.4 million – 2019: \$36.0 million – 2020: \$26.0 million | Information not publicly available | Information not yet available |

In addition to these comparators, regional municipalities in the GTA – the Regional Municipality of Peel (“Peel Region”) and the Regional Municipality of Halton (“Halton Region”) – have also recently obtained Council approval for the implementation of a VHT. Following initial feasibility studies that were presented to Peel and Halton councils in 2022, staff from both regions will report back to their respective councils in 2023, after conducting further public consultation and exploring options on VHT program design. These are highly relevant case studies for York Region as well, given the upper-tier and local municipality relationship. Case studies for these two jurisdictions have been included; however, both are in the preliminary stages of implementation and should continue to be monitored by the Region to understand roles and responsibilities between the Regions and their local municipalities, along with revenue sharing approaches.

Vacancy and financial estimates for York Region

KPMG worked with the Region to develop an approach to estimating vacancy based on observed outcomes from Vancouver’s implementation of their EHT. The approach uses 2021 census data for each of the nine municipalities within York Region to estimate vacancy rates based on the total number of dwellings and total occupied dwellings identified in the census data. Incorporating adjustment factors based on observed experience of other municipalities (e.g., to account for assessed values of vacant homes versus those of

average home prices, vacancy rates by property type, etc. as reported in Vancouver)³, census data relating to housing types in York Region, and potential exemptions to the VHT, a high-level analysis was developed to identify vacant home estimates for each municipality within York Region. Based on this vacant home estimate, average assessed housing values by housing type for each municipality were used to support the estimate of gross revenues. In addition to these gross revenue estimates, initial estimates for the implementation (one-time) and operations (annual) costs were developed based on actual and estimated costs of a VHT in other jurisdictions. These costs were used to estimate the net revenue potential of a VHT in York Region. Summaries of dwelling and vacancy rates, gross tax revenues, as well as net revenue potential of a VHT for York Region are included in Tables 2, 3, and 4, respectively.

³ Initially, Vancouver found that the assessed value of a vacant single-family home was approximately 40% higher than the average single-family home in the city (approx. \$3.4 million vs. \$2.4 million). The assessed value for vacant condominiums was found to be even higher – 53% greater than the average condo in the city. (City of Vancouver and Housing Vancouver, 2019)

Table 2: VHT vacancy rates in York Region

| Municipality | Total Private Dwellings | Occupied Private Dwellings | Vacancy Rate | Adjusted Vacant Dwellings | Adjusted Vacancy Rate | Potentially Exempted Dwellings | Vacant Dwellings After Exemptions | Assumed Vacancy Rate for Taxation |
|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Aurora | 22,253 | 21,506 | 3.4% | 386 | 1.7% | 304 | 82 | 0.4% |
| East Gwillimbury | 11,869 | 11,449 | 3.5% | 218 | 1.8% | 180 | 38 | 0.3% |
| Georgina ⁴ | 19,368 | 17,895 | 7.6% | 572 | 3.0% | 464 | 108 | 0.6% |
| King | 9,346 | 8,969 | 4.0% | 195 | 2.1% | 160 | 35 | 0.4% |
| Markham | 114,908 | 110,867 | 3.5% | 2,089 | 1.8% | 1,605 | 484 | 0.4% |
| Newmarket | 31,239 | 30,301 | 3.0% | 485 | 1.6% | 383 | 102 | 0.3% |
| Richmond Hill | 72,017 | 69,314 | 3.8% | 1,397 | 1.9% | 1,060 | 337 | 0.5% |
| Vaughan | 107,159 | 103,914 | 3.0% | 1,677 | 1.6% | 1,302 | 375 | 0.3% |
| Whitchurch-Stouffville | 17,154 | 16,707 | 2.6% | 231 | 1.3% | 187 | 44 | 0.3% |
| TOTAL | 405,313 | 390,922 | 3.6% | 7,250 | 1.8% | 5,645 | 1,605 | 0.4% |

⁴ MPAC data identified 190 seasonal properties in Georgina. Given that these types of properties would likely be exempted from the tax, but identified as vacant for census purposes, these units have been deducted from the estimated number of vacant dwellings in the analysis.

Table 3: Estimated VHT gross revenues

| Municipality | No. of Dwellings | Assumed Vacancy Rate for Taxation | Tax Revenue at 1% Rate | Tax Revenue at 1.5% Rate | Tax Revenue at 2% Rate |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Aurora | 22,253 | 0.4% | \$677,637 | \$1,016,455 | \$1,355,273 |
| East Gwillimbury | 11,869 | 0.3% | \$274,519 | \$411,779 | \$549,039 |
| Georgina | 19,368 | 0.6% | \$526,929 | \$790,393 | \$1,053,858 |
| King | 9,346 | 0.4% | \$413,510 | \$620,264 | \$827,019 |
| Markham | 114,908 | 0.4% | \$4,257,655 | \$6,386,482 | \$8,515,310 |
| Newmarket | 31,239 | 0.3% | \$691,418 | \$1,037,128 | \$1,382,837 |
| Richmond Hill | 72,017 | 0.5% | \$2,949,845 | \$4,424,767 | \$5,899,689 |
| Vaughan | 107,159 | 0.3% | \$3,224,626 | \$4,836,939 | \$6,449,253 |
| Whitchurch-Stouffville | 17,154 | 0.3% | \$378,013 | \$567,020 | \$756,027 |
| TOTAL | 405,313 | 0.4% | \$13,394,152 | \$20,091,229 | \$26,788,305 |

Table 4: Net revenue potential of York Region VHT in 2024

| | @ Rate of 1.0% | @ Rate of 1.5% | @ Rate of 2.0% |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Gross Revenue Estimate | \$13.4M | \$20.1M | \$26.8M |
| Annual Operating Cost Estimate | (\$3.5M) | (\$3.5M) | (\$3.5M) |
| Net Revenue Potential | \$9.9M | \$16.6M | \$23.3M |

Additional information on the potential financial implications for York Region regarding the implementation of a VHT, including the methodology and assumptions used to develop an estimate of the number of vacant homes across each of the nine local municipalities within the Region, the estimated potential costs (for implementation and annual operations), and the potential revenue that could be generated by a VHT, is included in Section 5 of this report.

Summary of considerations

The following table provides a high-level summary of the key considerations outlined in this report related to York Region considering the implementation of a vacant home tax.

Table 5: Summary of considerations for implementing a VHT in York Region

| No. | Category | Considerations |
|-----|-----------------------|---|
| 1 | Identification method | A mandatory declaration method is likely to produce the largest degree of participation from residential property owners and has the potential to generate higher revenues when compared to other methods due to the mandatory requirement for all property owners to make a declaration. By contrast, a self-identification method is preferred if a primary objective is minimizing the administrative burden on homeowners. ⁵ |
| 2 | Tax rate | A tax rate of 1% of the assessed value of the property is generally accepted as the standard initial taxation rate based on the implementation of comparable |

⁵ Note: due to privacy concerns, York Region will not at any time use any type of utility data to determine if a home is vacant or not.

| No. | Category | Considerations |
|-----|-------------------------------|---|
| | | vacant home taxes. However, if the Region intends to have the greatest impact on housing availability and affordability and generate higher VHT revenues, a higher tax rate may be appropriate. |
| 3 | Audit & compliance | An audit and compliance team (and appropriate audit protocols and procedures) should be established to identify homeowners who are not compliant with the tax. Strict penalties for tax avoidance should be included as part of the VHT implementation. |
| 4 | Vacancy threshold | A six-month vacancy period (out of a calendar year) seems to be the most appropriate timeframe to be used as a vacancy threshold, based on jurisdictional research. Using a period of six months ensures that properties are not left vacant for the majority of a year. |
| 5 | Exemptions | Reasonable exemptions — such as for medical care, major renovations or recent sales or transfers — would excuse homeowners who have legitimate reasons for leaving their homes vacant, and in most cases will reassume occupancy within a reasonable time period. |
| 6 | Timing | If the Region decides to implement a VHT, having the first VHT reference period begin January 1, 2023 would allow the Region sufficient time to communicate the introduction of the tax and to develop the necessary systems and capabilities to administer the tax. It would also provide the Region time to draft the required by-law, including identifying the required exemptions and penalty regime and working with the Province on the required regulation. ⁶ Considerations will also need to be made about retroactive implementation of the tax / by-law, including language, communication, and fairness to those affected. Spending sufficient time to prepare the required systems and educate the public will help enable a smooth rollout of the VHT. |
| 7 | Administration & governance | Through discussions with York Region staff as well as an analysis of the administration methods available, the “hybrid delivery” method appears to be the most suitable option. Under this method, York Region and its local municipalities would split the responsibilities for delivering a VHT. For example, local municipalities could be responsible for collecting the tax, with the Region responsible for communications and compliance. This would limit the duplication of functionality while leveraging the local municipalities existing tax collection capabilities and processes. This approach would also maintain familiarity and may be more user-friendly to York Region residents. Additional consideration will also need to be given to the revenue sharing approach between the Region and the local municipalities. |
| 8 | Implementation considerations | In order to implement a VHT, the Region should consider the following steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Establish a dedicated project team to lead the implementation of a VHT; – Develop the by-law for a VHT; – Work with the Province to develop necessary regulations required; – Build IT systems to administer the VHT, including a declaration system, compliance/audit database and payment system; – Undertake extensive public education and awareness campaigns to ensure homeowners are aware of the tax, applicability of the tax and requirement to report on an annual basis; and |

⁶ Having the first VHT reference period begin January 1, 2023 reduces the administrative and communications burden of administering the tax across multiple calendar years (e.g., applying the tax from May 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024) and therefore not aligned with the current property tax payment schedule.

| No. | Category | Considerations |
|-----|----------|---|
| | | – Form an audit and compliance team to develop audit procedures and protocols, review annual declarations, identify non-compliance with the tax and create annual reports on the impact of the tax. |

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In 2017, the Province of Ontario introduced amendments to the *Municipal Act*, which granted designated municipalities the ability to implement an “Optional Tax on Vacant Residential Units”, subject to designation by the Minister of Finance. Should a municipality decide to pass a by-law, it could “...impose a tax in the municipality on the assessed value, as determined under the *Assessment Act*, of vacant units that are classified in the residential property class and that are taxable under that Act for municipal purposes.”

The two key requirements of the by-law are that it state:

1. The tax rate; and
2. The conditions of vacancy that, if met, make a unit subject to the tax.

In October 2021, the Regional Municipality of York (“York Region” or the “Region”) Council directed staff to prepare a report on the feasibility and public benefits of implementing a vacant home tax (“VHT”). At the time, the City of Toronto was moving forward with the implementation of a VHT, while Halton Region and Peel Region were studying the feasibility of their own VHTs. As a result, York Region Committee of the Whole⁷ requested that a report be brought forward to further analyze the feasibility of implementing a VHT in York Region.

In April 2022, to support the ongoing work of the Region, the Region engaged KPMG to perform independent research and provide evidence-based advice on issues related to the Region’s consideration and potential implementation of a VHT. This included:

- Supporting the Region with public consultation;
- Supporting the Region with local and upper tier engagement;
- Performing an analysis of the potential vacant homes in the Region and associated revenue potential under a VHT; and
- Identifying other considerations applicable to drafting a VHT bylaw and implementing the tax, such as conditions of vacancy, exemptions, administration of the tax and revenue sharing.

1.2 Scope of this document

This document presents a high-level review of:

- The public policy rationale for a VHT;
- The estimated prevalence of vacant homes within the York Region real estate market;
- Potential design features of an effective and efficient tax program;
- Case studies from other major cities that have considered a comparable VHT, including four case studies of highly relevant examples (Vancouver, Melbourne, Toronto, and the Peel & Halton regions); and
- Potential qualitative and quantitative impacts of a VHT (e.g., alignment to stated policy objectives of increasing the supply of housing and affordable rents).

⁷ The Committee of the Whole comprises of all members of Regional Council.

The research, advice, and initial design elements contained within this report are intended to support York Region staff in preparing materials to seek ‘designation’ from the Province to pass a VHT bylaw in the Region. The report includes analysis of:

- i. The applicability of such a measure in the York Region context;
- ii. Potential impacts of implementing a VHT (e.g., financial and policy outcomes); and
- iii. Considerations for the structuring and implementation of the tax, including options for how the tax could be administered between the Region and local municipalities, potential exemptions to the tax, and timing for implementation.

The Region provided key elements of information for this document, including background on the desired public policy objectives and residential real estate data. KPMG supplemented its analysis with publicly available information about the Vancouver, Melbourne, Toronto, and Peel and Halton Region case studies, Statistics Canada data, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (“CMHC”) data, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (“MPAC”) data, and findings from stakeholder consultations.

1.3 Structure of this document

This document is organized by multiple sections, each addressing various considerations required to effectively analyze a VHT in York Region:

- Section 2 presents the rationale for a VHT in York Region, taking into consideration existing housing market conditions in the Region and the intended purpose of a VHT. This section also identifies the profile and motivations of a vacant homeowner, as well as the effect of vacant homes on housing affordability and rents within the Region.
- Section 3 describes the potential design features of a VHT. This includes the definitions of a vacant home and other terminology, along with considerations as to what might constitute a vacant home. This section also covers relevant administrative considerations, such as potential exemptions to the tax, levying and implementation of the tax, including administration options and considerations around roles and responsibilities for the Region and local municipalities, and operations and approaches for evaluation of the effectiveness of the tax.
- Section 4 highlights case studies of other municipalities and/or governments that have implemented and/or are in the process of implementing similar taxes on vacant properties. This section describes the backgrounds, administration methods, impacts (on vacant homes and local housing markets), public perception, as well as applicability to York Region for the different taxes reviewed in each jurisdiction.
- Section 5 provides an estimate of the financial implications of implementing a VHT in York Region. This includes an approach for estimating vacant homes in the Region based on experience in other jurisdictions, estimating the potential number of vacant homes that would be eligible for paying the tax and the associated VHT revenues across a range of tax rates and under different market assumptions.

In addition to this report, KPMG has prepared other reports as part of this engagement. These reports provide more detailed analysis on specific components of the engagement and should be reviewed in parallel to this report. The following separate reports were prepared for the Region:

1. An overview of current and historical housing market conditions within York Region to support the assessment and consideration of a potential VHT, titled “*A review of housing market conditions within York Region*”
2. A review of findings from research and stakeholder engagement, titled “*Evaluating a Vacant Homes Tax – What We Heard Report*”, prepared by KPMG’s subconsultant PROCESS.

2 Rationale for a VHT

The current housing market across much of Canada is at an inflection point. Demand for housing is at record highs, while vacancy rates remain low. Increasing housing prices, rising personal debt, and incomes that have not increased in-step are limiting the purchasing power of would-be homeowners, making it extremely difficult for many people to afford a home. A recent survey commissioned by KPMG Canada found that over 70% of millennials say their goal is to own a home, while over 45% of those surveyed believe that home ownership will likely be unattainable. As a result, governments across the country are actively looking at policy measures to make housing more affordable.

York Region is experiencing similar trends in its housing market – prices have been reaching record highs, and the supply of housing is being continually outpaced by demand. The increasing prices are affecting those looking to purchase or rent real estate.

Vacant homes can be a significant contributor to this problem. Houses that are kept vacant effectively reduce the supply of housing on the market, which – with all other things remaining equal – creates upward pressure on housing prices (following the law of supply and demand). This has a negative effect on housing affordability, but also indirectly impacts “affordable housing” by forcing buyers and renters into different tiers of housing, which can crowd out low-income residents from the market. Vacant homes also detract from the health of the communities in which they exist, creating additional negative effects on businesses and community services that rely on local residents within the community for sustenance.

2.1 Profile and market motivations of a vacant homeowner

Anecdotal case studies, high-level market reviews, and economic reasoning indicate that a primary reason for leaving a house vacant is the desire to speculate on market price appreciation. Some may also see property as a store of wealth, whereby renting the property is not financially necessary and/or desirable for the owner. Other reasons might include extended absences due to work, study, or recreational lifestyle, such as spending winters/summers at a cottage or abroad.

Below is a summary of reasons that a house may be left vacant, some of which are generally deemed as exemptible from vacant home taxes in other jurisdictions:

- **Strata restrictions:** the rental of units is restricted, and the unit is unable to be rented.
- **Medical care or death:** the occupier of the home is no longer able to occupy the unit because they are receiving medical care or have recently passed away.
- **Property uninhabitable:** the property is not currently in a state that it could be safely inhabited.
- **Construction:** the property is either under construction or undergoing significant renovations.
- **Recent sale or transfer:** the property has recently been sold or has had a transfer of ownership.
- **Seasonal, recreational, or occasional use:** the desire for flexibility to use the property occasionally at the convenience of the owner and their lifestyle.

Additionally, there are multiple reasons why an owner may leave a home vacant which have not generally been exempt in other jurisdictions:

- **Liquidity:** leaving a home vacant makes it easier for an owner to quickly sell the unit if desired.

- **Aversion to becoming a landlord:** disinterest in being required to comply with the numerous obligations and regulations associated with being a landlord.
- **Wear and tear:** to avoid the associated wear and tear (i.e., deterioration) and maintenance costs for property upkeep.
- **Inertia:** a homeowner may intend to eventually occupy a property, renovate, or rent it out to others, but for whatever reason has not yet done so.

2.2 Effect of vacant homes on the supply of housing and rents

Calculating the precise impact of vacant homes on the Region’s housing supply and affordability is not possible given the range of potential market variables and the lack of available data. Theoretically applying a tax against vacant homes should reduce the number of homes left vacant, as it increases the cost of leaving said home vacant.

Based on supply and demand economics, scarcity of a good generally increases the price of that good. As vacant homes have a negative impact on the housing supply, there is likely some upwards price pressure on housing prices in the Region because of the prevalence of vacant homes. Implementing a vacant home tax should increase the housing supply in the Region by transferring some vacant units to the market (either as rental properties or through sale by owners) and through the targeted use of revenues generated from administering the tax. Based on conversations with Region staff, directive from York Region Council, as well as at other comparable municipalities, it is expected that revenue generated from the tax could be used to fund affordable housing projects and initiatives across York Region.

The overall extent to which vacant homes are impacting the supply of affordable housing depends on a variety of factors, such as the types of homes currently being left vacant, their market price, and overall demand for homes of that type. Following the implementation of the tax, the Region should rely on available data gained through administering the tax to conduct analytics to review the impact. The data should demonstrate that the tax is achieving its stated purpose. The tax can be modified or adjusted based on any insights gained.

It is unlikely that many vacant homes transitioned to the market will fall into the low and mid-range market rental housing segment of the housing continuum. For example, Vancouver found that many homes that were vacant were single-family homes or condominium units that had an assessment value significantly above average. Many of these homes would likely be unaffordable to average income earners. However, transferring vacant homes to the market would likely improve housing choice for a number of York Region residents, which could moderate upward price pressures across the housing spectrum.

For example, transferring a three-bedroom single-family home to the market would provide a new option for a family of four currently living in a two-bedroom condominium. This family could then “right size” their housing by moving into the previously vacant home. This results in the current condominium unit being made available for new residents. Although no affordable housing units were added to the market in this example, the supply and range of housing options increased, which should help to improve overall affordability.

In Vancouver, the number of homes declared vacant has decreased significantly since the implementation of the VHT. Between 2017 and 2020 there was a 26% decrease in vacant homes, with the number of properties declared as vacant falling from 2,193 in 2017 to 1,627 in 2020. These 1,627 vacant properties represent 0.8% of all properties. In parallel, the number of principal and tenanted residences rose 1.3% and 19.5% respectively during the same period of time.⁸ Of the 1,769 vacant properties identified in 2019, 36% were converted to occupied in the 2020 year, while other homes were newly declared as vacant.

⁸ (City of Vancouver and Housing Vancouver, 2019)

2.3 Prevalence of vacant homes in York Region

It can be difficult to identify vacant homes and to determine the motivations of those homeowners. Data on home vacancy are not tracked on a continuous basis by the Region, Statistics Canada, or similar government agencies. Quantification is also challenged by the need to use an appropriate definition of vacancy and privacy legislation and principles.

Statistics Canada uses census data to identify unoccupied private dwellings for the census year only. Statistics Canada defines an unoccupied (i.e., vacant) dwelling as a private dwelling that meets the two conditions necessary for year-round occupancy but that has no individual residing in it on a specific date (e.g., May 11, 2021 for the 2021 census):

- A source of heat or power; and
- Provides shelter from the elements.

Using data from the 2021 census, it was estimated that of the 405,863 private dwellings in York Region, approximately 391,034 of them are occupied by usual residents.⁹ This analysis suggests that approximately 15,000 or 3.6% of all dwellings analyzed were vacant (i.e., not occupied by usual residents at the date of assessment). This figure is more or less in line with 2021 census vacancy rates from other neighbouring jurisdictions, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: GTA municipality vacancy rates

| Jurisdiction / Municipality | Toronto | Peel | Halton Region | York Region |
|-----------------------------|---------|------|---------------|-------------|
| Vacancy Rate | 5.6% | 3.7% | 2.6% | 3.6% |

This analysis of vacancy rates likely over-estimates the number of vacant homes for the purposes of a VHT, as it only considers occupancy at a single point in time. In comparison, most VHTs that have been implemented or proposed in other jurisdictions (e.g., Vancouver, Melbourne, Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton) only apply to homes that are left vacant for a minimum duration of time over a specified reference period (e.g., a VHT will only apply to houses that have been left vacant for at least six months of the calendar year). The VHTs that have been passed or proposed in Vancouver, Melbourne, Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton all stipulate that a home must be vacant for at least six months out of a 12-month year for it to be considered vacant.

2.4 Purpose of a VHT

There are two primary objectives for implementing a VHT:

- Transitioning vacant homes to the housing market, and;
- Raising revenue for municipal programs, initiatives, and public policy objectives, such as affordable housing.

2.4.1 Transitioning vacant homes to the market

A vacant home tax is a fiscal policy instrument that can increase housing availability and affordability under certain market conditions, such as those associated with a shortage of housing options for widespread portions of the population. When demand for residential property exceeds supply, residential property values will appreciate, leading to an increasing number of property owners that view residential real estate not just as a personal dwelling or source of rental income, but also as a store of wealth. One consequence of this can be

⁹ Statistics Canada defines a “private dwelling occupied by usual residents” as a private dwelling in which a person or a group of persons is permanently residing.

speculative investment. In such cases, speculators may purchase and hold property until the maximum return on investment may be realized. In the interim, property owners may leave these properties vacant, which places pressure on available housing stock and drives up housing affordability / rents. This also limits the prevalence of vacancy and creates additional competition for units. Property owners may leave these properties vacant for a variety of reasons - the profile and market motivations of vacant homeowners are described in Section 2.1. For example, according to the Toronto Real Estate Board's 2018 Market Year in Review & Outlook Report, a survey of 2,501 GTA homeowners found that 2% of existing GTA homeowners stated that they own one or more additional homes that they keep vacant.¹⁰

These types of issues associated with a lack of housing supply are increasingly being felt across different jurisdictions throughout Canada, as the country currently faces a supply gap of 3.5 million homes.¹¹ All levels of government have acknowledged the lack of housing stock and each level has either studied or implemented policy measures to help with addressing the issue as the lack of supply continues to drive up housing prices.

Nonetheless, a VHT that is set sufficiently high will serve to disincentivize some speculators from leaving properties vacant by eroding potential returns. In the GTA it was found that 38% of vacant homeowners indicated that they would sell their investment property in response to a VHT while 37% would rent to tenants, and 25% would not change their behaviour.¹² Ultimately, if it becomes more expensive for vacant homeowners to keep a unit empty because of the VHT, they may choose to release these units back into the market for rent or sale. In addition to improving the supply of homes, a VHT could slow excessive market demand as it discourages investors from purchasing additional vacant homes due to the associated costs.¹³ Overall, in line with the principles of supply and demand, more units on the market to buy or rent and fewer buyers competing in the market should have a positive impact on housing affordability.

More and more municipal and regional governments across Canada have recognized these potential benefits of a VHT and implemented their own version of the policy. A VHT can be an important policy initiative for quickly addressing the supply issues in Canada as it is relatively simple to implement. In comparison, it is extremely difficult to address housing shortages in the short-term by building new homes as the construction and government approvals process can be lengthy in Canada.¹⁴

Although a VHT displays several benefits, its impact is difficult to quantify. The housing market is impacted by a plethora of factors, such as global economic trends, cost of financing, other government policy, and changing demographics. While other jurisdictions have reported a decline in the number of vacant properties after the implementation of a vacant home tax, there are other factors that could impact the declining number of vacant properties and the decline cannot be solely or specifically attributable to the tax. Having said that, directionally, the decline in vacant properties is consistent with the intended purpose of a VHT.

Additionally, given the structuring and administration of the tax (described in Section 3), there will be lag time between the implementation of the tax and changes in behaviours of homeowners. A vacant home tax would likely not be paid by homeowners until at least a year after its implementation. Until a homeowner is required to pay the tax, it may not begin to impact their behaviour and ultimately transition vacant homes to the market.

¹⁰ (Toronto Real Estate Board, 2018)

¹¹ (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2022)

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Interest rates also impact demand for housing. High interest rates tend to decrease demand for property, placing downward pressure on housing prices, while low interest rates generally have the opposite effect. While Canada is currently experiencing a high-inflationary environment, leading to interest rates that have not been observed in Canada in several years, it can be reasonably expected that interest rates will flatten out or decrease within the coming years. Given the medium- to long-term nature of a VHT policy and the additional costs of carrying vacant real estate that the tax would create, it can be expected to further disincentivize speculators and encourage vacant homeowners to return said properties to the real estate market.

¹⁴ (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2022)

2.4.2 Generating revenue for regional/municipal programs and initiatives

Revenues generated from a VHT could be directed towards supporting municipal programs, initiatives, and public policy objectives, such as developing additional affordable housing. For example, Vancouver allocates all net revenues from its VHT, the Empty Homes Tax (“EHT”), to affordable housing initiatives, which has totaled more than \$86 million since its inception in 2017. In 2021 alone, the EHT generated more than \$26 million for affordable housing initiatives, which enabled the City to provide an additional \$12 million in funding for the Community Housing Incentive Program. This program supports non-profit and co-op housing developers in attracting funding partners for affordable developments.¹⁵ Similarly, Toronto City Council directed City staff to allocate any VHT revenues towards affordable housing initiatives through the annual operating and capital budget approval process.

A benefit regarding revenues generated from VHTs is that they typically have the general support from citizens and officials alike when compared to other taxes or fees. Additionally, the data obtained from the tax can be leveraged by housing and municipal planners to better understand whether particular neighbourhoods or developments are being targeted by speculative investors, allowing them to modify/update their policies and approaches to the benefit of the municipality and urban landscape more broadly.

If the VHT ends up achieving its policy objectives, the number of vacant homes will decrease over time, along with the revenue generated by the tax (in the absence of any rate increases). For example, vacant homes in Vancouver consistently decreased in each consecutive year following the implementation of the EHT in 2017. Vacant homes in Vancouver declined by 7% in 2018, 13% in 2019 and 8% in 2020.¹⁶ Nonetheless, revenues from the EHT have remained relatively stable, as the tax rate was raised to 1.25% in 2020, 3% in 2021 and will be raised to 5% in 2023. While these rate increases have continued to support declines in the number of vacant homes, it is not clear how low the number of vacant homes will go, or whether there may be a limit on how high the VHT rate can be set and still remain effective.¹⁷ Some vacant homeowners may continue to keep their properties vacant regardless of how high the tax rate is set. However, the effect of these homeowners on the housing market can be at least partially offset by directing the net revenues raised from a VHT towards affordable housing initiatives. The market response in Vancouver over the coming years will be an interesting case study for other jurisdictions who have implemented a similar tax. As such, a VHT can be viewed as a good revenue tool for the Region in the short- and medium-term but should not be relied upon as a long-term sustainable revenue source.

¹⁵ (City of Vancouver, 2021)

¹⁶ (City of Vancouver, 2021)

¹⁷ A VHT rate that is set too high may face challenges in terms of political ramifications and/or general market acceptance.

3 VHT Program Design

Per the enabling legislation in the Ontario Municipal Act, and upon receiving ‘designation’ from the Minister of Finance, York Region must pass a by-law to implement a vacant home tax. According to Ontario legislation, that by-law must contain:

- A stated tax rate; and
- Defined conditions of vacancy that, if met, make a unit subject to the tax.

Ontario legislation dictates that municipalities may include other contents in a by-law for a VHT as deemed necessary, such as:

- Exemptions from the tax;
- Rebates of tax;
- Audit and inspection powers; and
- Except as otherwise provided for in the regulations, the establishment and use of dispute resolution mechanisms.

This section provides research and analysis on these tax design features for the consideration of implementing a VHT in York Region.

3.1 Definitions

A VHT will require clear definitions for terms such as “vacant” and “home”. Definitions used by Vancouver, Melbourne, and Toronto are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: VHT definitions from comparator municipalities

| | Vancouver Empty Homes Tax | Melbourne Vacant Residential Land Tax | Toronto Vacant Home Tax |
|---------------|---|---|--|
| Vacant | Properties are considered vacant if they have been unoccupied for more than six months during the preceding calendar year. | Properties are considered vacant if they have not been lived in for at least six months (collectively) of the preceding calendar year. The occupation does not need to be by the same occupant or for a single continuous period. | A residential unit is vacant if it has been unoccupied for more than six months during the prior calendar year, or it is deemed to be vacant due to the owner failing to make a vacancy declaration or making a false vacancy declaration. |
| Home | All “Class 1 Residential” properties, including: single-family residences, multi-family residences, duplexes, apartments, condominiums, nursing homes, seasonal dwellings, manufactured homes, farm buildings and daycare facilities. | Land that is able to be used solely or primarily for residential purposes, such as a home or an apartment. | A residential unit is a self-contained unit which includes a dedicated washroom and kitchen, located on property classified as residential property on the assessment roll. |

A six-month period within a twelve-month reference year (e.g., calendar year, fiscal year) would align to the York Region context. This period of time acknowledges several life circumstances common in York Region, such as individuals who travel for work and/or spend extended periods outside of the Region (e.g., cottagers, snowbirds, etc.).

Definitions used by other agencies may serve as a precedent. To maintain OHIP coverage, an individual may be temporarily outside of Canada for a total of 212 days in any 12-month period as long as their primary place of residence is still in Ontario.¹⁸ Under certain circumstances, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has extended absence provisions. These would cover absences due to studying outside of Canada, working outside of Canada, and charitable work outside of Canada. In comparison to Ontario, in order to maintain coverage under the Medical Services Plan in British Columbia, a person must be physically present in B.C. at least six months in a calendar year.¹⁹ In Vancouver's implementation of the EHT, they noted that by using an occupation aligned with the Medical Services Plan would reduce the number of snowbirds impacted, as many snowbirds would likely return to their primary residence to maintain their health coverage. As OHIP coverage allows for Ontario residents to remain out of the country for an additional 29 days (or approximately seven months in total) compared to British Columbia's plan (six months), a VHT with a six-month occupation requirement may capture the primary residences of some snowbirds. Property taxes in York Region are currently applied on a calendar year basis, with property assessment values and property tax rates revised annually. Utilizing a calendar year as the VHT reference period would align the application of other tax measures currently used by the Region.

Details around timing of implementation are included in Section 3.5.

3.2 Exemptions

Given the range of residential property taxes in a large city/region, policymakers may seek to exempt certain types of property owners or classes of homes. The enabling legislation permitting the Region to implement a VHT requires regulations "prescribing persons and entities who are not subject to [the] tax." Other jurisdictions have included the following exemptions:

Table 7: VHT exemptions across comparable jurisdictions

| Vancouver Empty Homes Tax | Melbourne Vacant Residential Land Tax | Toronto Vacant Home Tax |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Major home renovation requiring vacancy – Resident has been admitted to a long-term care facility (for no more than 12 months) – Rental restrictions or prohibitions in place for the property – Transfer of 100% of the legal interest in the property was registered in the Land Title Office – Court order prohibits taking up residence in the property – Use of the property for rental purposes is curtailed due to | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Change of ownership during the year – Property became a "residential" property during the year – Property is a holiday home for a minimum of 4 weeks in a year – The property is used and occupied for work purposes by the owner for at least 140 days – Significant renovations to the property (lasting no more than 2 years from date of building permit) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Death of a registered owner – Undergoing redevelopment or major renovation that makes occupation impossible for at least six months – Registered owner is in care, institutionalized or hospitalized – Residential Unit is subject to a restriction or prohibition on rental – Legal ownership of residential unit has been transferred to an arm's length transferee (during year of sale only) |

¹⁸ (Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, 2012)

¹⁹ (Province of British Columbia, 2022)

| Vancouver Empty Homes Tax | Melbourne Vacant Residential Land Tax | Toronto Vacant Home Tax |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – factors such as size limitations – Property belongs to the recently deceased | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Property forms part of an estate for the recently deceased | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Unit is occupied by a registered owner with a principal residence outside of the Greater Toronto Area and the property is required for employment purposes in Toronto for at least six months per year – Court order is in place prohibiting occupancy of the residential unit |

Many exemptions are only able to be applied for one year, such as in the case of a recent death – after which point the property would be subject to the tax.

It is important to ensure sufficient consideration is made to ensure exemptions don't create unintended behaviours and/or produce workarounds. For example, Vancouver conducted an evaluation of its EHT and found that its exemptions had created multiple, unintended loopholes. Individuals were leasing residential properties to corporations they owned to avoid being assigned a vacant status. Vancouver has since modified its tax regulations to close these loopholes, specifying that the property must have actually been used/occupied for the required minimum amount. If the property was not rented out or used/occupied for at least six months of the tax year, the EHT will apply. Additionally, the use and occupation must be as a principal place of residence or subject to an actual leasing arrangement.

3.3 Levying the tax

3.3.1 Identification of vacant homes

The primary challenge to implementing a VHT is identifying which residential units are truly unoccupied over the course of the reference period. This will ensure that the tax can be levied, and the desired outcomes achieved. There are potentially several different methods to identifying vacant homes:

- **Mandatory declaration (universal declaration):** Property owners are required to complete mandatory declarations each year, confirming the status of their property as occupied, exempt, or vacant during the prior reference period. Failure of an owner to declare their property's status results in the property being considered vacant by default, triggering liability for the VHT. This is the most prevalent method used in Canada, with Vancouver, Toronto, Ottawa, Region of Peel and Halton Region all implementing their VHTs on this basis.
- **Self-identification (voluntary declaration):** Property owners are expected to self-identify vacant units to municipalities for the purpose of determining liability for the VHT. Properties are assumed to be occupied unless declared as vacant. Penalties are put in place to act as a deterrent to owners of vacant properties that might be tempted to not self-identify. This method was employed by Melbourne with some challenges – it was found after the fact that, when given the option, many residents did not report their property occupancy, potentially reducing the impact of the implemented VHT.
- **Complaint-based identification:** Investigations into the occupational status of a property are undertaken by municipalities where complaints are received regarding suspected vacant units. Complaints can be filed either by neighbours, residents, or municipal staff. Should the property be deemed unoccupied, it becomes liable under the applicable VHT. Such an approach can also be used as an audit and enforcement mechanism in combination with any of the above methods.

These identification methods are often supported by audits and compliance efforts that verify whether a property/home is vacant or not. Jurisdictions generally apply penalties to owners found to falsely report

occupancy status. The mandatory declaration or self-identification mechanisms could be used in combination with a complaint-based method for compliance – this was also largely supported by respondents across the stakeholder engagement activities.

The advantages and disadvantages of these approaches are summarized in the table below:

Table 8: Advantages and disadvantages of VHT declaration methods

| | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Mandatory declaration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Individual property owners are more directly accountable (they must claim occupancy to avoid the tax) – Larger dataset of responses allows for additional analysis – Lower evasion rate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Higher administrative effort, with significantly more forms to be processed – More intrusive (all taxpayers must respond) – All homeowners must be aware |
| Self Identification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lower administrative effort – Less intrusive to public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Owners can more easily claim ignorance of obligations – Higher risk of avoidance – More education/public awareness required to ensure compliance (Response relies on homeowners self-identifying and knowing that they have an obligation) |
| Complaint-based identification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lower administrative effort – Less intrusive to public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Higher risk of avoidance – Reliant on in-person inspections to verify – Potentially higher degree of mediation on account of false reports / categorizations of occupancy |

3.3.2 Tax rate

The VHT tax rate should discourage property owners from leaving residential properties vacant while not creating unintended consequences, such as disincentivizing housing development. In general, other jurisdictions have defined vacancy in a way to avoid impacting snowbirds or cottagers who may be temporarily absent.

Depending on the tax rate and the number of vacant homes in York Region, the measure could potentially generate additional revenues for the Region (although not a primary policy objective). Policymakers may decide to dedicate this new revenue to similar public policy objectives (such as Regional affordable housing initiatives).

Without sufficient data around the VHT it is not possible to establish an initial optimal tax rate. Once the VHT is established and implemented, data can be collected to evaluate its effectiveness and to determine the impacts of raising the tax rate. In the absence of such data, York Region may want to look to jurisdictions with experience with VHT implementation to identify an initial tax rate for consideration.

Vancouver, Melbourne, Toronto, Ottawa, the Region of Peel, Halton Region, and Hamilton all have used (or will use) an initial tax rate of 1% of the assessed value of the property. Although not insignificant in value, there are questions in all jurisdictions as to whether the 1% tax rate is high enough to incentivize property owners to return their vacant properties to the market. The Region of Peel and Halton Region have indicated that they would consider adjustments of the rate to up to 3%. As indicated previously, Vancouver has already made rate increases, with further rate increases already planned – moved from 1% to 1.25% in 2020, up to 3% for 2021 and 2022 and increasing to 5% in 2023.

A tax rate of 1% may be appropriate initially and align with neighbouring jurisdictions, however a higher tax rate could support achieving policy objectives more quickly. It may be beneficial to the Region to keep the tax rate constant for the early years of implementation to support in establishing baseline data on vacant homes in the Region. Once established, the Region may wish to consider steadily increasing the rate (i.e., on an annual basis) to measure potential impacts on the number of vacant homes and revenues to determine what an optimal rate could be in York Region.

3.4 Implementation

There are a number of factors that the Region should take into consideration when implementing a VHT. At a high level, the key considerations are as follows:

- Timing;
- Communication;
- Local Municipal/Regional responsibilities;
- Costs;
- Public policy and legislation;
- Allocation of revenues; and
- Infrastructure and governance.

Additional detail for each is provided below.

3.4.1 Timing

The VHT will need to be implemented in a timely manner if it is to achieve its desired results in the near term. However, it is also important to allow sufficient time for communication and public education in order to effectively inform residential property owners about their declaration obligations, and to allow them adequate time to adjust their behaviours. A potential implementation timeline is provided in Section 3.5.

3.4.2 Communication

Public awareness initiatives will be required in order to bring sufficient awareness and understanding of the VHT to the public. During the implementation process, regular communication and public engagement would be required. Communication leading up to the declaration period is required such that owners are aware of their responsibilities, and to ensure that taxes are not applied in situations where owners simply were unaware of the regulation. Public awareness campaigns would have to be run throughout the reference year, informing the public of the upcoming changes to their taxes. Inserts in utility bills and official Region/local municipality correspondence, along with radio, television, and other media advertisements would be appropriate. Campaigns would be required to inform owners of the intent of the VHT, as well as of new regulations regarding vacant homes.

These campaigns would also be required to run throughout the initial taxation year, to remind property owners of the application of the VHT on vacant properties. The Region should work with groups such as the Canadian Real Estate Association and the Condominium Authority of Ontario to ensure the impact of the VHT is communicated and understood.

One of the lessons learned from Vancouver was that more effort was required to raise public awareness than they had projected. Following the implementation of their EHT, Vancouver had to allocate an additional \$650,000 on public communications than what was originally anticipated.²⁰ Vancouver needed to conduct additional public communications during the reference period and in the lead up to the declaration period in order to ensure the public was aware of the requirement to declare, but still found that some homeowners

²⁰ (City of Vancouver, 2017)

claimed a lack of awareness for why their home was left vacant or not declared (vacant or occupied) as part of the initial declaration process. Public awareness campaigns during the reference period were targeted at convincing vacant homeowners to find ways to have their homes be occupied. Whereas campaigns during the declaration period were focused on reminding all homeowners of the need to declare their vacancy status.

3.4.3 Local municipal/Regional responsibilities

Implementing a VHT in York Region will require additional considerations around municipal/regional responsibilities due to the nature of the two-tiered municipality. Currently, property taxes are collected by the local municipalities, with proceeds remitted to the Region. When determining the responsibilities of the Region versus local municipalities, consideration should be made to maximize efficiencies from existing processes and minimize redundancies where possible.

There are three main administration methods available:

- **Local municipal delivery:** The local municipalities would be responsible for completing all activities related to a VHT, including communication, reporting, collections, and compliance. This may require duplication of functionality across the local municipalities and may result in inconsistencies between different municipalities.
- **Hybrid delivery:** York Region and the local municipalities would split the responsibilities for delivering a VHT. For example, the local municipalities could be responsible for collecting the tax, with the Region responsible for communications and compliance. This would limit the duplication of functionality while utilizing the local municipalities existing tax collection capabilities.
- **Regional delivery:** York Region would be responsible for completing all activities related to a VHT. This may result in higher levels of efficiency due to consolidated operations across the Region. It may, however, require amendments to the Municipal Act in order to allow the Region to collect the tax. Because of the challenges associated with obtaining permission from the Province for the Region to become a tax collector and the potential costs associated with establishing a tax collection system at the Regional level, the Region has indicated that this is an unlikely option for implementation.

Through discussions with York Region staff as well as an analysis of the administration methods available, the “hybrid delivery” method appears to be the most suitable option as it limits the duplication of efforts between local municipalities and the Region, while also leveraging existing property tax collection systems. This approach would also maintain familiarity and may be more user-friendly to York Region property owners.

Implementation details, such as by-law drafting and implementation planning will need to be finalized over the coming months. The Region, working together with local municipalities, will be able to learn from the experience of other neighbouring jurisdictions, such as Toronto, Halton or Peel, to understand what went well, what to be aware of, and how to more effectively manage both effort and costs. Both the Region of Peel and Halton Region have recommended to their Councils that the VHT be delivered through the “Hybrid” delivery model. Both regions estimated that a hybrid delivery model would have lower implementation and operating costs by leveraging existing tax collection capabilities at the local level. Neither region has specified how the various responsibilities for delivering the tax, such as audits, will be divided between the local municipal governments and respective regions.

3.4.4 Costs

When considering the implementation and design of a residential vacancy tax, the associated costs would have two components: a start-up cost and the ongoing costs for operation.

The start-up cost for implementing the Empty Homes Tax in Vancouver, including the key considerations outlined in this section, amounted to approximately \$7.4 million. Overall, implementation costs for Vancouver were 57% higher than their original anticipated start-up cost estimate of \$4.7 million.²¹ Vancouver staff indicated that, at the time of implementation, there were limited jurisdictions with VHTs that could inform their analysis. As a result, Vancouver had to refine estimates for implementation costs several times. Subsequent jurisdictions to implement VHTs in Canada have experienced implementation costs that were largely consistent with Vancouver's ultimate costs (proportionate to their population sizes). Thus, other jurisdictions can be used to help inform estimates for implementation costs of a VHT in York Region. Given the Region's two-tier municipal structure, the cost structure for York Region will be different than that of several other municipalities. For further details on costs, please see Section 5.3.

Most jurisdictions look to ensure that all operating costs are covered by the proceeds collected from the tax, with the remaining funds being dedicated to various housing-related initiatives. The cost structure of the "Hybrid" implementation approach will also need to be considered, with the Region and local municipalities sharing costs for different components of the tax.

Additional cost considerations, including anticipated costs for the Region, are included in Section 5 of this report.

3.4.5 Public policy and legislation

A significant amount of time will be required for the public policy and legislative work required to implement the VHT. Public consultation, Council decision(s) regarding the appropriate rules and regulations for the tax, and the drafting of legislation will all need to take place before the implementation can begin. Based on consultation with York Region staff, implementation of the VHT would likely entail using the period through 2022 to address policy and planning issues, along with establishing roles and responsibilities between the Region and local municipalities. It is anticipated that a draft VHT bylaw will go to Regional Council for approval in early 2023, followed by an application to the Province for 'designation' which council will later enact. Given this timing and the potential to use 2023 as the first reference period for the VHT, the Region may need to include language in its by-law drafting that allows for the tax to be implemented retroactively and include a period of time prior to the formal adoption of the tax.

Following Council approval, the Region could use the remainder of the year to establish and implement the requisite systems and processes. In addition, it will be important for the Region and/or local municipalities to commence the promotion and education component of the communications strategy following approval. This should allow sufficient time for homeowners to make appropriate arrangements for their homes should they be considered vacant under the VHT by-law. By retroactively assigning the calendar year of 2023 as the initial reference period, homeowners would then be required to make declarations in early 2024, with billing occurring one to two months thereafter. A potential VHT implementation timeline is discussed in Section 3.5.

3.4.6 Allocation of revenues

There are several different methods for allocating revenue across the Region. The three primary methods are as follows:

- **Regional approach:** The Region would retain all revenue and allocate it to projects and initiatives across the Region as it sees fit. Under this approach, the Region would direct any revenues generated by the VHT to affordable housing programs and initiatives per Council direction.

²¹ (City of Vancouver, 2017)

- **Return revenue to local municipalities:** A portion of revenue generated in a municipality may be returned to it by the Region after accounting for administration costs and other potential Regional initiatives. For example, if there is \$5 million in VHT revenue generated by/within a municipality, that funding would be given to the municipality after deducting the administrative costs associated with levying the VHT and other potential Regional program costs that would get priority access to the VHT revenues. This means that the proportion of total VHT revenue a municipality receives each year may fluctuate but allows for a portion of revenue generated to be returned to the area in which it is generated.
- **Allocate revenue to local municipalities proportionately:** Revenue generated across the Region is divided across municipalities using established factors such as population, number of households, or affordable housing demand. The amount of revenues available for distribution would be established after the Region determines the extent of revenues required to deliver on Regional housing initiatives. This approach could result in a more predictable allocation of funding across the Region but may mean that VHT revenue is not returned to the municipality in which it was generated.

The approach to sharing/allocating revenue is still to be determined by the Region and its local municipalities. There were several suggestions made by stakeholder engagement participants about allocating revenues with municipalities based on the number of vacant units, established housing programs, local populations, or property assessment value, however a firm conclusion was not determined.

These initial considerations for allocation of revenues should be considered against their alignment with historical approaches, whether they recognize local municipal housing initiatives, their ease of implementation, and whether they address stakeholder concerns. Regardless of the revenue allocation method, the Region will always maintain a share/portion of the revenues generated by the VHT. Preliminary conclusions through discussions with the Region and the stakeholder engagement exercise indicate that the “Regional approach” may be the most appropriate, however the Region will need to assess further how revenue allocation should best be handled to deliver on the policy objectives of the VHT (e.g., increased housing supply; VHT revenue to go to affordable housing in the Region). Note that revenue allocation may be also informed by the different roles related to housing within a two-tiered municipal environment.

3.4.7 Infrastructure and governance

The implementation of a VHT would require additional infrastructure and governance to be put in place in order to administer and manage the tax. Based on the experience of other jurisdictions like Vancouver and Melbourne, as well as an assessment of typical requirements associated with implementing new taxes, the Region and its local municipalities would have to ensure that the following is employed:

- A project team to oversee the initial implementation and early troubleshooting;
- Business support, including internal subject matter experts in areas like revenue generation, tax policy, housing policy, legal services, and communications;
- Development of a payment and reporting system, including audit, compliance, and analytics capabilities;
- A dispute resolution system to handle appeals as necessary, similar to the appeals process in place for supplementary taxes and land tax appeals;
- Technical and professional services for website development, configuration, and testing; and
- Hardware and software implementations, as well as a design consultancy engagement to ensure that the infrastructure is properly designed and functional.

As part of the implementation of the new tax, adjustments to existing Regional and local municipality systems would be required. A new module for the local municipalities’ tax management and collection systems would be required, taking advantage of synergies with the existing property tax and land transfer tax systems. This system would handle the processing of applicable taxes for vacant properties, using the same property assessment information used in the existing property tax system. Furthermore, a front-end portal would be required for declarations of property occupancy status, as well as for initiating appeals and providing an

interface for the public to interact on VHT-related issues. The Region and its local municipalities should consult with other municipalities in the GTA implementing similar changes in an effort to leverage lessons learned and/or products/solutions developed for other municipalities to help keep costs down.

The Region will also need to develop an audit and compliance capability. This would require technology systems and new staff in order to support the ongoing audit and compliance functions. Having this capability in place prior to the declaration period will allow for audit and compliance checks to occur in a timely fashion and minimize the potential of tax avoidance from homeowners. In consultation with Vancouver staff, they indicated that their initial assumptions for the resources and efforts required to adequately audit and enforce the VHT were underestimated. As of 2019, the City had 12 full time staff responsible for administering audits.

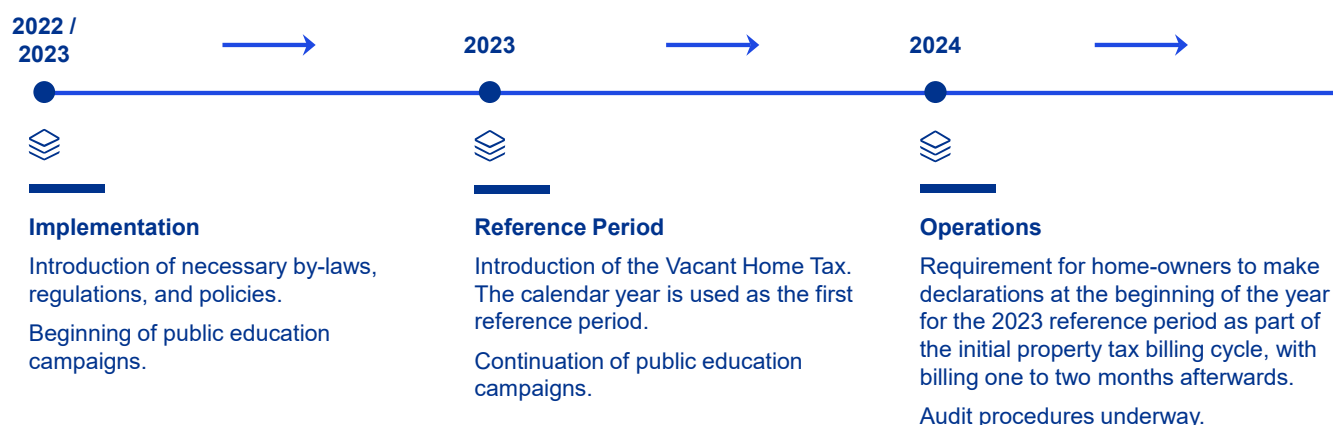
In addition, a dispute resolution system would need to be implemented to handle appeals as necessary. As part of the EHT in Vancouver, an independent body was established to handle the appeals and dispute resolution process. Such a body would require a defined or independent dispute mechanism or process to handle VHT case considerations. If, however, an independent body was not set up, the Region could follow a similar process to that used for land tax appeals.

3.5 Implementation timeline

Due to lag times associated with housing policy, a VHT designed to reduce the number of vacant homes in the market and potentially improve housing affordability/availability would need to be implemented in a timely manner if it is to impact the housing market in the near term. The sooner the VHT is implemented, the sooner potential impacts to the housing market can be identified (e.g., available housing units, impacted price points, etc.).

A reasonable timeline for the implementation of a VHT would balance the urgency of the public policy objectives with the necessary administrative and operational preparations required. At a high-level, a potential implementation timeline for a VHT for York Region is outlined in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Potential VHT implementation timeline



In pursuing the implementation timeline above, sufficient consideration will also need to be made by the Region about retroactive implementation of the tax / by-law. Additionally, specific consideration around language within the by-law, communication (internally and externally) about the tax and implementation timeline, and general fairness towards those affected by the VHT will need to be incorporated. Several other jurisdictions within Ontario that have already passed VHT by-laws have taken similar approaches using a retroactive implementation. In Toronto, City Council passed a VHT by-law on February 3, 2022, which retroactively came into effect on January 1st of that same year. Ottawa City Council also passed a draft VHT bylaw on March 23, 2022, which retroactively came into effect on January 1, 2022. Similar to the case for York Region, Ottawa City Council officially enacted the VHT following receipt of 'designation' from the Province that same year. York Region may consider using the precedents set by other municipalities with experience implementing a VHT to inform its own by-law and implementation timeline.

3.6 Operations

As part of ongoing operations of a VHT, the Region and/or local municipalities would need to employ staff that could handle the following tasks:

- Tax administration;
- Review and compliance (audit);
- Notice and advertising;
- IT support and maintenance; and
- A call centre or online portal and maintenance.

The above tasks will be split between the Region and local municipalities. Specific details on roles and responsibilities and governance will need to be further refined between the Region and local municipalities.

Given the novel nature of a vacant home tax in York Region, a large portion of ongoing costs of operation would be spent to ensure compliance with the tax regulations and to educate property owners about their roles and responsibilities in regard to responding to the tax. Relevant operating costs would include salaries for inspectors and audit staff, IT services, and any hard costs associated with print, postage, and electronic services.

Vancouver indicated that developing the audit and dispute functions in advance of the declaration period was important in order to increase compliance. Having the audit function established allowed the city to conduct audits and ensure compliance in a timely fashion, ultimately increasing the overall compliance with the tax. Additionally, Vancouver city staff identified that ensuring the evidence requirements were not overly onerous made the audit process efficient, while still ensuring overall compliance with the tax.

The intention is that a VHT would be self-funding in that the revenue generated would be able to cover annual costs of administration, with any surplus revenue being directed to affordable housing programs or other Regional initiatives. Additionally, in order to ensure compliance with the tax, the VHT would need to have priority lien status in order to enforce unpaid VHT balances.

3.7 Measuring effectiveness

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of a VHT, the public policy objective should be clear. Based on discussions with York Region staff and factors identified by Council, the primary objective of a VHT in York Region would be to produce a positive impact on housing availability and affordability across the Region. This is similar to other jurisdictions. For example, the stated objective of Vancouver’s Empty Homes Tax is to “return empty or under-used properties to use as long-term rental homes for people who live and work in Vancouver.” The objective is not necessarily to maximize revenues or to force owners to sell their properties.

Annual reporting and monitoring will be required to effectively measure the effects of the tax on housing availability and affordability. The number of vacant homes, revenue collected, and housing trends should be monitored on an annual basis in order to understand the effects of a VHT.

As the Region does not have existing reliable data on the number of vacant homes, the effectiveness of the tax should be analyzed based on the trend of annual VHT declarations. Additional sources of information, such as utility usage, public surveys, and housing data can also be used to monitor the overall housing market and vacancy trends.

Several municipalities that have recently implemented VHTs in Canada have successfully identified and established several key metrics useful for the evaluation of the performance of the taxes. In consultation with the City of Vancouver and the City of Toronto, the following metrics have been identified as effective indicators related to VHT performance. The Region should consider measuring and evaluating tax performance on an ongoing basis:

- The evolution of vacancy rates over time;

- The relationship between vacancy rates and market rents;
- Number of properties required to declare;
- Changes in vacant and exempt properties (e.g., the number of properties converted from vacant to occupied, the number of new properties reported as vacant);
- Breakdown of exemptions by type;
- Changes in tenanted properties;
- Occupancy status of previously vacant properties;
- Average assessed value of vacant properties versus all properties; and
- Revenues generated by the tax.

The City of Vancouver reports on several of the indicators above related to the performance of the tax. Additional information related to the annual performance measurement is available in the Vancouver Empty Homes Tax Annual Report.

It can be reasonably assumed that by simply announcing the tax and its effective taxation date of January 1, 2024, some owners of vacant properties may seek out tenants in 2023 to avoid paying the tax. This will help the Region in achieving its objective of releasing housing stock but will be difficult to measure quantitatively.

Ultimately, a VHT should discourage maintaining vacant homes, either by returning units to the rental market or by encouraging owners to sell the property. The success of the tax will depend on a number of factors. Annual reporting and monitoring will be essential to successfully measuring the impact of the tax.

4 Case Studies

This section provides a high-level summary of reference information from other domestic and international jurisdictions that have implemented or are planning on implementing a VHT or a similar policy. This section focuses on publicly available and published data. A key outcome of the jurisdictional scan was to identify key learnings and takeaways for a York Region VHT and identify any elements that are unique to the other jurisdictions. Jurisdictions covered include Vancouver, Toronto, the Region of Peel and Halton Region, and Melbourne. Additional information about the jurisdictions and their conditions related to VHTs, as well as information on several additional jurisdictions (Paris, New York, and London) can be found in Appendix A.

4.1 Vancouver

4.1.1 Background of tax

In response to mounting pressures on Vancouver's housing market resulting in record-breaking housing prices, in November 2016 the City of Vancouver approved the Empty Homes Tax, which came into effect in January 2017. The primary intent of the EHT was to return empty and underutilised properties to the housing market through sales or as long-term rental homes for residents of Vancouver. Any revenue generated by the EHT was intended to be a secondary benefit of the tax, with all funds collected to be directed towards investments in affordable housing in Vancouver.²²

4.1.2 Definition of vacant home

The City of Vancouver defines a vacant residential property as one that has been unoccupied for more than six months during the vacancy reference period.²³ The EHT is assessed by calendar year (January 1 to December 31), defined as the "vacancy reference period".

The occupant does not need to be the same occupant over the six-month period, nor does the occupancy need to take place over a single continuous period. However, occupancy must occur in periods of at least 30 consecutive days or more. It is not enough that the property is simply available for occupation (i.e. listed as a short term rental), the property must have actually been used/occupied for the required minimum amount. If the property was not rented out for at least six months of the tax year, the EHT will apply. The use and occupation must be as a principal place of residence or subject to an actual leasing arrangement.²⁴

The EHT applies to all Class 1 Residential properties within the city of Vancouver that were not used as a principal residence or rented for at least six months of the year, and do not qualify for an exemption.²⁵ Class 1 Residential properties include:

- Single-family residences;
- Multi-family residences;
- Duplexes;
- Seasonal dwellings;
- Manufactured homes;
- Some vacant land;

²² (City of Vancouver and Housing Vancouver, 2019)

²³ (City of Vancouver, 2019)

²⁴ (City of Vancouver, 2019)

²⁵ (City of Vancouver, 2020)

- Apartments;
- Condominiums;
- Nursing homes;
- Farm buildings; and
- Daycare facilities.

Acceptable exemptions include:

- Major renovations;
- Change in ownership;
- Death of owner;
- Rental restrictions apply to the property;
- Property is under court order; and
- Property is limited in use.

In addition, properties will be exempt from the EHT if the lands are vacant, a heritage property, or part of a phased development – provided that an application to redevelop has been submitted and permits are under review. There are no exemptions for properties that are unoccupied for more than six months of the vacancy reference period solely because they are unimproved.²⁶

4.1.3 Administration method

Vancouver's EHT is administered as a mandatory declaration program. Each year, residents are required to complete mandatory declaration forms, confirming the status of their property as occupied, exempt, or vacant during the prior reference period. If a resident owns a property that was unoccupied for greater than six months during the previous vacancy reference period, they must indicate as such on the mandatory declaration form, at which point the property will be subject to the tax. Those that fail to submit their property status declaration(s) by this date will have their property / properties automatically declared vacant and will be subject to the EHT as well as a \$250 penalty for not submitting their declaration(s).²⁷

In situations where there may be doubt surrounding the validity of a resident's declaration, the City can require the registered owner to provide additional information about their property ownership for up to 2 years after the initial declaration. As a means of data collection and enforcement, the City will periodically audit certain properties to ensure compliance with the tax. Using a combination of a risk-based approach and random audits, the EHT program verifies the validity of property status declarations. All property status declarations are subject to the audit process as per best practices for provincial and federal tax programs. As part of the audit process, registered property owners may be required to submit additional evidence to the City to support their declaration.

The annual EHT was originally set at 1% of the property's assessed taxable value,²⁸ and was increased to 1.25% for the 2020 tax year.²⁹ Vancouver has continued to raise the tax, with a rate of 3% in 2021, and recent announcements inform of a 5% rate to come into effect for 2023.³⁰ The assessed taxable value of a property is the value of the land, buildings, and any other aspects of the property as determined by BC Assessment, and is different depending on the class of property involved. An overview of the historical EHT tax rate is illustrated in Figure 4 below.

²⁶ (City of Vancouver, 2020)

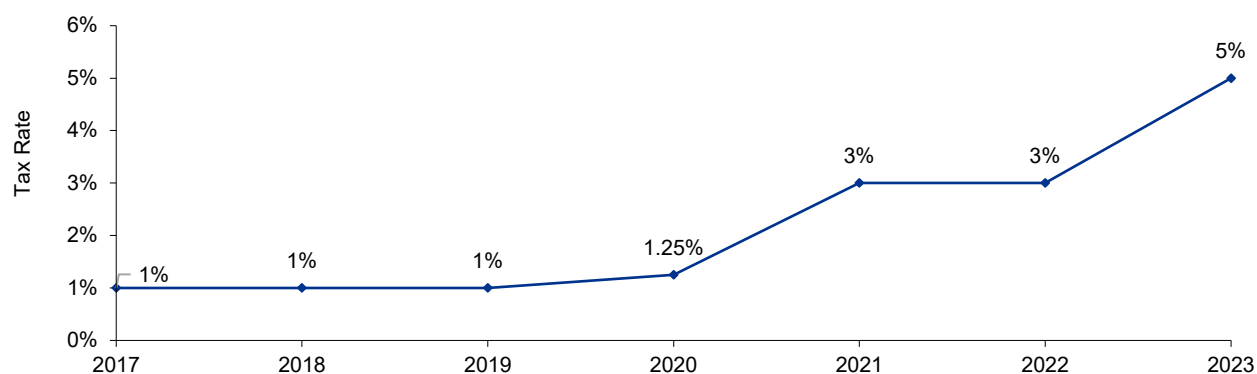
²⁷ (City of Vancouver, 2019)

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ (City of Vancouver, 2019)

³⁰ (Little, 2022)

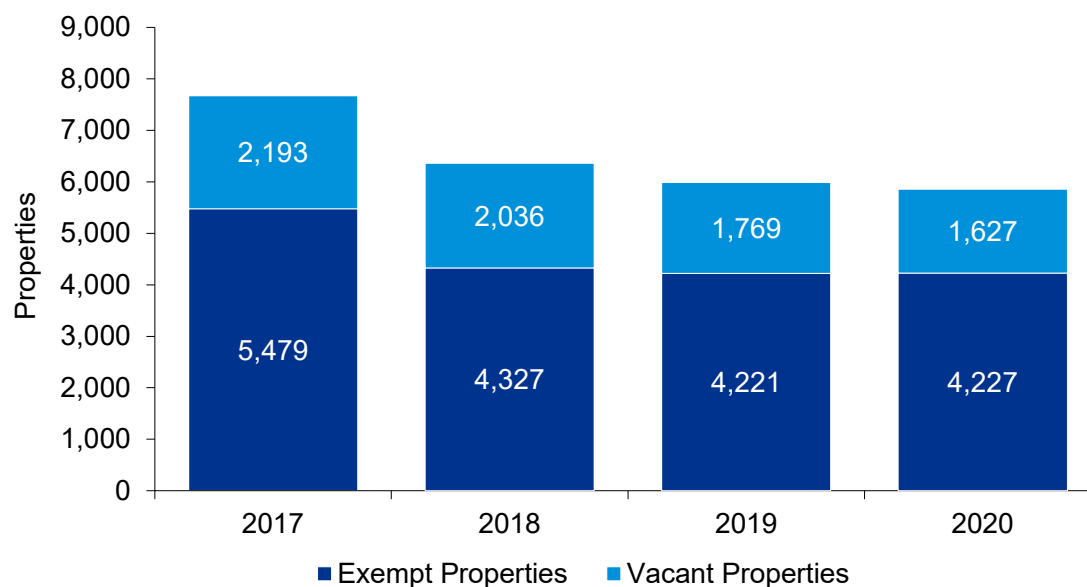
Figure 4: Vancouver EHT rate by year



4.1.4 Impact of tax

Between 2017 and 2020 there was a 26% decrease in vacant homes, with the number of properties declared as vacant falling from 2,193 in 2017 to 1,627 in 2020. These 1,627 vacant properties represent 0.8% of all properties. In comparison, the number of principal and tenanted residences rose 1.3% and 19.5% respectively during the same period of time.³¹ Of the 1,769 vacant properties identified in 2019, 36% were converted to occupied in the 2020 year. A visual breakdown of vacant and exempt properties over the past four years is included in Figure 5, below.

Figure 5: Vacant and exempt Vancouver residential properties subject to the EHT



Although any revenues generated by the EHT were intended to be a secondary benefit of the tax, the City raised approximately \$38.0 million, \$39.4 million, \$36.0 million and \$26.0 million from the tax in years from 2018 to 2021, respectively. The City noted that revenue decreased in 2021 as more vacant homes were

³¹ (City of Vancouver and Housing Vancouver, 2019)

transitioned back into the market where the number of vacant properties decreased by approximately 250. Figures for the 2022 tax reference period are not yet complete and still unavailable.

4.1.5 Applicability to York Region

Similar to Vancouver in 2015, York Region has been experiencing a rapid acceleration in housing prices. As a result, both jurisdictions have experienced low vacancy rates over a similar timeframe. Furthermore, both are under strong and increasing pressure from growing demand to live in urban areas, while supply – despite the addition of new buildings, has not kept pace to meet this demand. Furthermore, both jurisdictions are in provinces that have implemented provincial foreign buyers’ taxes.

Although it is still too early to definitively conclude that Vancouver’s EHT is producing its intended results, at a high level there has been a decrease in vacant properties within the city and additional revenue raised for affordable housing initiatives. If York Region were to proceed with implementing a VHT, Vancouver’s experience in implementing their EHT should be taken into account for insights into the structure and components of the tax (i.e., administration, exemptions, enforcement, etc.). Furthermore, lessons learned with regards to understanding the effectiveness of the tax, as well as setbacks, loopholes, public perception, and potential changes/revisions being made to Vancouver’s EHT should be considered in Region’s initial implementation of a VHT.

4.2 Melbourne

4.2.1 Background of tax

In 2017, it was estimated that in Melbourne, up to 3.9% of all residential properties were vacant (nearly 61,000 properties³²), based on water usage data.³³ As a percentage of investor-owned rental properties, the vacancy rate was estimated to be as high as 16.2% of all rental properties – demonstrating more than \$20 billion in vacant property.³⁴ To address the lack of housing supply in Melbourne and across the state of Victoria, the Victorian Government introduced the vacant residential land tax (“the VRLT”) in March 2017, with it coming into effect in January 2018. The aim of the VRLT was to assure the availability of housing and was intended to encourage owners to rent or sell their properties rather than providing additional revenue to the government. The intent is such that additional revenue generated by the VRLT will support affordable housing initiatives in Victoria.

4.2.2 Definition of vacant home

The Victorian Government defines residential property or residential land as land that is able to be used solely or primarily for residential purposes, such as a home or an apartment. This also includes land on which a residence is being renovated, or where a former residence has been demolished and a new one is being constructed. It does not, however, include vacant land or commercial residential properties.³⁵

A property is deemed to be vacant if, for more than six months in the preceding year, it has not been lived in by either of the following:

- The owner of the property, or a permitted occupier by the owner, as their principal place of residence; or
- A person under a lease or short-term letting arrangement made in good faith.

The occupant does not need to be the same occupant over the six-month period, nor does it need to take place over a single continuous period. However, it is not enough that the property is simply available for

³² The study analyzed 1,579,906 dwellings out of a total possible 1,741,984. Dwellings not included were excluded because of data availability issues.

³³ (Prosper Australia, 2019)

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ (Victoria State Revenue Office, 2017)

occupation (i.e., listed as a short-term rental). The property must actually have been used/occupied for six months or more. Furthermore, it is also not enough that the property is used intermittently or on a casual basis (i.e., by friends and/or family of the owner). The use and occupation must be as a principal place of residence or subject to an actual lease or letting arrangement.³⁶

There are several exemptions to the above rules, including:

- Ownership of the property changed;
- The property is a holiday home; and
- The property became a ‘residential’ property during that year
- Property is used and occupied by the owner for work purposes.

Properties that are owned by companies, associations, or organizations are generally not eligible for these exemptions.³⁷

4.2.3 Administration method

The administrative method for Victoria’s VLRT is self-identification. If a resident owns a property that was unoccupied for greater than six months during a calendar year, it is their responsibility to notify the Victoria State Revenue Office (VSRO).³⁸ Failure by a resident to notify the VSRO of ownership of a vacant residential property is considered a notification default, and results in the owner being held liable for a penalty tax on the amount assessed in accordance with the state’s revenue ruling on penalty tax and interest.³⁹

The annual VLRT is set at 1% of the capital improved value (CIV) of taxable land.⁴⁰ The CIV of a property is the value of the land, buildings, and any other capital improvements made to the property as determined by the general valuation process.

4.2.4 Impact of tax

Overall, the effects of the VLRT on vacancy rates in Melbourne remains unclear. Prior to the implementation of the VLRT, vacancy rates in Melbourne were consistently trending downwards, falling from an average of 2.7% in 2013 to 1.4% in 2018.⁴¹ Following the implementation of the VLRT in 2018, vacancy rates began increasing – 2.5% in 2019, 4.7% in 2020 and 4.4% in 2021.⁴² Nonetheless, Melbourne’s real estate market was significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The VLRT was suspended in 2021, as border restrictions limited the entry of foreign workers and students which resulted in extremely high vacancy rates.⁴³ Additionally, vacancy rates have likely been inflated due to high levels of dwelling completions in recent years.⁴⁴ As of 2022, the VLRT has been reinstated and corresponded with a sharp drop in vacancy rates. However, it is too early to determine the extent to which this trend is due to the easing of pandemic restrictions or the reinstatement of the VLRT. Furthermore, some critics note that the current tax rate is too low, and a higher rate would be more effective at incentivizing property owners to return vacant houses to the market.

4.2.5 Applicability to York Region

Melbourne and York Region share multiple similarities that make Melbourne a relevant comparator to York Region in the context of a vacant home tax. Both cities have experienced recent property booms, significant increases in housing demand, low vacancy rates over the past 5-10 years (excluding during the COVID-19 pandemic), and have struggled to supply adequate levels of housing to meet increasing demand. Furthermore,

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ (Parliament of Victoria, 2019)

⁴⁰ (Victoria State Revenue Office, 2017)

⁴¹ (Statista, 2022) (SQM Research, 2022)

⁴² (SQM Research, 2022)

⁴³ (Victoria State Revenue Office, 2017)

⁴⁴ (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020)

speculation investment is exacerbating the housing shortage by keeping a significant number of properties off the market as investors hold properties vacant as speculative investment vehicles rather than allowing them to be occupied for housing. In addition, both jurisdictions share similar structures of government, laws, and regulations, which allow for relevant comparison in the context of taxes and similar such initiatives.

Melbourne also serves as an example of a jurisdiction that has opted for a voluntary self-identification vacant home declaration method as opposed to the mandatory declaration methods applied in Vancouver and Toronto. As some of the initial evidence from Melbourne indicates that the VLRT has been less effective at reducing the number of vacant homes compared to Vancouver, a self-identification declaration mechanism may be less effective than the mandatory declaration method at achieving the goals of the tax.

4.3 Toronto

4.3.1 Background of tax

Toronto housing has become increasingly unaffordable and has priced many residents out of the market. Between 2006 and 2017, average home prices grew by over 130%.⁴⁵ Furthermore, residential rental prices have continuously risen – between 2006 and 2017 the average prices for primary rental units and condominiums rose by approximately 30% and 47%, respectively.⁴⁶ A major contributor that has been worsening affordability in Toronto is a lack of housing supply. Vacancy rates for both primary rental apartments and rental condominium units have declined, indicating limited supply. In 2017, overall rental vacancies for primary rentals and condominiums were 1.4% and 0.7% respectively.⁴⁷

To address these challenges, in 2016, the City of Toronto began investigating a VHT. This decision closely followed the implementation of Vancouver's EHT. In 2016, studies using census data⁴⁸ and analysis of water consumption data indicated that Toronto residential vacancies ranged between 2% and 5.7%.⁴⁹ In response to the affordability and supply issues in Toronto's housing market, Toronto City Council approved the implementation of a 1% VHT in July 2021 which subsequently came into effect in January 2022.⁵⁰ The City outlined that the goal of the tax was to improve the supply and affordability of housing stock by disincentivizing homeowners from leaving their properties vacant.⁵¹ Although Toronto's VHT was not passed to generate revenue, City Council has directed that all revenues from the tax be directed to affordable housing initiatives.⁵²

4.3.2 Definition of vacant home

At the time of this report, specifics on Toronto's VHT have not yet been finalized as the official bylaw has not been released for public review. However, City Council has approved the final design features for the VHT. The City of Toronto defines a vacant residential property as one that has been unoccupied for more than six months during the vacancy reference period (January to December).⁵³ The six months does not have to be consecutive, however, tenant stays must be for at least 30 consecutive days to count towards the six months. Homes can also be deemed vacant by the City in circumstances where the owner fails to make a status declaration, makes a false status declaration, fails to provide information/evidence to the City or provides false

⁴⁵ (MLS Real Estate Listings, 2022)

⁴⁶ (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2020)

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ (Statistics Canada, 2016)

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ (City of Toronto, 2021)

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

information/evidence.⁵⁴ The Toronto VHT applies to all residential units within the city that were neither used as a principal residence nor rented out for at least six months of the year, and do not qualify for an exemption.⁵⁵

A residential unit is defined by the City as “a self-contained unit which includes a dedicated washroom and kitchen, located on property classified as residential property on the assessment roll”.⁵⁶

The City of Toronto has outlined a number of exemptions to the VHT. If a property is deemed exempt, the owner will not be charged the tax for the applicable year. Exemptions include:

- Death of a registered owner;
- The residential unit is subject to a restriction or prohibition on rental;
- The property is undergoing redevelopment or major renovation;
- The property has undergone a transfer in ownership; and
- The registered owner is in care, institutionalized, or hospitalized;
- The property is being occupied for full time employment.
- The property is under court order which is prohibiting occupancy;

4.3.3 Administration method

Toronto’s VHT will be administered as a universal declaration program. All registered owners of residential property within the City of Toronto will be required to complete mandatory declaration forms each year, confirming the status of their property as occupied, exempt, or vacant during the prior reference period.⁵⁷ If a resident owns a property that was unoccupied for greater than six months during the previous vacancy reference period, they must indicate as such, at which point the property will be subject to the tax. Those that fail to submit their property status declaration(s) will automatically have their property / properties deemed vacant.⁵⁸

In situations where there may be doubt surrounding the validity of a resident’s declaration, the Director of Revenue Services can require the registered owner to provide additional information about their property ownership for up to 2 years after the initial declaration. As a means of data collection and enforcement, the City will periodically audit certain properties to ensure compliance with the tax. Using a combination of a risk-based approach and random audits, the VHT program verifies the validity of property status declarations. All property status declarations are subject to the audit process as per best practices for provincial and federal tax programs. As part of the audit process, registered property owners may be required to submit additional evidence to the City’s Director of Revenue Services to support their declaration.

4.3.4 Impact of tax

As Toronto’s VHT only came into effect in January 2022, with payments not starting until 2023, there is not yet any evidence of the impact that the tax has on vacant homes or the Toronto housing market in general. However, comparing Toronto with Vancouver highlights the potential effectiveness that a VHT can have. Both Vancouver and Toronto have faced issues with high numbers of homes being left vacant in each city. In 2016, vacant homes accounted for 8.2% and 5.6% of the total housing stock in Vancouver and Toronto respectively according to census data.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, following the implementation of Vancouver’s EHT in 2017, the number of vacant homes in the city has fallen by over 25%.⁶⁰ In comparison, the number of vacant homes in

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ (City of Toronto, 2021)

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ (Younglai, 2022)

⁶⁰ Between 2017 and 2020 there was a 26% decrease in vacant homes, with the number of properties declared as vacant falling from 2,193 in 2017 to 1,627 in 2020.

Toronto over the same period of time has increased by approximately 40%.⁶¹ This contrast between Vancouver and Toronto indicates that a VHT could have a significant impact in reducing the number of vacant homes.

Furthermore, revenues from a VHT will increase support for affordable housing initiatives in Toronto. Just as with Vancouver, Toronto's VHT has a principal objective of increasing the supply of housing to the market. All revenues generated from the VHT are seen as a secondary benefit and will be directed towards affordable housing initiatives after deducting operational expenses.⁶² Using tax metrics from Vancouver's experience and assuming a one percent vacancy rate of Toronto's 800,000 residential units, the City estimates that the one percent VHT could generate approximately \$55 million to \$66 million in annual revenue.⁶³

Additionally, since the goal of Toronto's VHT is to increase housing supply, the City may find a one percent tax to be insufficient, as was the case with Vancouver. The City may subsequently choose to raise the tax if too many property owners are opting to pay the tax instead of putting their property on the market.

4.3.5 Applicability to York Region

Toronto's decision to implement a VHT is highly pertinent to the York Region, both in terms of taking action to improve housing affordability and the potential spillover effects. Toronto has experienced rapid growth in real estate prices over the past 5-10 years, low vacancy rates, and supply levels that have struggled to keep pace with demand. Speculative housing investments pose a significant risk for further exacerbating the housing shortage by keeping properties off the market and reducing supply. Concern for this risk is already evident at the provincial government level which introduced the foreign home buyers' tax in 2017 for the Golden Horseshoe region, including both York Region and the City of Toronto, before expanding it provincially in 2022. Additionally, given York Region's proximity to Toronto, a Toronto VHT could result in an acceleration of speculative housing investments in York Region, as investors replace their Toronto properties with properties in York Region to avoid being taxed.

Although Toronto's VHT has yet to produce any concrete results, it offers useful insights into the policy design of a VHT in Ontario. Furthermore, as more information comes out on Toronto's VHT, York Region can leverage lessons learned with regards to understanding the effectiveness of the tax, as well as potential setbacks, loopholes, public perception, and policy changes/revisions that are required.

4.4 Region of Peel & Halton Region

4.4.1 Background of tax

Both the Region of Peel and Halton Region have announced their intentions to launch a vacant home tax in each respective region. Similar to the other case studies examined, this policy came in response to rapidly rising property values and to address housing affordability. Both regional municipalities anticipate an expected implementation by 2023/2024.

4.4.2 Definition of vacant home

Halton and Peel have engaged in jurisdictional scans to formulate potential definitions of a vacant home. In remaining consistent with the definitions in Vancouver and Toronto, both regions have recommended to council that a definition for a vacant home should be one which is unoccupied for more than six months of the calendar year.⁶⁴ Additionally, both Regions are considering exemptions, such as:

⁶¹ (Younglai, 2022)

⁶² (City of Toronto, 2021)

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ (Region of Peel, 2022) (Halton Region, 2022)

- Holiday homes if the property is lived in for a minimum of 4 weeks every year;
- Deceased owner;
- Large renovations;
- Owner in medical care;
- Inability to find tenant or buyer;
- Change of ownership; and
- Court prohibiting occupancy.

4.4.3 Administration method

In aligning with VHTs in Toronto and Vancouver, Peel and Halton are considering similar administration methods. Both Regions have recommended that their Council adopt a universal declaration method, where all homeowners within the region annually declare the vacancy status of their home(s).⁶⁵ Furthermore, both Regions have recommended initial tax rates of 1% for the VHT, with future reassessments that would consider adjustments of the rate to up to 3%.⁶⁶ The Regions have recommended that a VHT be enforced through periodic audits, with penalties applied to homeowners that fail to appropriately declare their homes as vacant. Homeowners would retain the right to challenge any penalties through established dispute resolution bodies.⁶⁷ Lastly, both regions have recommended to their Councils that a VHT will be most efficiently delivered through a hybrid delivery model. Both regions estimated that a hybrid delivery model would reduce implementation and operating costs due to efficiencies gained through centralizing functions at the regional level while leveraging capabilities at the local level.

4.4.4 Impact of tax

Both Peel and Halton have outlined that a VHT will have a primary objective of returning vacant homes back to the market for rent or sale, with any revenue generated from the tax treated as a secondary benefit. Additionally, both Regions have forecasted potential net revenues generated by a 1% VHT. In Halton, the Region projected that a VHT could generate \$4.1 to \$4.3 million in annual net revenue (\$5.8 million from declarations and \$0.3 million from penalties through audits) based on an estimated 348 to 376 vacant homes.⁶⁸ Annual operating costs were estimated to range between \$1.8 to \$2 million for eleven to twelve full-time employees, as well as notices and advertising, IT support and maintenance, and customer service.⁶⁹ Implementation is forecasted to cost between \$3.3 and \$3.9 million for six to nine full-time employees, professional services, infrastructure costs, and technical costs.⁷⁰ Overall, Halton projects that a 1% VHT will result in approximately 330 vacant homes being sold or converted into rental properties.⁷¹ In comparison, the Region of Peel expects to generate \$17.1 million in annual revenue (\$16.4 million from declarations and \$0.7 million from penalties through audits), with \$5 million in annual operating costs.⁷² Peel expects that implementation costs will range between \$12 and \$15 million.⁷³ Both Regions have indicated that all net revenues from a VHT will be directed towards affordable housing initiatives.

4.4.5 Applicability to York Region

The decision of the Region of Peel and Halton Region to pursue a VHT has several implications for York Region. As more jurisdictions across Canada face housing affordability issues, a VHT is seen as an effective policy for improving affordability. Jurisdictions such as Toronto, Peel, and Halton are acknowledging Vancouver's success at reducing vacancy rates following the implementation of a VHT and are implementing

⁶⁵ (Region of Peel, 2022) (Halton Region, 2022)

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ (Halton Region, 2022)

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² (Region of Peel, 2022)

⁷³ Ibid.

their own VHTs that share many similarities (e.g., definition of a vacant home, universal declaration method, consistent exemptions, etc.). Additionally, Peel and Halton are neighbouring jurisdictions to York Region, where a VHT may result in spillover effects. For example, home vacancies in York Region may accelerate as housing speculators seek to move their investment properties out of Peel or Halton and into York Region to avoid paying the tax. Lastly, Peel and Halton indicated that a hybrid delivery model for a VHT may be most effective for York Region, as all are regional municipal governments within the GTA.

5 Vacancy and Financial Estimates for York Region

This section of the report presents a high-level overview of the potential financial implications for York Region regarding the implementation of a VHT, including the methodology and assumptions used to develop an estimate of the number of vacant homes across each of the nine local municipalities within York Region, and the potential revenue that could be generated by a VHT.

5.1 Estimating vacant homes

Estimating the number of vacant homes in a given municipality or region can be challenging. There is limited credible data available to support the identification of vacant homes (particularly when considering the breadth of exemptions available under the tax), and jurisdictions that have implemented a VHT (or similar tax) have found that the actual number of eligible vacant homes can vary from estimates.

One source of data that has been used by York Region, as well as other jurisdictions, is electricity or water consumption data. While this can be helpful in providing rough estimates for vacancy rates, **the data is not directly linked to an address due to privacy concerns** and, as a result, can be unreliable – particularly when it comes to new developments or homes that are under construction. Additionally, the majority of condominiums and apartments in municipalities are bulk metered, meaning that it is not possible to identify the water consumption for individual housing units within the building.⁷⁴

Another source of data that has been used to estimate vacant homes is census information. The census will identify the total private dwellings within a particular jurisdiction, along with an estimate of the occupied private dwellings (which provides an implicit vacancy rate for the jurisdiction). A major challenge with using this Statistics Canada data (i.e., census data) is that it is a point-in-time estimate that attempts to measure whether a dwelling is occupied or not. The dwelling could be unoccupied during the time of the census, but otherwise occupied for the majority of the year. This could lead to several properties being identified as vacant in the census, while not meeting the criteria for vacancy under a VHT. For example, when Vancouver implemented its EHT in 2017, the Vancouver Census Subdivision reported a total of 309,418 private dwellings in 2016, of which 283,916 were identified as ‘occupied’. This implied an 8.2% vacancy rate. When Vancouver implemented the EHT the following year, the total number of vacant homes based on the mandatory declaration of residents was notably lower at 4.3% (and this was before any exemptions were applied).

5.1.1 Approach to estimating vacant homes for York Region

Given the challenges in estimating vacant homes, KPMG worked with the Region to develop a conservative approach to estimating vacancy based on observed outcomes from Vancouver’s EHT implementation. The

⁷⁴ **Note: due to privacy concerns, York Region does not use any type of utility data to determine if a home is vacant or not and will not use such data at any time in the future.**

approach uses 2021 census data for each of the nine municipalities within York Region to estimate vacancy rates based on the total dwellings and total occupied dwellings identified in the census data.

Table 9 below presents the dwelling information and the implied vacancy rate for each municipality from the 2021 census.

Table 9: 2021 York Region census dwelling information

| Municipality | Total Private Dwellings | Occupied Private Dwellings | Vacancy Rate |
|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Aurora | 22,253 | 21,506 | 3.4% |
| East Gwillimbury | 11,869 | 11,449 | 3.5% |
| Georgina | 19,368 | 17,895 | 7.6% |
| King | 9,346 | 8,969 | 4.0% |
| Markham | 114,908 | 110,867 | 3.5% |
| Newmarket | 31,239 | 30,301 | 3.0% |
| Richmond Hill | 72,017 | 69,314 | 3.8% |
| Vaughan | 107,159 | 103,914 | 3.0% |
| Whitchurch-Stouffville | 17,154 | 16,707 | 2.6% |
| TOTAL | 405,313 | 390,922 | 3.6% |

From here, an adjustment factor of 52% was applied to the vacancy rates to reduce the anticipated vacancy rates under the VHT based on the observed experience of Vancouver.⁷⁵ Effectively, this step is to convert the vacancy rates from being based on vacancy on a specific date to vacancy over a six-month period.

Table 10 below presents the adjusted number of vacant dwellings and vacancy rates for each municipality based on the application of the adjustment factor.

Table 10: 2021 York Region vacant dwellings

| Municipality | Total Private Dwellings | Number of Vacant Dwellings | Assumed % of Vacant Dwellings |
|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Aurora | 22,253 | 386 | 1.7% |
| East Gwillimbury | 11,869 | 218 | 1.8% |
| Georgina ⁷⁶ | 19,368 | 572 | 3.0% |
| King | 9,346 | 195 | 2.1% |

⁷⁵ In Vancouver, the 2016 census data indicated a vacancy rate of 8.2%. When the EHT was implemented, the reported vacant home rate was only 4.3%, which represents approximately 52% of the census vacancy rate.

⁷⁶ MPAC data identified 190 seasonal properties in Georgina. Given that these types of properties would likely be exempted from the tax, but identified as vacant for census purposes, these units have been deducted from the estimated number of vacant dwellings in the analysis.

| Municipality | Total Private Dwellings | Number of Vacant Dwellings | Assumed % of Vacant Dwellings |
|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Markham | 114,908 | 2,089 | 1.8% |
| Newmarket | 31,239 | 485 | 1.6% |
| Richmond Hill | 72,017 | 1,397 | 1.9% |
| Vaughan | 107,159 | 1,677 | 1.6% |
| Whitchurch-Stouffville | 17,154 | 231 | 1.3% |
| TOTAL | 405,313 | 7,250 | 1.8% |

5.1.2 Assessment of housing types

As previously mentioned, the vacancy rate and exemption rate can vary substantially by housing type. Using 2021 census data as well as observed data from Vancouver, we attempted to approximate the number of vacant homes by housing type in each of the local municipalities in York Region.

The 2021 census data provides the total number of private dwellings in each municipality. It also provides a breakdown of the 'occupied' private dwellings within each municipality by housing type. Based on the total number of vacant dwellings (the difference between the total private dwellings and total occupied private dwellings), vacancies within each municipality were distributed based on the relative ratio of vacancies observed in Vancouver.

In 2017, the first year of implementation for the EHT, Vancouver indicated that 3.4% of all single-family homes were deemed vacant for the period, along with 4.9% for condominiums and 4.8% of other housing stock. Using this ratio of vacancy rates and the breakdown of housing stock from the 2021 census, our analysis estimated the number of vacant homes by housing stock for each municipality.

5.1.3 Exemptions to the VHT

When estimating the number of vacant homes for revenue purposes, it is important to consider that a significant number of homes will likely fall within one of the exemptions identified for the VHT and therefore not subject to the tax. These exemptions could include renovations to the home, a recently sold property, extended stay of an owner in a healthcare facility for medical care, recent passing of the principal resident, or a home intended for seasonal use, to name a few.

The number of exemptions each year can be quite high and have been seen to vary by housing type. Since the implementation of the EHT in Vancouver, almost 60% of the condominiums identified as vacant were exempted from paying the tax. The exemption rate for single-family homes and other housing types was even higher at approximately 83% and 80%, respectively.

For the purposes of estimating the potential number of exemptions to the VHT in York Region, it was assumed that the exemption rate would be similar to that experienced by Vancouver in its first year of implementation. Based on this, the analysis assumes that:

- 83.2% of vacant single detached, semi-detached and duplex homes are exempted from the tax;
- 78.5% of vacant townhomes are exempted from the tax; and
- 58.1% of vacant condo and apartment units are exempted from paying the tax.

Table 11 presents the total number of dwellings that could be exempted from the tax and the estimated number of dwellings that would be eligible to pay the VHT, along with the assumed vacancy rate for taxation purposes within each municipality.

Table 11: 2021 York Region census vacant dwelling exemptions

| Municipality | Number of Vacant Dwellings | Potentially Exempted Dwellings | Vacant Dwellings After Exemptions | Assumed Vacancy Rate for Taxation |
|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Aurora | 386 | 304 | 82 | 0.4% |
| East Gwillimbury | 218 | 180 | 38 | 0.3% |
| Georgina | 572 | 464 | 108 | 0.6% |
| King | 195 | 160 | 35 | 0.4% |
| Markham | 2,089 | 1,605 | 484 | 0.4% |
| Newmarket | 485 | 383 | 102 | 0.3% |
| Richmond Hill | 1,397 | 1,060 | 337 | 0.5% |
| Vaughan | 1,677 | 1,302 | 375 | 0.3% |
| Whitchurch-Stouffville | 231 | 187 | 44 | 0.3% |
| TOTAL | 7,250 | 5,645 | 1,605 | 0.4% |

5.2 Estimated gross revenue potential

Once an estimate for the number of vacant homes subject to VHT by housing type within each municipality was established, the next step was to estimate home values and calculate the potential VHT revenues that could be captured in the first year of implementation. To do this, data was leveraged from MPAC that identified average assessment values by housing type for each municipality. As home values in York Region have substantially increased in recent years, a scheduled reassessment of home values for tax purposes in 2024 will likely result in higher revenues than what is currently estimated.

In terms of home values, based on EHT data in Vancouver, there is a “value premium” for vacant homes when compared to the average value of homes. This means that, on average, the assessed value of the vacant homes was higher than the assessed value of all homes in Vancouver of a similar housing type. The amount of the premium has fluctuated slightly over the last few years, however it still remains high. There could be several factors contributing to this value premium, such as vacant homes tend to be located in higher priced neighborhoods or communities, or are newly built or recently renovated homes, etc.

In 2017, the value premium for vacant condominiums was 53%, while vacant single-family homes had a value premium of 40%. These value premium rates may not be directly applicable to York Region – given the housing markets are different between the two municipalities. For example, York Region is not expected to have the same extent of vacant luxury condos that “dragged” up the average value of vacant condos in Vancouver. Therefore, for the purposes of the analysis, the value premiums observed in Vancouver have been reduced by 50% and applied to the average assessed values in York Region.

Table 12 below provides the assessed home values assumed in the analysis on a weighted basis for each municipality, along with the weighted assessed value after the premium was applied. Based on these two values, the implied value premium is also included for each municipality. The slight differences between municipalities is attributable to the housing mix of the assumed number of vacant homes within each municipality (i.e., the municipalities with a higher prevalence of vacant condominiums have a higher implied value premium).

Table 12: Weighted average of assessed values by municipality before and after value premium is applied

| Municipality | Weighted Assessed Home Value | Weighted Assessed Home Value After Premium | Implied Value Premium* |
|------------------------|------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Aurora | \$680,813 | \$826,386 | 21.4% |
| East Gwillimbury | \$601,048 | \$722,419 | 20.2% |
| Georgina ⁷⁷ | \$404,194 | \$487,897 | 20.7% |
| King | \$979,351 | \$1,181,456 | 20.6% |
| Markham | \$723,780 | \$879,681 | 21.5% |
| Newmarket | \$558,272 | \$677,861 | 21.4% |
| Richmond Hill | \$720,000 | \$875,325 | 21.6% |
| Vaughan | \$708,069 | \$859,900 | 21.4% |
| Whitchurch-Stouffville | \$711,052 | \$859,121 | 20.8% |

* Differences derived from housing mix for vacant homes in each municipality.

5.2.1 Tax rate

In almost all jurisdictions that have implemented a VHT, the initial tax rate has been set at 1.0% of the assessed value of eligible vacant homes. For the purposes of the analysis, multiple tax rate scenarios have been included to observe the impact of the tax rate on potential VHT gross revenues.

Table 13 below presents the estimated VHT gross revenues that could be generated within each municipality based on the methodology outlined above and an associated tax rate of 1.0%, 1.5% and 2.0%. A tax rate of 1.0% may be appropriate initially as it aligns with neighbouring and comparator jurisdictions, however a higher tax rate could support achieving policy objectives more quickly and through initial public engagement, would appear to have public support (more than 65% of survey respondents indicated support for a tax rate higher than 1%). Additionally, it may be beneficial to the Region to keep the tax rate constant for the early years of implementation to support in establishing baseline data on vacant homes in the Region. Once established, the Region may wish to consider steadily increasing the rate (i.e., on an annual basis) to measure potential impacts on the number of vacant homes and revenues to determine what an optimal rate could be in York Region.

Table 13: Estimated VHT gross revenues

| Municipality | No. of Dwellings | Assumed Vacancy Rate for Taxation | Tax Revenue at 1% Rate | Tax Revenue at 1.5% Rate | Tax Revenue at 2% Rate |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Aurora | 22,253 | 0.4% | \$677,637 | \$1,016,455 | \$1,355,273 |
| East Gwillimbury | 11,869 | 0.3% | \$274,519 | \$411,779 | \$549,039 |

⁷⁷ MPAC data identified 190 seasonal properties in Georgina. Given that these types of properties would likely be exempted from the tax, but identified as vacant for census purposes, these units have been deducted from the estimated number of vacant dwellings in the analysis.

| Municipality | No. of Dwellings | Assumed Vacancy Rate for Taxation | Tax Revenue at 1% Rate | Tax Revenue at 1.5% Rate | Tax Revenue at 2% Rate |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Georgina | 19,368 | 0.6% | \$526,929 | \$790,393 | \$1,053,858 |
| King | 9,346 | 0.4% | \$413,510 | \$620,264 | \$827,019 |
| Markham | 114,908 | 0.4% | \$4,257,655 | \$6,386,482 | \$8,515,310 |
| Newmarket | 31,239 | 0.3% | \$691,418 | \$1,037,128 | \$1,382,837 |
| Richmond Hill | 72,017 | 0.5% | \$2,949,845 | \$4,424,767 | \$5,899,689 |
| Vaughan | 107,159 | 0.3% | \$3,224,626 | \$4,836,939 | \$6,449,253 |
| Whitchurch-Stouffville | 17,154 | 0.3% | \$378,013 | \$567,020 | \$756,027 |
| TOTAL | 405,313 | 0.4% | \$13,394,152 | \$20,091,229 | \$26,788,305 |

Given that a VHT is primarily a policy tool used to incentivize property owners to release vacant homes to the housing market, whether through sale or tenancy (rather than allowing them to stay vacant), it is expected that the number of vacant homes will decrease over time as more property owners adjust their behavior. With a decline in the number of vacant homes, the amount of revenue generated by the tax will also decrease, if all other variables such as average home value and tax rate remain equal.

Vancouver has reported annual revenues for the last four years. In the first year of the EHT, revenues were \$33.6 million. Revenues have declined since that initial year, but still surpass \$20 million on an annual basis. This includes a rate increase from 1% to 1.25% last year, as well as planned increases of 3% for 2021 and 2022, and up to 5% for 2023.

Between 2017 and 2020, there was a 26% decrease in vacant homes observed in Vancouver, with vacant properties falling from 2,193 in 2017 to 1,627 in 2020. These 1,627 vacancies represent approximately 0.8% of all properties in the city. Of the 1,769 vacant properties identified in 2019, 36% were converted to occupied in 2020. While it is difficult to attribute these behaviors solely to the EHT, the desired outcome of the tax is being observed and more homes are being returned to the market.

While Vancouver has seen the conversion of several vacant homes to occupied units, there are still a number of property owners who are incurring the tax on an annual basis – some people are less price sensitive than others, particularly if these are investment properties and the EHT is viewed by property owners instead as a transaction cost. The price sensitivity of owners of these vacant homes will be tested in the coming years with the proposed tax rate increases planned through 2023.

5.2.2 Other revenue potential

While the majority of revenues are anticipated to come from the declaration of vacant properties, there is also the potential for revenues to be generated through audit activities and the levying of fines/penalties for late declaration or falsely reporting a vacant property as occupied. In Vancouver, approximately 4.5% of the total revenues generated for the EHT come from penalties that are applied through non-compliance audits and the percentage of revenues received through audit activities has been increasing each year (see Table 14).

Table 14: Annual gross revenues from Vancouver's Empty Homes Tax

| | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Revenues from declarations | \$38.0M | \$39.4M | \$36.0M | \$26.0M |
| Revenues from penalties | \$1.1M | \$1.8M | \$1.9M | \$1.8M |
| Total revenues | \$39.1M | \$41.2M | \$37.9M | \$27.8M |
| <i>% of Revenues from Penalties</i> | <i>2.8%</i> | <i>4.4%</i> | <i>5.0%</i> | <i>6.5%</i> |

5.3 Administration costs and net revenues

When considering the implementation of a VHT, it is important to consider the cost of setting up and administering the tax on an ongoing basis. It will be critical that the revenues collected outweigh the costs, and that there are sufficient net revenues to support housing initiatives within the Region. To date, there are limited examples of regional municipalities moving ahead with a VHT. Vancouver, Melbourne, and Toronto are all single-tier municipalities, and it is difficult to assess the cost sharing approach that would occur under a two-tiered approach. Both Peel Region and Halton Region have recently approved a VHT – both have studied the tax, however neither have implemented nor reported on the actual cost of implementing the tax.

Through discussions with the Region and feedback from our stakeholder engagement process, it appears that a hybrid option for administration of the VHT may be most effective. This approach would allow the Region to lead the communications and public outreach related to the implementation of the tax and ongoing communications, while also establishing an audit and compliance team that would perform spot checks of residences along with leading the review of properties that applied for exemptions. Under this model, the local municipalities would leverage their existing property tax payment systems and processes to support the collection of any VHT related payments. Additionally, the local municipalities would be responsible for reporting to the Region the number of vacant homes within their respective municipalities.

Under this model, all VHT revenues would be collected by the local municipalities and remitted to the Region. Direct costs incurred with the administration of the tax – both at the local and regional level – would be covered by the proceeds from the tax and the remaining proceeds would be directed to housing initiatives within the Region. A potential revenue sharing approach between the Region and local municipalities has not yet been identified and will be further explored following the submission of this report.

Table 15 below presents the estimated costs associated with implementing and administering a VHT based on a hybrid model, along with rationale for each of the assumptions. Costs are indicative in nature and are subject to change based on a more clearly defined implementation and administration approach. This is expected to involve further discussions between the Region and the local municipalities.

Table 15: Estimated costs with implementing and administering VHT in York Region

| Cost Item | Amount | Assumptions | Rationale |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Implementation (One-Time) | | | |
| Region Project Management | \$1,200,000 | 10 FTEs plus benefits @ \$120K | Responsible for overall implementation and coordination with local municipalities, including drafting and development of the by-law. |
| Technical Support | \$4,500,000 | \$500K per municipality | IT costs associated with development and implementation (assumed at each municipality). Assumed efficiencies if coordinated at the Regional level and lessons learned from surrounding municipalities. |
| Hardware and Software | \$500,000 | | Requirement for additional purchases to support the buildout of the tax administration system |
| Communications | \$200,000 | | Public outreach in advance of implementation and advertising associated with public notification |
| Other Costs | \$128,000 | 2% of total costs | Other costs related to printing, advertising, accessibility, review, etc. |
| TOTAL | \$6,528,000 | | |
| Operating Costs (Annual) | | | |
| Tax Administration | \$1,080,000 | 1 FTE per muni plus benefits @\$120K | Local municipality administration teams responsible for collection and remittance of tax revenues. This may involve partial time for multiple staff members. |
| Compliance Team | \$1,800,000 | 15 FTEs plus benefits @\$120K | Audit and compliance team from the Region responsible for reviewing audits and exemption claims |
| Communications | \$140,000 | | Public outreach and public support |
| Ongoing support and maintenance | \$450,000 | \$50K per municipality | IT support and maintenance at the local level to ensure systems is available for payment |
| TOTAL | \$3,470,000 | | |

Based on the implementation timeline presented Section 3.5, the majority of the estimated implementation costs are assumed to be incurred in 2023 as the Region and local municipalities prepare for vacant home declarations and tax collection to commence in 2024. It is assumed that the Region and local municipalities will use the implementation period (Q4 2022 and 2023) to further establish roles and responsibilities and develop audit functions and dispute resolution processes. It is also assumed that Region staff will be able to work with counterparts at the City of Toronto, Region of Peel and Halton Region to discuss lessons learned from the implementation of their respective VHT programs and drive efficiencies in the Region's and local municipality's processes and costs.

The operating costs presented above are assumed to be incurred on an annual basis once the tax is fully implemented (starting in 2024). Similar to the implementation costs, it is assumed that costs would be incurred at both the Regional and local levels, with the Region responsible for overall administration of the tax, including audit and compliance, communications with the public, etc. while the local municipalities would be responsible for the collection and remittance of tax revenues and ongoing support and maintenance of their respective systems.

These estimates are subject to change based on the implementation approach selected for the VHT (e.g., hybrid model) and other factors, including the procurement of services for third party consultants to support the implementation and staffing levels approved by Regional and local councils. It is expected that these estimates will be refined based on a more detailed implementation plan.

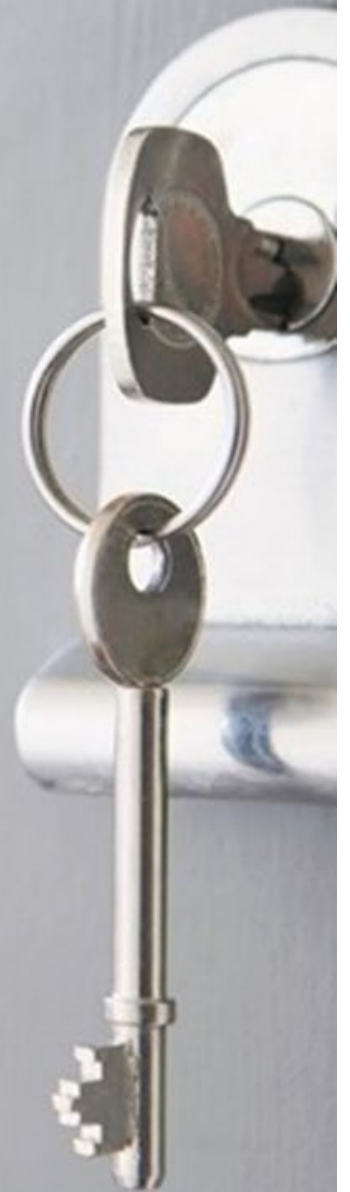
5.3.1 Net revenue potential

Based on the gross revenue estimate presented in Section 5.2.1 and the ongoing operating costs discussed above, it is estimated that the net revenue potential at a tax rate of 1% could be approximately \$9.9 million. Table 16 presents the estimated net revenues for each of the tax rates analyzed.

Table 16: Net Revenue Potential of York Region VHT in 2024

| | @ Rate of 1.0% | @ Rate of 1.5% | @ Rate of 2.0% |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Gross Revenue Estimate | \$13.4M | \$20.1M | \$26.8M |
| Annual Operating Cost Estimate | (\$3.5M) | (\$3.5M) | (\$3.5M) |
| Net Revenue Potential | \$9.9M | \$16.6M | \$23.3M |

Appendices



Appendix A – Detailed Case Studies

This appendix provides a more detailed overview of the conditions within other domestic and international jurisdictions that have implemented or are planning on implementing a VHT or a similar policy. This appendix focuses on publicly available and published data. A key outcome of the jurisdictional scan was to identify key learnings and takeaways for a York Region VHT and identify any elements that are unique to the other jurisdictions. Jurisdictions covered include Vancouver, Toronto, the Region of Peel and Halton Region, Melbourne, Paris, New York, and London.

Vancouver

Background of the tax

Vancouver has been one of Canada's most expensive real estate markets for many years and has continued to grow over time. These market features are conducive to speculative housing investments due to the high returns offered. These speculative investments further exacerbate price growth by reducing housing supply. Homes are purchased for the sole purpose of resale in the future, leaving them vacant in the interim. As a result, the Vancouver real estate market has become increasingly unaffordable, with many residents being priced out. In 2016, the City began exploring various policies, such as a VHT, to improve housing affordability after experiencing year after year of record-setting housing prices.

In early 2016, the average sale price of a detached home in Vancouver was over \$1.8 million and was approximately \$0.72 million and \$0.53 million for attached homes and condos, respectively.⁷⁸ In addition, residential rental prices continued to rise, while vacancy rates for both primary rental apartments and rental condominium units were declining. The average price for a rental unit rose by approximately 6.4% from the previous year, while the overall rental vacancy rate decreased to 0.7%.⁷⁹ Amplifying the issue further, numerous residential properties in Vancouver remained unoccupied, as they were being kept vacant by their owners. A report issued by the City of Vancouver in March 2016 estimated that the percentage of unoccupied homes in Vancouver was approximately 4.8% for all housing types, based on electricity consumption data. Fueled by strong demand for residential accommodation which outpaced new additions to the market supply, an abundance of underutilised and vacant properties, and strong employment and population growth, rising home and rental prices put the Greater Vancouver area as the most expensive real estate market in the country.

In an effort to help address the mounting pressures placed on Vancouver's housing market, Vancouver City Council approved the Empty Homes Tax in November 2016, with it coming into effect in January 2017. The primary intent of the EHT was to return empty and under-utilized properties to the market as long-term rental homes for residents of Vancouver. Any revenue generated by the EHT was intended to be a secondary benefit of the tax, with all funds collected to be directed towards investments in affordable housing in Vancouver.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ (McElroy, 2016)

⁷⁹ (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2016)

⁸⁰ (City of Vancouver and Housing Vancouver, 2019)

The City's objective was for the tax to motivate owners of empty and under-used homes to rent out their properties, resulting in an increase in the rental housing supply.⁸¹

The tax applies to residential units that were vacant for more than six months in the preceding calendar year. The tax excludes principal residences and homes that qualify for an exemption. The EHT is assessed by calendar year (January 1 to December 31), defined as the "vacancy reference period". The six months of vacancy do not need to be continuous.

The annual EHT was originally set at 1% of the property's assessed taxable value,⁸² and was increased to 1.25% for the 2020 tax year.⁸³ Vancouver has continued to raise the tax, with a rate of 3% in 2021, and recent announcements inform of a 5% rate to come into effect for 2023.⁸⁴ The assessed taxable value of a property is the value of the land, buildings, and any other aspects of the property as determined by BC Assessment, and is different depending on the class of property involved.

Definition of a vacant home

The City of Vancouver defines a vacant residential property as one that has been unoccupied for more than six months during the vacancy reference period.⁸⁵ The EHT applies to all Class 1 Residential properties within the city of Vancouver that were not used as a principal residence or rented for at least six months of the year, and do not qualify for an exemption.⁸⁶ Class 1 Residential properties include:

- single-family residences;
- multi-family residences;
- duplexes;
- apartments;
- condominiums;
- nursing homes;
- seasonal dwellings;
- manufactured homes;
- some vacant land;
- farm buildings; and
- daycare facilities.

The occupant does not need to be the same occupant over the six-month period, nor does the occupancy need to take place over a single continuous period. However, occupancy must occur in periods of at least 30 consecutive days or more. It is not enough that the property is simply available for occupation (i.e. listed as a short term rental), the property must have actually been used/occupied for the required minimum amount. If the property was not rented out for at least six months of the tax year, the EHT will apply. The use and occupation must be as a principal place of residence or subject to an actual leasing arrangement.⁸⁷

There are a number of exemptions to the above rules. Properties that would otherwise be subject to the EHT may be exempt from the tax if:⁸⁸

- Legal ownership of the property changed during the current year. For example, a property would be exempt from the EHT if the property was sold, and a new Land Title Number was issued during the vacancy reference period. The change of ownership must actually occur during the vacancy reference period – a property that was empty for more than six months of the year solely because it was listed for sale will still be subject to the EHT. Effective for the 2019 tax year and beyond, the exemption for property transfer will be tied to proof of payment of the property transfer tax.

⁸¹ (City of Vancouver, 2020)

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ (City of Vancouver, 2019)

⁸⁴ (Little, 2022)

⁸⁵ (City of Vancouver, 2019)

⁸⁶ (City of Vancouver, 2020)

⁸⁷ (City of Vancouver, 2019)

⁸⁸ Ibid.

- The property was undergoing redevelopment or major renovations. This exemption is only applicable to properties that are undergoing active construction where all the necessary permits have been issued. Properties that are undergoing construction without the necessary permits will be subject to the EHT. Additionally, minor renovations do not qualify for an exemption.
- The property is used and occupied by the owner for work purposes. Properties that are occupied by the registered owner for a minimum aggregate of six months during the vacancy reference period for the purpose of attending their workplace or conducting business in Greater Vancouver are not subject to the EHT. The nature of the employment must require physical presence in Greater Vancouver.
- The property occupier was undergoing medical care. Properties that are unoccupied for more than six months of the vacancy reference period because the occupier was residing in a hospital, long term or supportive care facility, and had previously been using the property as a principal residence or occupying it as a tenant would be exempt from the EHT. All occupants must be residing in a care facility for the exemption to apply. This exemption is not allowed for more than two consecutive tax years.
- Death of registered owner. Properties that were empty for more than six months because the last registered owner became deceased are exempt from the EHT. This exemption applies for the vacancy reference period in which the property owner became deceased as well as the following vacancy reference period.
- Rental restrictions or prohibitions applicable to the property. For example, properties that were empty for more than six months because they are subject to a strata rental bylaw where the bylaw restricts rentals altogether or restricts the number of rental units are exempt from the EHT, provided that the maximum number of units allowed to be rented have been rented.
- The property is under a court order. For example, if a property is under a court order, court proceedings, or order of a governmental authority where occupancy is prohibited, the property will not be subject to the EHT. This exemption applies to owners who were prohibited from selling, occupying, or renting their property, but does not apply to properties that are uninhabitable due to inaction by the owner.
- A property is limited in use. For example, if a property is restricted for a specific use, such as vehicle parking, or the shape, size, or other aspect of the property precludes it from having a residential building constructed on the site, it will not be subject to the EHT.

In addition, properties will be exempt from the EHT if the lands are vacant, a heritage property, or part of a phased development – provided that an application to redevelop has been submitted and permits are under review. There are no exemptions for properties that are unoccupied for more than six months of the vacancy reference period solely because they are unimproved.⁸⁹

Administration method

Vancouver's EHT is administered as a universal declaration program. All registered owners of residential property within the city of Vancouver are required to complete mandatory declaration forms each year, confirming the status of their property as occupied, exempt, or vacant during the prior reference period. If a resident owns a property that was unoccupied for greater than six months during the previous vacancy reference period, they must indicate as such on the mandatory declaration form, at which point the property will be subject to the tax. Mandatory declaration forms are mailed out to residents on or before December 31st of each year and must be returned to the City by the second business day of February. Declarations are made through an online platform on the City website. Those that fail to submit their property status declaration(s) by this date will have their property / properties automatically declared vacant and will be subject to the EHT as well as a \$250 penalty for not submitting their declaration(s).⁹⁰

⁸⁹ (City of Vancouver, 2020)

⁹⁰ (City of Vancouver, 2019)

In situations where there may be doubt surrounding the validity of a resident's declaration, the City can require the registered owner to provide additional information about their property ownership for up to 2 years after the initial declaration, regarding:

- a. the property;
- b. the identity and address of the registered owner;
- c. the identity and address of any person occupying the property;
- d. the status of the property; or
- e. the nature of the occupancy of the property during the vacancy reference period.

As a means of data collection and enforcement, the City will periodically audit certain properties to ensure compliance with the tax. Using a combination of a risk-based approach and random audits, the EHT program verifies the validity of property status declarations. All property status declarations are subject to the audit process as per best practices for provincial and federal tax programs. As part of the audit process, registered property owners may be required to submit additional evidence to the City to support their declaration. Some of the evidence that the City may ask for as part of the audit are:

- a. copies or certified copies of:
 - i. government-issued personal identification, including, without limitation, driver's license, BCID card, British Columbia Services Card;
 - ii. medical Services Plan or ambulance invoice;
 - iii. income tax returns and notices of assessment;
 - iv. tenancy agreements;
 - v. wills, grants of probate, or grants of administration;
 - vi. employment contracts, pay statements or records of employment;
 - vii. verification of residence in long term or supportive care;
 - viii. verification of educational enrolment form;
 - ix. separation agreements;
 - x. court orders;
 - xi. insurance certificates for homeowners or tenants insurance; or
 - xii. strata by-laws, minutes of strata meetings or records prepared or maintained by the strata.
- b. statutory declarations or affidavits regarding the status of the property.

If required, auditors are authorized to enter onto residential property to verify its occupancy status if a registered letter was sent to the owner ahead of time advising of the inspection time and date, and a copy of the letter was posted on the property in advance of the inspection. Vancouver completed 6,231 audits in 2018, and 8,457 in 2019. In 2018, approximately 5 percent of the properties subject to audit were found in non-compliance, with the rate doubling to 10.5 percent in 2019.⁹¹ Owners found non-compliant in their audits may submit a Notice of Complaint. If unsuccessful, owners may request a review by an external review panel.⁹²

Since the introduction of the EHT, various loopholes have been identified and are actively being mitigated. Through the auditing process, City staff identified situations in which a property owner attempted to avoid paying the EHT on an un-occupied second home by entering into a rental agreement with a corporation (which they may own) or with a family member or friend who would not actually occupy the property. Some residents

⁹¹ (City of Vancouver and Housing Vancouver, 2019)

⁹² Ibid.

have also attempted to submit outdated rental agreements as proof of occupancy. The City has since modified the EHT to remove these loopholes.

For those properties which are subject to the EHT, an EHT tax notice is mailed to each registered owner of the taxable property / properties by the 10th business day of March. The City has the ability to reassess the status of a property after the fact and can issue a supplementary EHT tax notice to change the status of a property if required. The City keeps records of the date(s) when vacancy tax notices and supplementary vacancy tax notices were mailed to registered owners, as well as any refunds of excess tax, penalty, and interest payments that have been issued and/or received.⁹³

The annual revenue for each vacancy reference period is estimated on November 1st of that year. Late declaration and audit activities continue until the calendar year-end, and thus additional revenue after November 1 is rolled into the subsequent year's revenue results. If a payment for an EHT notice is not made by December 31st of the levied year, the outstanding amounts may be added to the owner's property tax account, with a commencement of interest (approximately 7%) accruing as of January 1.⁹⁴

The administrative start-up costs for the EHT program included a one-time \$7.4 million investment which covered the project implementation team, business support, technical and professional services, hardware and software, and contingency funds. The ongoing budgeted costs for the EHT are approximately \$2.9 million, and include tax administration staffing, review and compliance staffing, notice and advertising, IT support and maintenance services, and a 311-call centre. These costs are funded by revenues collected from the tax.

Vancouver City Staff have indicated that initial assumptions for the resources and efforts required to adequately audit and enforce the EHT were underestimated. As of 2019, the City has approximately 12 staff responsible for administering audits.

Impact of the tax on vacant homes

The principal objective of the EHT is to increase the supply of housing to the rental market. Although any revenues generated by the EHT were intended to be a secondary benefit of the tax, the City raised approximately \$38, 39.4, 36 and 26 million from the tax in 2018 – 2021 respectively. The City noted that revenue decreased in 2021 due to the number of vacant properties decreasing by 250 as increased communications were directed towards undeclared property owners. Figures for the 2022 tax reference period are not yet complete and still unavailable. Between 2017 and 2020 there was a 26% decrease in vacant homes, with the number of properties declared as vacant falling from 2,193 in 2017 to 1,627 in 2020. These 1,627 vacant properties represent 0.8% of all properties. In parallel, the number of principal and tenanted residences rose 1.3% and 19.5% respectively during the same period of time.⁹⁵ Of the 1,769 vacant properties identified in 2019, 36% were converted to occupied in the 2020 year. In 2022, the CMHC reported that rental vacancy rates in purpose-built rental apartments in Vancouver had decreased from 2.6% in 2020 to 1.2% in 2021. This represents a return to similar rates seen in 2019. This was attributed to a rebound in economic growth, an influx of students returning due to COVID-19, as well as an increased migration to Vancouver, all of which contributed to rental demand growing faster than supply.⁹⁶ This reduction in vacancy rates has been more pronounced in the city of Vancouver than the surrounding region.

As of 2021, the vacancy rates for purpose-built rental and condominium apartment markets were 1.2% and 0.8% respectively.

However, due to the large array of factors that have influenced the property market since the introduction of the EHT, it is not possible to attribute these changes directly to the EHT alone.

Revenue from tax and penalties recorded over 2018 – 2020 hovered between \$36 and 39 million, and as of November 1st, 2021, that figure is tracking a decline sitting at \$26 million. While revenue has been fairly steady,

⁹³ (City of Vancouver, 2019)

⁹⁴ (City of Vancouver and Housing Vancouver, 2019)

⁹⁵ (City of Vancouver and Housing Vancouver, 2019)

⁹⁶ (CMHC, 2022)

the number of vacant homes declared has been decreasing year over year, with 2020 marking a 25% decrease since the tax's implementation in 2017.⁹⁷ The 2021 annual report reveals that the Vancouver empty homes tax has generated more than \$86.6 million of net revenue, which has been allocated to supporting affordable housing initiatives.⁹⁸

Additionally, revenues generated were more heavily weighted from taxes applied to vacant apartment and condominium units compared to single and semi-detached homes. Approximately 77% of vacant homes identified in 2020 were condominiums, with 1.2% of Vancouver's total condominium stock identified as vacant, compared to only 0.5% for single-family homes.⁹⁹ In comparison to 2017, 2.1% of condos and 0.35% of single-family homes were declared vacant. This trend suggests that the number of vacant homes is declining over time. Furthermore, the assessed property value of the taxed units was higher than the overall average assessed property value in both categories.

Due to the relatively high number of property owners that opted to pay the tax rather than renting out their property, the City of Vancouver is currently increasing the EHT rate. In November 2019, Vancouver City Council approved a 25% increase in the EHT rate for 2020 (to 1.25%), followed by additional increase in 2021 to 3%. After successful outcomes from the raises, the City will again increase the rate to 5% in 2023. The rationale behind this increase is that it will put additional pressure on owners to transition their empty homes to the rental market, as the higher tax would increase the cost of holding the home vacant and potentially lead to owners renting or selling the property. Furthermore, additional revenues created by the increase will be put towards additional enforcement efforts and providing affordable housing for households with income less than \$50,000 per year.¹⁰⁰ Given the infancy of the EHT, however, it is difficult to confidently determine the true impact that this rate increase might have on property owners' behaviour.

Impact of the tax on the housing market

As the EHT only came into effect in 2017, the direct impacts of the tax are difficult to evaluate. Additionally, a number of government policy changes occurred near the time of implementation, further obfuscating the impact of the EHT. These changes include the BC Foreign Buyers Tax and the BC Speculation and Vacancy Tax.

In 2018, the CMHC reported that rental vacancy rates in purpose-built rental apartments in Vancouver had decreased slightly between 2017 and 2018; from 0.9% to 0.8%. This was attributed to a strong local economy contributing to growing rental demand, while the high cost of entry-level homeownership was keeping some residents in rental housing for longer periods. There were some early indications that rental prices were weakening, however it is unclear whether those price changes were attributable to the EHT or the broader housing market in Vancouver.¹⁰¹ In 2019, the Vancouver region saw over 11,000 condominium and apartment residential units come onto the rental market. This exceeded the 9,000 newly built apartments which were completed in 2019, suggesting that upwards of 2,000 existing condominium units were added to the city's rental stock. This was even more pronounced in downtown Vancouver, where approximately 3,000 condominium and apartment residential units were added to the rental market, while only 300 new units were built. It has been suggested by City staff that the transfer of condominium and apartment units to the rental stock is a result of policies such as Vancouver's EHT.¹⁰²

2020 also saw an increase of 2,879 in tenanted properties from 2019. Condominiums represent the majority of this increase with 68%, while single-family homes and other property types represented 9% and 23% respectively. The asking rents for both occupied and vacant units witnessed a decline in 2020. The CMHC

⁹⁷ (City of Vancouver, 2021)

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ (City of Vancouver and Housing Vancouver, 2019)

¹⁰⁰ (City of Vancouver, 2019)

¹⁰¹ (CTV News, 2019)

¹⁰² (Bula, 2020)

believes this to be associated with the introduction of new apartments in high rent locations that were previously left vacant.

The CMHC's 2022 annual report for the 2021 year informs readers that the city is making efforts to increase rental supply. A total of 1602 purpose-built rental apartments hit the market in 2021, representing an increase of 1.4%. Much of these additions come from construction projects coming to completion after several years. The number of condominium apartments in long-term rentals also increased by 2,550 units (a 3.3% increase from 2020). As of the publication of this report, the purpose-built rental market and condominium apartment markets have an average two-bedroom rent of \$1,824 and \$2,498 respectively.

There has been a considerable range of factors that have influenced the property market since the introduction of the EHT, so isolating the effects of the tax and/or attributing these occurrences to the tax alone is not possible.

Nonetheless, since the introduction of the EHT, revenues from the tax have enabled the City to allocate an additional \$86.6 million to affordable housing initiatives. These initiatives have helped to increase the supply and affordability of social housing to many local residents¹⁰³.

Profile of vacant homeowners

Vancouver has been experiencing issues surrounding how owners use residential properties for some time. Speculative ownership of residential properties is thought to be a driving force behind rising rent and housing prices in Vancouver, along with much of the province. Additionally, there is widespread belief that foreign buyers are the primary culprits behind the trend, purchasing homes and displacing residents who find that housing has become unaffordable. Furthermore, there is concern that housing purchased by foreigners is more likely to remain vacant. In 2016, in an effort to slow foreign ownership of residential properties within Vancouver, the city introduced the Foreign-buyers Tax – an additional property transfer tax of 15% on all residential property purchased by foreign buyers. Then, in 2019, the Province of British Columbia introduced the Speculation and Vacancy Tax – an additional tax of between 0.5% and 2% paid out when a property is vacant – in an effort to discourage speculative ownership of residential properties. A Statistics Canada report published in 2017 indicated that approximately 4.8% of all residential properties in Vancouver were owned by non-residents,¹⁰⁴ however, it is difficult to determine how much of the current vacant stock of housing is locally owned compared to foreign owned.¹⁰⁵

There are multiple motivations for owners to keep their property vacant in Vancouver. Conversations with public officials at the City of Vancouver indicated that it is too early in the EHT's lifecycle to create definitive profiles of vacant homeowners, however, at a high level, vacant homeowners can often be categorized into:

- **Retirees:** individuals that own properties in Vancouver but have relocated in their retirement to other parts of the country or abroad. As a result, the property tends to be used sparingly and is often reserved for when these individuals return to the city to tend to personal matters. Retirees are often reluctant to rent their properties because they wish to use them at their convenience.
- **Non-resident speculator:** data on non-resident ownership in Vancouver is not widely available to the public as much of it still under development. However, it is estimated that non-residents of Vancouver own approximately 5.1% of total residential property value in the city.¹⁰⁶ These include foreign nationals and Canadian citizens who live abroad but does not include Canadian corporations that have a foreign director or owner. Due to data privacy reasons, Vancouver is unable to directly quantify the number of non-resident speculators that own vacant properties.
- **Domestic speculators:** in high demand real estate markets, domestic speculators tend to buy and hold property in anticipation of rapid appreciation. The Royal Bank of Canada released a report in 2016 that

¹⁰³ (City of Vancouver, 2021)

¹⁰⁴ (Statistics Canada, 2017)

¹⁰⁵ Privacy restrictions limit the information publicly available regarding ownership information.

¹⁰⁶ (Statistics Canada, 2017)

suggested that speculators may be holding onto their properties in order to achieve the greatest return. This becomes particularly likely when the real estate market is out-performing other types of investments.¹⁰⁷

Public opinion

In general, public opinion regarding the EHT has been positive. Much of the public is unfavourable towards speculative housing investment, with overwhelmingly negative opinions towards vacant residential properties and their contributory effects to high costs of real estate in Vancouver. Criticism of the EHT has however been documented, much of which focuses on the fairness of evaluations. The City of Vancouver is currently facing multiple lawsuits regarding homeowners and developers disputing their evaluations. Some property owners who own second homes in Vancouver claim that they have been unfairly taxed, arguing that there are legitimate reasons for owning a second home in the city, and that such properties should not be subject to the EHT.¹⁰⁸ For example, some condominium owners claim that it is more practical to keep second properties vacant to be used when they visit the city (i.e., for family, occasional work, etc.) than to rent them out. They view the tax as a penalty for which they receive nothing in return. Others feel that the EHT unfairly targets retirees who might have seasonal properties elsewhere.¹⁰⁹ Public officials at the city of Vancouver have stated that much of the negative sentiment toward the EHT is due to the lack of understanding of the EHT, its relevant policy, and how it is meant to improve housing costs. Vancouver staff indicated that greater levels of communication and more thorough public awareness campaigns may have led to fewer negative reactions from the public. Vancouver staff are confident that once better understood, cases of non-declaration and non-payment will continue to decrease.

From a municipal point of view, the EHT is largely seen to have been a success. Decreasing annual declarations are considered to be a positive result of the policy, and significant revenues generated are seen as an added benefit. As such, neighbouring municipalities such as West Vancouver and White Rock are now considering implementing their own similar versions of an EHT.

Applicability to York Region

Similar to Vancouver in 2015, York Region has been experiencing a rapid acceleration in house prices. As a result, both jurisdictions have experienced low vacancy rates over a similar timeframe. Additionally, both are under strong and increasing pressure from growing demand to live in urban areas, while supply – despite the addition of new buildings, has not kept pace to meet this demand. Furthermore, both jurisdictions are in provinces that have implemented provincial foreign buyers' taxes.

Although it is still too early to definitively conclude that Vancouver's EHT is producing its intended results, at a high level there has been a decrease in vacant properties within the city and additional revenue raised for affordable housing initiatives. If the York Region were to proceed with implementing a VHT, Vancouver's experience in implementing their EHT should be taken into account for insights into the structure and components of the tax (i.e., administration, exemptions, enforcement, etc.). Furthermore, lessons learned with regards to understanding the effectiveness of the tax, as well as setbacks, loopholes, public perception, and potential changes/revisions being made to Vancouver's EHT should be considered in York Region's initial implementation of a VHT.

¹⁰⁷ (Royal Bank of Canada, 2016)

¹⁰⁸ (Morton & Duran, 2018)

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

Toronto

Background of the tax

Closely behind Vancouver, Toronto has been Canada's second most expensive real estate market for several years and has continued to grow rapidly. Toronto shares many similarities with Vancouver, as both are major Canadian population centres and are experiencing strong employment and population growth which contribute to rising real estate prices. Additionally, these features encourage speculative housing investments which further worsens affordability. In response to these trends, the City of Toronto has adopted numerous initiatives to improve affordability, such as the Vacant Home Tax that was passed in late 2021.

Toronto housing has become increasingly unaffordable and has priced many residents out of the market. Between 2006 and 2017, average home prices grew by over 130%, reaching an average value of over \$800,000. By 2017, average Toronto sale prices for detached homes, attached homes and condos were \$1.1 million, \$925,000, and \$493,000 respectively.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, residential rental prices have continuously risen. Between 2006 and 2017, the average prices for primary rental units and condominiums rose by approximately 30% and 47%, reaching over \$1,300 and \$2,100 respectively.¹¹¹ In comparison, incomes have not kept pace with these trends. Between 2006 and 2016, the median household income grew by only 25%, or approximately 2.2% per year.¹¹² The Canadian Rental Housing Index, a database that compiles rental housing statistics for cities, regions and provinces across Canada, ranked the rental situation in Toronto as "critical", with about 23% of renters in the GTA spending 50% or more of their salaries on housing costs.¹¹³ In contrast, the benchmark for affordability has historically been set at 30% of income spent on housing.¹¹⁴

A major contributor that has been worsening affordability in Toronto is a lack of housing supply. Vacancy rates for both primary rental apartments and rental condominium units have declined, indicating limited supply. In 2017, overall rental vacancies for primary rentals and condominiums were 1.4% and 0.7% respectively.¹¹⁵ Additionally, Toronto's population is forecasted to grow by 36% by 2041.¹¹⁶ However, growth in accompanying housing supply is only forecasted to be 32.5%.¹¹⁷ This gap suggests that there will continue to be persistent excess demand for housing in Toronto, with the primary constraint being the availability of residential dwellings.

Due to the insufficient housing supply in Toronto, speculative housing investments that leave homes vacant pose a substantial risk for further worsening affordability. Thus, around 2016, the City of Toronto began investigating a VHT. This decision closely followed the implementation of Vancouver's EHT. In 2016, studies using census data¹¹⁸ and analysis of water consumption data indicated that Toronto residential vacancies ranged between 2% and 5.7%.¹¹⁹ Bringing these properties back onto the market would thus help ease some of the supply pressures that Toronto currently faces.

In response to the affordability and supply issues in Toronto's housing market, Toronto City Council approved the implementation of a 1% VHT in July 2021 which subsequently came into effect in January 2022.¹²⁰ The City outlined that the goal of the tax was to improve the supply and affordability of housing stock by disincentivizing homeowners from leaving their properties vacant.¹²¹ Although Toronto's VHT was not passed

¹¹⁰ (MLS Real Estate Listings, 2022)

¹¹¹ (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2020)

¹¹² (City of Toronto Planning & Housing Committee, 2019)

¹¹³ (BC Non-Profit Housing Association, 2016)

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2020)

¹¹⁶ (Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis and Canadian Urban Institute, 2019)

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ (Statistics Canada, 2016)

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ (City of Toronto, 2021)

¹²¹ Ibid.

to generate revenue, City Council has directed that all revenues from the tax be directed to affordable housing initiatives.¹²²

Definition of a vacant home

At the time of this report, specifics on Toronto's VHT have not yet been finalized as the official bylaw has not been released for public review. However, City Council has approved the final design features for the VHT. These design features show that Toronto's VHT shares many similarities with Vancouver's EHT. The City of Toronto defines a vacant residential property as one that has been unoccupied for more than six months during the vacancy reference period (January to December).¹²³ The six months does not have to be consecutive, however, tenant stays must be for at least 30 consecutive days to count towards the six months. Homes can also be deemed vacant by the City in circumstances where the owner fails to make a status declaration, makes a false status declaration, fails to provide information/evidence to the City or provides false information/evidence.¹²⁴ The Toronto VHT applies to all residential units within the city that were neither used as a principal residence nor rented out for at least six months of the year, and do not qualify for an exemption.¹²⁵ A residential unit is defined by the City as "a self-contained unit which includes a dedicated washroom and kitchen, located on property classified as residential property on the assessment roll".¹²⁶

The City of Toronto has outlined a number of exemptions to the VHT. If a property is deemed exempt, the owner will not be charged the tax for the applicable year. Exemptions to Toronto's VHT include:¹²⁷

- The death of a registered owner. If the registered owner dies, the property will be exempt from the VHT for the year that the death occurred, as well as one subsequent year.
- The property is undergoing redevelopment or major renovation. In this circumstance, the property will only be considered exempt if the redevelopment or major renovation makes occupation impossible for a period of six months or longer. The redevelopment or major renovation must also have permits issued and be actively pursuing the opinion of the Chief Building Official.
- The registered owner is in care, institutionalized or hospitalized. This exemption is not allowed for more than two consecutive tax years.
- The residential unit is subject to a restriction or prohibition on rental, preventing the registered owner from renting out the property. For example, a condominium building or co-ownership with restrictions on allowing units to be made available for rental.
- The property has undergone a transfer in ownership. This applies to circumstances where legal ownership of the residential unit has been transferred to an arm's length transferee. This exemption only applies during the year of sale only.
- The property is being occupied for full time employment. This exemption will apply if the residential unit is occupied by a registered owner with a principal residence outside of a defined Greater Toronto Area, and the property is required for employment purposes in Toronto for an aggregate of at least six months per year.
- The property is under a court order which is prohibiting occupancy. For example, if a property is under a court order, court proceedings, or order of a governmental authority where occupancy is prohibited, the property will not be subject to the VHT.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ (City of Toronto, 2021)

¹²⁶ (City of Toronto, 2021)

¹²⁷ Ibid.

Administration method

Toronto's VHT will be administered as a universal declaration program. All registered owners of residential property within the City of Toronto will be required to complete mandatory declaration forms each year, confirming the status of their property as occupied, exempt, or vacant during the prior reference period.¹²⁸ If a resident owns a property that was unoccupied for greater than six months during the previous vacancy reference period, they must indicate as such on the mandatory declaration form, at which point the property will be subject to the tax. Mandatory declaration forms are mailed out by the Director of Revenue Services to residents on or before December 31st of each year and must be returned to the City by the specified due date. Declarations can either be mailed or made through an online platform on the City website. Those that fail to submit their property status declaration(s) will automatically have their property / properties deemed vacant.¹²⁹

In situations where there may be doubt surrounding the validity of a resident's declaration, the Director of Revenue Services can require the registered owner to provide additional information about their property ownership for up to 2 years after the initial declaration, regarding:

- a. the residential unit;
- b. the identity and address of the registered owner or any person occupying the unit, including tenants;
- c. the nature and duration of the occupancy of the residential unit during the relevant taxation year; or
- d. the nature of any exemption to the VHT.

As a means of data collection and enforcement, the City will periodically audit certain properties to ensure compliance with the tax. Using a combination of a risk-based approach and random audits, the VHT program verifies the validity of property status declarations. All property status declarations are subject to the audit process as per best practices for provincial and federal tax programs. As part of the audit process, registered property owners may be required to submit additional evidence to the City's Director of Revenue Services to support their declaration. Some of the evidence that the Director of Revenue Services may ask for as part of the audit includes:

- a. copies or certified copies of:
 - i. MTO vehicle registration and insurance;
 - ii. government-issued personal identification, including, without limitation, driver's license, Ontario Identity Card;
 - iii. proof of OHIP coverage or valid Health card;
 - iv. income tax returns and notices of assessment;
 - v. lease agreements;
 - vi. wills, grants of probate, or grants of administration;
 - vii. employment contracts, pay statements or records of employment;
 - viii. verification of residence in long term or supportive care;
 - ix. relevant court orders;
 - x. insurance certificates for homeowners or tenants insurance;
 - xi. copies of condominium/co-ownership building by-laws, minutes of meetings or records prepared or maintained by the condominium/co-ownership building; and
- b. statutory declarations or affidavits regarding the occupancy of the residential unit.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Should the property owner be found to have misrepresented their vacancy declaration, they will face a fine that is no less than \$250 and no more than \$10,000 for each offence.¹³⁰

Following the submissions of the mandatory declarations from property owners, the Director of Revenue Services will determine which homes are subject to the VHT and mail out a vacancy tax notice on or before March 31st of each year.¹³¹ The tax rate for the VHT is set at one percent of the property's current value assessment for the year that the home is vacant. Property owners subject to the tax must then pay the tax by a specified deadline. Failure to meet this deadline results in a penalty of 1.25% per month of the unpaid taxes due, which is the same late penalty applied to property taxes.

The administrative start-up costs for Toronto's VHT are forecasted to total \$11 million. The costs are planned to be spread across 2021 and 2022 and stem from establishing the administrative structure, systems and programming that will be required to collect the tax, as well as initial public communications. The ongoing operational costs forecasted for the VHT are approximately \$3.1 million. The operational costs include salaries for 25 staff positions, and direct operating expenses such as licensing and data storage/file server costs for systems, printing, postage and communications, banking and payment processing costs, as well as other normal office expenditures.¹³²

Impact of the tax on vacant homes

As Toronto's VHT only came into effect in January 2022, with payments not starting until 2023, there is not yet any evidence of the impact that the tax has on vacant homes or the Toronto housing market in general. However, comparing Toronto with Vancouver highlights the potential effectiveness that a VHT can have. Both Vancouver and Toronto have faced issues with high numbers of homes being left vacant in each city. In 2016, vacant homes accounted for 8.2% and 5.6% of the total housing stock in Vancouver and Toronto respectively.¹³³ Nonetheless, following the implementation of Vancouver's EHT in 2017, the number of vacant homes in the city has fallen by 10%. In comparison, the number of vacant homes in Toronto over the same period of time has increased by approximately 40%.¹³⁴ This contrast between Vancouver and Toronto indicates that a VHT could have a significant impact in reducing the number of vacant homes. If Toronto's experience with a one percent VHT is similar to Vancouver's experience, non-exempt vacant homes in the city could decrease by approximately 10% annually.

Furthermore, revenues from a VHT will increase support for affordable housing initiatives in Toronto. Just as with Vancouver, Toronto's VHT has a principal objective of increasing the supply of housing to the market. All revenues generated from the VHT are seen as a secondary benefit and will be directed towards affordable housing initiatives after deducting operational expenses.¹³⁵ Using tax metrics from Vancouver's experience and assuming a one percent vacancy rate of Toronto's 800,000 residential units, the City estimates that the one percent VHT could generate approximately \$55 million to \$66 million in annual revenue.¹³⁶

Additionally, since the goal of Toronto's VHT is to increase housing supply, the City may find a one percent tax to be insufficient, as was the case with Vancouver. The City may subsequently choose to raise the tax if too many property owners are opting to pay the tax instead of putting their property on the market.

Profile of vacant homeowners

There is nothing to indicate that vacant homeowners in Toronto are significantly different from vacant homeowners in Vancouver. Speculative ownership of residential properties is thought to be a driving force behind rising rent and housing prices in Toronto and across the rest of the province. Additionally, many view

¹³⁰ (City of Toronto, 2021)

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² (City of Toronto, 2021)

¹³³ (Younglai, 2022)

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ (City of Toronto, 2021)

¹³⁶ Ibid.

foreign buyers as a substantial contributor for worsening housing affordability. Furthermore, there is concern that housing purchased by foreigners is more likely to remain vacant. In 2017, in an effort to slow foreign ownership of residential properties, the Government of Ontario introduced the Foreign Home Buyers Tax which added a 15% tax on a home's purchase price within the Greater Golden Horseshoe region. In 2022, the tax was increased to 20% and expanded to apply across the entire province.¹³⁷ A Statistics Canada report published in 2017 indicated that approximately 4.9% of all residential properties in Toronto were owned by non-residents,¹³⁸ however it is difficult to determine how much of the current vacant stock of housing is locally owned compared to foreign owned.¹³⁹

Overall, there are multiple motivations for owners to keep their property vacant in Toronto. Examples include:

- **Retirees:** these individuals own properties in Toronto but have relocated in their retirement to other parts of the country or abroad. As a result, the property tends to be used sparingly and is often reserved for when these individuals return to the city to tend to personal matters. Retirees are often reluctant to rent their properties because they wish to use them at their convenience.
- **Non-resident speculator:** data on non-resident ownership in Toronto is not widely available to the public as much of it still under development. However, it is estimated that non-residents of Toronto own approximately 4.9% of total residential properties in the city.¹⁴⁰ These include foreign nationals and Canadian citizens who live abroad but do not include Canadian corporations that have a foreign director or owner. Due to data privacy reasons, Toronto is unable to directly quantify the number of non-resident speculators that own vacant properties.
- **Domestic speculators:** In high demand real estate markets, domestic speculators tend to buy and hold property in anticipation of rapid appreciation. The Royal Bank of Canada released a report in 2016 that suggested that speculators may be holding onto their properties in order to achieve the greatest return. This becomes particularly likely when the real estate market is out-performing other types of investments.¹⁴¹

Public opinion

Public consultations on a Toronto VHT have demonstrated overwhelming support from the public. A survey of approximately 5,000 people that was conducted by the City of Toronto found that 84% of respondents were very supportive or supportive of a VHT.¹⁴² Such positive reception has been consistent across many jurisdictions with expensive housing markets due to negative opinions on vacant residential properties and their contributory effects to high costs of real estate.

Applicability to York Region

Toronto's decision to implement a VHT is highly pertinent to York Region, both in terms of taking action to improve housing affordability and the potential spillover effects. Similar to Toronto, York Region has also experienced rapid growth in real estate prices over the past 5-10 years due to significant increases in housing demand, low vacancy rates, and supply levels that have struggled to keep pace with demand. As a result of these trends, speculative housing investments pose a significant risk for further exacerbating the housing shortage by keeping properties off the market and reducing supply. Concern for this risk is already evident at the provincial government level which introduced the foreign home buyers' tax in 2017 for the Golden Horseshoe region, including both York Region and the City of Toronto, before expanding it provincially in 2022. Additionally, given York Region's proximity to Toronto, a Toronto VHT could result in an acceleration of

¹³⁷ (KPMG Canada, 2022)

¹³⁸ (Statistics Canada, 2017)

¹³⁹ Privacy restrictions limit the information publicly available regarding ownership information.

¹⁴⁰ (Statistics Canada, 2017)

¹⁴¹ (Royal Bank of Canada, 2016)

¹⁴² (City of Toronto, 2021)

speculative housing investments in York Region, as investors replace their Toronto properties with properties in York Region to avoid being taxed.

Although Toronto's VHT has yet to produce any concrete results, it offers useful insights into the policy design of a VHT in Ontario. Furthermore, as more information comes out on Toronto's VHT, York Region can leverage lessons learned with regards to understanding the effectiveness of the tax, as well as potential setbacks, loopholes, public perception, and policy changes/revisions that are required.

Region of Peel and Halton Region

Background of the tax

In response to worsening housing affordability issues, both the Region of Peel and Halton Region are exploring the implementation of a VHT. In Peel, house and rental prices have risen annually by 7.5% and 2.8% respectively over the past 15 years. Along with rising costs, incomes have lagged, growing at only 1.4% over the same period.¹⁴³ Thus, the housing market has become increasingly unaffordable. In 2020, Peel reported that owning or renting is now unaffordable for 80% of residents. The pandemic has only exacerbated this crisis. In 2021, the Region of Peel calculated that it would take the average Peel household 26 years to save for a down payment at current average market prices, while a dual minimum wage income family would need 51 years to save or pay 2/3 of their income in rent.¹⁴⁴ In response, Peel has enhanced its efforts to increase the market supply of housing, as well as affordable housing projects through initiatives such as a vacant home tax. Currently, Peel is continuing to solicit public consultation on a VHT and expects to report to council in 2023 with program design options and next steps.¹⁴⁵ Peel expects that a VHT would come into effect in 2023/2024.¹⁴⁶

Halton has also experienced similar trends as Peel and is investigating their own VHT. In Halton, house prices have rapidly accelerated since 2014, where prices rose by over 39% through to 2018. In comparison, incomes only rose 16.7% over the same period.¹⁴⁷ Since the pandemic, these trends have also accelerated, where prices have risen an additional 37% between 2019 and 2021 to an average sale price of over \$1.3 million.¹⁴⁸ Additionally, rental rates have become increasingly unaffordable, rising by an average of 7% between 2019 and 2020. According to the CMHC, Halton now has the most cost prohibitive rents in Ontario, with an average 2020 monthly rental price of \$1583.¹⁴⁹ As a result, increasing numbers of city residents are being priced out of the market. Waitlists for subsidized housing have ballooned to over 3,200.¹⁵⁰ In response to the Halton housing market, the Region continues to investigate the adoption of a VHT with an expected implementation by 2023/2024.¹⁵¹

Definition of a vacant home

Halton and Peel have engaged in jurisdictional scans to formulate potential definitions of a vacant home. In remaining consistent with the definitions in Vancouver and Toronto, both regions have recommended to council that a definition for a vacant home should be one which is unoccupied for more than six months of the calendar year.¹⁵² Additionally, both Regions are considering exemptions, such as:

¹⁴³ (Region of Peel, 2022)

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ (Desormeaux, 2022)

¹⁴⁸ (ZOLO, 2022)

¹⁴⁹ (Halton Region, 2022)

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ (Halton Region, 2022)

¹⁵² (Region of Peel, 2022) (Halton Region, 2022)

- Homes owned by snowbirds, or used as holiday homes are exempt if the property is lived in for a minimum of 4 weeks every year;
- Deceased owner;
- Large renovations;
- Owner in medical care;
- Inability to find tenant or buyer;
- Change of ownership; and
- Court prohibiting occupancy

Administration method

Again, in aligning with VHTs in Toronto and Vancouver, Peel and Halton are considering similar administration methods. Both Regions have recommended that their Council adopt a universal declaration method, where all homeowners within the region annually declare the vacancy status of their home(s).¹⁵³ Furthermore, both Regions have recommended initial tax rates of 1% for the VHT, with future reassessments that would consider adjustments of the rate to up to 3%.¹⁵⁴ The Regions have recommended that a VHT be enforced through periodic audits, with penalties applied to homeowners that fail to appropriately declare their homes as vacant. Homeowners would retain the right to challenge any penalties through established dispute resolution bodies.¹⁵⁵ Lastly, both regions have recommended to their Councils that a VHT will be most efficiently delivered through a hybrid delivery model. A hybrid model is likely to result in lower implementation and operating costs by leveraging existing tax collection capabilities at the local level.¹⁵⁶

Operations and forecasted impact

In alignment with Toronto and Vancouver, both Peel and Halton have outlined that a VHT will have a primary objective of returning vacant homes back to the market for rent or sale with any revenue generated from the tax treated as a secondary benefit. Additionally, both Regions have forecasted potential net revenues generated by a 1% VHT. In Halton, the Region projected that a VHT could generate \$4.1 to \$4.3 million in annual net revenue (\$5.8 million from declarations and \$0.3 million from penalties through audits) based on an estimated 348 to 376 vacant homes.¹⁵⁷ Annual operating costs were estimated to range between \$1.8 to \$2 million for 11 to 12 full-time employees, as well as notices and advertising, IT support and maintenance, and customer service.¹⁵⁸ Implementation is forecasted to cost between \$3.3 and \$3.9 million for six to nine full-time employees, professional services, infrastructure costs, and technical costs.¹⁵⁹ Overall, Halton projects that a 1% VHT will result in approximately 330 vacant homes being sold or converted into rental properties.¹⁶⁰ In comparison, the Region of Peel expects to generate \$17.1 million in annual revenue (\$16.4 million from declarations and \$0.7 million from penalties through audits), with \$5 million in annual operating costs.¹⁶¹ Peel expects that implementation costs will range between \$12 and \$15 million.¹⁶² Both Regions have indicated that all net revenues from a VHT will be directed towards affordable housing initiatives.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ (Halton Region, 2022)

¹⁵⁸ (Halton Region, 2022)

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ (Region of Peel, 2022)

¹⁶² Ibid.

Applicability to York Region

The decision of the Region of Peel and Halton Region to pursue a VHT has several implications for York Region. As more jurisdictions across Canada face housing affordability issues, a VHT is seen as an effective policy for improving affordability. Jurisdictions such as Toronto, Peel and Halton are acknowledging Vancouver's success at reducing vacancy rates following the implementation of a VHT and are implementing their own VHTs that share many similarities (e.g., definition of a vacant home, universal declaration method, consistent exemptions, etc.). Additionally, Peel and Halton are neighbouring jurisdictions to York Region, where a VHT may result in spillover effects. For example, home vacancies in York Region may accelerate as housing speculators seek to move their investment properties out of Peel or Halton and into York Region to avoid paying the tax. Lastly, Peel and Halton indicate that a hybrid delivery model for a VHT may be most effective for York Region, as all are regional municipal governments within the GTA.

Melbourne

Background of the tax

In 2017, Melbourne — the largest city in the Australian state of Victoria, with over 1.7 million dwellings — was at the height of a property boom, where an estimated 3.9% of all residential properties were vacant (nearly 61,000 properties¹⁶³), based on water usage data.¹⁶⁴ As a percentage of investor-owned rental properties, the vacancy rate was estimated to be as high as 16.2% of all rental properties – demonstrating more than \$20 billion in vacant property.¹⁶⁵ Despite significant investment in residential property development and relatively high vacancy rates, prospective homebuyers and renters found it difficult to enter the market due to increasing housing prices coupled with an abundance of underutilised and vacant properties.

To address the lack of housing supply in Melbourne and across the state of Victoria, the Victorian Government introduced the vacant residential land tax (“the VRLT” or “the tax”) in March 2017, with it coming into effect in January 2018. The aim of the VRLT is to assure the availability of housing and is intended to encourage owners to rent or sell their properties rather than providing additional revenue to the government. The intent is such that additional revenue generated by the VRLT will support affordable housing initiatives in Victoria. The VRLT affects properties in 16 inner-city areas of Melbourne. The tax applies to homes that were vacant for more than six months in the preceding calendar year. The VRLT is assessed by calendar year (January 1 to December 31), and the six months do not need to be continuous.

The annual VRLT is set at 1% of the capital improved value (CIV) of taxable land.¹⁶⁶ The CIV of a property is the value of the land, buildings, and any other capital improvements made to the property as determined by the general valuation process. For example, if a vacant home has a capital improved value of \$1,000,000, the tax will be \$10,000 owed annually.

Definition of a vacant home

The Victorian Government defines residential property or residential land as land that is able to be used solely or primarily for residential purposes, such as a home or an apartment. This also includes land on which a residence is being renovated, or where a former residence has been demolished and a new one is being constructed. It does not, however, include vacant land or commercial residential properties.¹⁶⁷

A property is deemed to be vacant if, for more than six months in the preceding year, it has not been lived in by either of the following:

¹⁶³ The study analyzed 1,579,906 dwellings out of a total possible 1,741,984. Dwellings not included were excluded because of data availability issues.

¹⁶⁴ (Prosper Australia, 2019)

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ (Victoria State Revenue Office, 2017)

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

- The owner of the property, or a permitted occupier by the owner, as their principal place of residence; or
- A person under a lease or short-term letting arrangement made in good faith.

The occupant does not need to be the same occupant over the six-month period, nor does it need to take place over a single continuous period. However, it is not enough that the property is simply available for occupation (i.e., listed as a short-term rental). The property must actually have been used/occupied for six months or more. Furthermore, it is also not enough that the property is used intermittently or on a casual basis (i.e., by friends and/or family of the owner). The use and occupation must be as a principal place of residence or subject to an actual lease or letting arrangement.¹⁶⁸

There are a number of exemptions to the above rules. Properties that are exempt from land tax are also exempt from the VRLT.¹⁶⁹ Such exemptions include:

- Principal place of residence, subject to the definition of ‘taxable land’;
- Primary production land;
- Charities;
- Rooming houses;
- Crown land;
- Municipal and public land;
- Residential care facilities;
- Retirement villages; and
- Land leased for outdoor sporting, recreational, or cultural activities by members of the public.

In addition to the above exemptions, homes that would otherwise be subject to the VRLT may be exempt from the tax if:

- Ownership of the property changed during that year. For example, a property sold and transferred is exempt from the following tax year. The change of ownership must actually occur during the calendar year – it is not sufficient that the property is simply available for sale or awaiting settlement of sale.
- The property became a ‘residential’ property during that year. For example, a commercial warehouse that was converted into residential apartments in one year is exempt from the following tax year.
- The property is used as a holiday home. Holiday homes that are occupied by the owner for at least four weeks of that year (whether continuous or in aggregate) are not subject to the tax in the following year. The owner must also have a principal place of residence in Australia in the relevant tax year.
- The property is used and occupied by the owner for work purposes. Properties that are occupied by the owner for at least 140 days of that year (whether continuous or in aggregate) for the purpose of attending their workplace or conducting business are not subject to the tax in the following year. The owner must have a principal place of residence in Australia.

Properties that are owned by companies, associations, or organizations are generally not eligible for these exemptions.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Land tax is payable each year by owners of “taxable land” in the state of Victoria. Land is considered to be taxable land unless it is exempt land as outlined in the *Land Tax Act 2005 (Vic)*. Land tax is assessed on all taxable land of which the taxpayer owns and is calculated on the “taxable value” of the land. The land’s “taxable value” is determined by reference to the land’s unimproved value, typically the value of the land excluding any improvements to the land such as buildings and fixtures. Land tax is required to be paid if the total taxable value of all the land owned within the State of Victoria, individually or jointly, as of December 31, is equal to or exceeds A\$250,000.

¹⁷⁰ (Victoria State Revenue Office, 2017)

In addition, properties that are undergoing significant renovations or construction are not considered vacant for the purpose of the tax for up to two years from the date a building permit for the construction or renovation was issued. This grace period may be extended under certain circumstances. Grace periods are also available if the vacant property forms part of a deceased estate, provided that the property was used and occupied as the owner's principal place of residence immediately prior to their passing. The grace period for a deceased estate is for up to three years. However, properties part of the estate that were not used as the principal place of residence are subject to the VRLT.

Finally, property owners who opt to rent their properties on short-stay accommodation sites, such as Airbnb, will find their property/properties are still subject to the tax if they are unoccupied for more than six months in a calendar year.¹⁷¹

Administration method

Unlike Vancouver and Toronto, the administrative method for Victoria's VRLT is self-reported. If a resident owns a property that was unoccupied for greater than six months during a calendar year, it is their responsibility to notify the Victoria State Revenue Office (VSRO) by January 15 of the following year.¹⁷² Failure by a resident to notify the VSRO of ownership of a vacant residential property is considered a notification default under the Taxation Administration Act 1997.¹⁷³ Notification defaults result in the owner being held liable for a penalty tax on the amount assessed in accordance with the state's revenue ruling on penalty tax and interest.

Owners that inform the VSRO by the January 15 deadline will be subject to an annual tax of 1% of the capital improved value of the vacant property. Additional penalty taxes are applicable to owners which do not disclose their vacant properties. Owners that miss the deadline of January 15 are encouraged to notify the VSRO as soon as they are able as late disclosures are treated more favourably than properties identified to be vacant through a formal investigation.

A breakdown of the penalty tax levels by percentage is found in Table 17, below.

Table 17: Tax penalty breakdowns

| Notification of Vacant Property / Properties | Penalty Tax (% of Assessed Amount) |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| The owner misses the annual deadline, but voluntarily notifies the state of vacant residential properties before an investigation is begun. | 5% |
| The owner misses the annual deadline but notifies the state of vacant residential properties after an investigation has begun. | 20% |
| The state believes that the owner intentionally disregarded the law and hindered the state's investigation regarding vacant residential properties. | Up to 90% |

Residents must notify the state office of their vacant properties using the state office's online portal. Within the portal, they are also able to claim exemption(s) from the tax, as well as nominate a representative to receive further correspondence about the tax should it be appropriate.

The VSRO conducts monitoring activities to make sure that vacant residences are being declared, including comparing data with that of other state and federal agencies, as well as conducting investigations. However, the tax relies heavily on owners of homes reporting that their properties remain vacant. The state office encourages residents to submit tip-offs to notify them of suspected owners not complying with their obligations.

The VRLT was waived in 2021 as part of COVID-19 relief measures and has recommenced for 2022.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ (Conveyancing, 2018)

¹⁷² (Victoria State Revenue Office, 2017)

¹⁷³ (Parliament of Victoria, 2019)

¹⁷⁴ (Victoria State Revenue Office, 2017)

Impact of the tax on vacant homes

The VRLT, while its principal objective is to increase the housing supply, was originally forecast to raise more than A\$80 million — equivalent to approximately C\$72 million — over its first four years. Nonetheless, no official data from the state government has been released on net revenue from the VRLT to date. Additionally, because the VRLT only came into effect in 2018, there is currently little evidence on the market impact of the tax to date. Initial mainstream media reports indicate that the tax is not performing as expected, allegedly bringing in approximately A\$5.4 million (C\$4.9 million) in its first full financial year compared to approximately A\$20 million previously expected.¹⁷⁵ Water usage data suggests that there are between 14,000 and 21,000 properties using zero water within the VRLT boundary,¹⁷⁶ however, using a median property price, initial tax performance figures imply that only approximately 900 investors self-reported their property as vacant and paid the tax. Sufficient data is not yet available to ascertain if these low values are as a result of non-compliance, exemptions, or tax boundary limitations within Melbourne.

Overall, the effects of the VLRT on vacancy rates in Melbourne remains unclear. Prior to the implementation of the VLRT, vacancy rates in Melbourne were consistently trending downwards, falling from an average of 2.7% in 2013 to 1.4% in 2018.¹⁷⁷ Following the implementation of the VLRT in 2018, vacancy rates began increasing, with a high of 2.5% in 2019, 4.7% in 2020 and 4.4% in 2021.¹⁷⁸ Nonetheless, Melbourne's real estate market was significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The VRLT was suspended in 2021, as border restrictions limited the entry of foreign workers and students which resulted in extremely high vacancy rates.¹⁷⁹ Additionally, vacancy rates have likely been inflated due to high levels of dwelling completions in recent years.¹⁸⁰ As of 2022, the VLRT has been reinstated and corresponded with a sharp drop in vacancy rates. However, it too early to determine the extent to which this trend is due to the easing of pandemic restrictions or the reinstatement of the VRLT. Furthermore, some critics note that the current tax rate is too low, and a higher rate would be more effective at incentivizing property owners to return vacant houses to the market.

Impact of the tax on the housing market

Currently, the Government of Victoria has not released any reports on the impact of the VRLT, making it difficult to analyze its effectiveness. Additionally, the VRLT only came into effect in 2018, leaving little evidence on the impact of the tax. Nonetheless, initial news reports indicate that the tax may not have had as large an effect on the housing market as intended, possibly because it only applies to select regions within the Melbourne metropolitan area. Discussions with officials from the Government of Victoria indicated that the tax was intended to apply only to the regions within Melbourne experiencing the greatest issues with housing availability, however some housing affordability advocates believe that the tax should be applied to a larger area. In addition, there are others who believe that the tax is not material enough to make a difference (at 1% annually), along with too many properties being eligible for exemptions (most notably the 2-year window for construction of new units – much of Melbourne's available real estate was constructed after the most recent property boom).

Critics note that a higher tax rate would be more likely to incentivize property owners to adjust their behaviour and consider renting and/or selling properties that they might otherwise be speculating on. Additionally, the Australian housing market experienced a significant decline in housing prices during 2018, which saw dwelling values fall in price by approximately 5.8%.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, there were approximately 2,000 extra rental listings available across the Melbourne metropolitan area over the previous year.¹⁸² This decline in the housing market

¹⁷⁵ (Minear, 2019)

¹⁷⁶ (Prosper Australia, 2019)

¹⁷⁷ (Statista, 2022) (SQM Research, 2022)

¹⁷⁸ (SQM Research, 2022)

¹⁷⁹ (Victoria State Revenue Office, 2017)

¹⁸⁰ (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020)

¹⁸¹ (Yardney, 2018)

¹⁸² (Owen, 2019)

and increase in properties available may have been partially as a result of the VRLT. However there has been a considerable range of factors that have influenced the property market since the introduction of the tax, so isolating the effects of the tax and/or attributing these occurrences to the tax alone is not necessarily possible.

While Melbourne's property market slowed during the pandemic, 2022 has experienced a 'return to normal' as Australian governments have begun relaxing restrictions. Melbourne's housing market, which slowed considerably during the peak of the pandemic, has started to rebound aggressively. As Victoria opened its borders, demand increased from the return of international students, tourists, and skilled migrants. Accompanying the lower vacancy rates are increases in rental costs. In 2022, prices surged in response to the new demand, with all units experiencing an average weekly rental increase of 17% in the past 12 months (as of June 4th, 2022).¹⁸³

Profile of vacant homeowners

According to last year's annual report by The Foreign Investment Review Board, Melbourne remains the number one target for foreign investors in Australia, although domestic investors still account for the majority of those holding vacant properties. There has been some skepticism that foreign investors are purchasing properties simply to keep them empty, with some real estate professionals indicating that the vacancy data is more reflective of the new housing that is being constructed but has not yet been occupied for long enough to qualify as occupied.

It is unclear how much of the vacant stock of housing is locally owned and how much is foreign-owned. However, the Melbourne central business district, which has drawn a significant volume of foreign investment, has the largest number of vacant properties, at just over 1,100 units or approximately 6.7% of properties.¹⁸⁴ Interestingly, the primarily student residential areas in Melbourne had the highest ratio of vacant homes, at approximately 7.6%.¹⁸⁵

Public opinion

In general, the vacant home tax has been received positively in Melbourne. Due to the high cost and short supply of homes in Melbourne there has not been significant pushback from the public. One of the primary complaints about the Melbourne tax, however, is the number of exemptions and ease at which a home could be exempt. There has been some public sentiment that the exemptions are too lenient, such as a vacation home or through short term rental platforms like Airbnb. As a result, not enough vacant homes are returning to the market. Furthermore, some critics argue that the VRLT experienced a soft launch, due primarily to the self-reported declaration method. There has also been some feedback from landowners who do not believe their land should be subject to the tax, particularly those with holiday homes and properties for intermittent use within Melbourne.

Applicability to York Region

Melbourne and York Region share multiple similarities that make Melbourne a relevant comparator to York Region in the context of a vacant home tax. Both cities have experienced recent property booms, significant increases in housing demand, low vacancy rates over the past 5-10 years, and have struggled to supply adequate levels of housing to meet increasing demand. Furthermore, speculation investment is exacerbating the housing shortage by keeping a significant number of properties off the market as investors hold properties vacant as speculative investment vehicles rather than allowing them to be occupied for housing. According to SQM Research, the City of Melbourne had a rate of vacancy of approximately 1.9%¹⁸⁶ in 2020, which is only slightly higher than York Region's rate of vacancy of approximately 0.9% in the same year.¹⁸⁷ In addition, both

¹⁸³ (SQM Research, 2022)

¹⁸⁴ (Bleby, 2015)

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ (SQM Research, 2022)

¹⁸⁷ (The Regional Municipality of York, 2021)

jurisdictions share similar structures of government, laws, and regulations, which allow for relevant comparison in the context of taxes and similar such initiatives.

Melbourne also serves as an example of a jurisdiction that has opted for a voluntary self-reported vacant home declaration method as opposed to the mandatory declaration methods applied in Vancouver and Toronto. As some of the initial evidence from Melbourne indicates that the city's vacant home tax has been less effective at reducing the number of vacant homes compared to Vancouver, a self-reported declaration mechanism may be less effective than the mandatory declaration method at achieving the goals of the tax.

Ottawa

Background of tax

Just as in many other Canadian jurisdictions, Ottawa has been experiencing worsening housing affordability in recent years and implemented various initiatives such as a VHT to combat affordability issues. Ottawa's housing market has been largely consistent with broader Ontario trends, with rapidly increasing house and rent prices over the previous 5 to 10 years. In 2022, the average home sale price in Ottawa reached approximately \$830,000,¹⁸⁸ an 88% increase from pre-pandemic price levels of \$440,000 in 2019 and a 130% increase from the 2014 average of \$361,707.¹⁸⁹ Ottawa rental prices have also rapidly grown. Between 2016 and 2018, average rents for one and two-bedroom apartments grew by 7.4% and 7.9% respectively.¹⁹⁰ These prices have continued to grow and skyrocketed since the pandemic. Between 2018 and 2021, average rents for one and two-bedroom apartments increased by 36% and 51.5% respectively.¹⁹¹ In contrast, median household incomes in Ottawa have only grown by 2% since 2019 and 10.4% since 2016.¹⁹²

As a result of the housing and income trends in Ottawa, the city is facing an affordability crisis. The waitlist for affordable housing in Ottawa has grown by 14.8% since 2017 to over 12,000 people.¹⁹³ To afford a two-bedroom apartment in Ottawa, a person needs to make at least \$38 an hour, which is over \$13 greater than the Ontario minimum wage.¹⁹⁴ In response, Ottawa declared a housing and homelessness emergency in January 2020, becoming the first Canadian city to do so.¹⁹⁵ This declaration was followed by several policy initiatives aimed at improving affordability, such as a Ottawa's Vacant Unit Tax (VUT) that was passed by city council in May 2022.¹⁹⁶

Definition of vacant home

Ottawa's VUT defines a vacant home as a property in the residential tax class that has been left unoccupied for more than 184 days in a calendar year.¹⁹⁷ The tax excludes commercial, industrial and multi-residential properties and does not apply to principal residences, tenanted properties, or properties occupied by a family member, friend, or other resident using it as their principal residence.¹⁹⁸

Acceptable exemptions to the VUT include:

- Major renovations;
- Change in ownership;
- Death of owner;
- Seasonal property (e.g., a cottage); and
- Property is under court order.

¹⁸⁸ (Cusack, 2022)

¹⁸⁹ (Agent in Ottawa, 2022)

¹⁹⁰ (Prism Economics and Analysis, 2019)

¹⁹¹ (Pringle, 2022)

¹⁹² (Invest Ottawa, 2022)

¹⁹³ (Osman, 2020)

¹⁹⁴ Uses CMHC's measure of 30% of income spent on housing to represent affordability.

¹⁹⁵ (Osman, 2020)

¹⁹⁶ (City of Ottawa, 2022)

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

Administration method

The Ottawa VUT will be administered through a mandatory declaration method. Ottawa homeowners are required to annually declare to the City if their home is vacant and if any exemptions apply if their property was vacant.¹⁹⁹ Late declarations may be charged a \$250 fee.²⁰⁰ The City will also conduct periodic audits of houses to confirm the accuracy of declarations. If a homeowner is found to have falsely declared their property following an audit, they will be subject to a fine of between \$500 and \$10,000.²⁰¹ Homeowners would retain the right to challenge any penalties through established dispute resolution bodies.²⁰² Additionally, the VUT has been set at a rate of 1% of the property's assessed value.²⁰³

Impact of tax

The City of Ottawa has outlined that the primary objective of the VUT is to return vacant homes to the market for rent or sale, while any revenue that is generated is treated as a secondary benefit. Nonetheless, the City has forecasted that a 1% VUT will on average, generate \$6.6 million annually.²⁰⁴ This forecast is based on the estimate that 0.5% of Ottawa's 330,000 eligible units will be subject to the tax.²⁰⁵ Start-up costs are estimated to be \$3.9 million over the first 2.5 years, with eight full-time employees and five temporary employees. Annual long-term operating costs are estimated to be \$1.4 million. After accounting for costs, average annual net revenues are estimated to be \$5.2 million, all of which will be invested towards affordable housing initiatives.²⁰⁶

Applicability to York Region

Ottawa's decision to implement the VUT demonstrates that a VHT is increasingly being viewed by municipalities as a key policy initiative for improving housing affordability. Although Ottawa's housing market has been strong in recent years, the city has not experienced the same growth rates as the GTA or Vancouver jurisdictions and does not have the same levels of population density. Nonetheless, Ottawa has recognized the affordability issues its residents face and has pursued initiatives such as a VHT to improve this issue. Therefore, Ottawa demonstrates that a VHT does not need to be limited to the most extreme jurisdictions. Additionally, Ottawa's VUT is largely consistent with the VHTs of other Canadian jurisdictions, illustrating that the general framework of the tax is viewed as effective.

Paris

Background of the tax

The City of Paris introduced a tax on vacant residential units in 2015. The tax was introduced in an effort to reduce the prevalence of vacant residences in Paris, a long-standing public policy objective of local government. Over the 15-year period leading up to 2017, the number of unoccupied homes within Paris increased by approximately 43%.²⁰⁷ According to one estimate, there were more than 100,000 vacant residential properties in Paris – approximately 10% of all residential homes. It was found that 40,000 vacant

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ (City of Ottawa, 2022)

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ (Porier, 2017)

units had even been disconnected from the electrical grid – implying that the properties were purely owned for speculative purposes. The issue was most prevalent in Paris’s most popular neighbourhoods.²⁰⁸

The tax rate was originally set at 20% of the annual fair market value of rent for the taxable property. The introduction of the tax in 2015 was met with opposition from real estate agents and property developers. By 2017, the original tax rate of 20% was increased to 60% of the fair market value of rent, as it was perceived as not having had the desired effect of enticing owners of vacant properties to either rent or sell their properties.²⁰⁹ Some media outlets have reported that the government is considering additional increases to the tax rate to as high as 250%.²¹⁰ Deputy Mayor of Paris Ian Brossard, whose mandate includes housing in Paris, had stated that the goal of the tax was to eliminate “richer people’s ghettos”.²¹¹ Increasing the availability of housing was also in line with the government’s commitment to build more social housing across Paris.²¹²

Although specific revenue figures from the tax have not been released, the introduction of the higher 60% tax rate is expected to generate an additional CAD \$63 million annually, which will fund affordable housing projects within Paris. In addition to the vacancy tax, Paris also introduced caps on rent increases in 2016, and a tourist tax for residences using short term rental services such as Airbnb.²¹³

Definition of a vacant home

Dwellings that are subject to the vacancy tax include those that have:

- been proven to be vacant and habitable for longer than one year;
- been vacant and habitable on January 1 of the tax year and January 1 of the previous year; and
- not been occupied for more than 90 consecutive days.

Dwellings that were occupied for more than three months, while exempt from the vacancy tax, are subject to applicable homeowner taxes.²¹⁴ In addition, only dwellings for residential use are taxable. A dwelling is presumed to have a residential use if it is enclosed, covered, and provided with basic comfort (electricity, running water, and sanitary services). Dwellings requiring major work (representing approximately one quarter of the value of the dwelling, or greater) to become habitable are not impacted by the tax.²¹⁵

Dwellings that are exempt from the tax include:

- those whose vacancy is involuntary (as a result of an inability to find an occupant);
- those that are occupied for at least 90 consecutive days during the year;
- those which are furnished accommodation held as a secondary residence and subject to housing tax; and
- illegally occupied accommodation (i.e. squats).²¹⁶

The amount to be paid by property owners for the tax is determined by the annual fair market value of rent of the property. For example, if the annual fair market value of rent for a property was \$36,000 (rent of \$3,000 per month), the owner would be required to pay an annual tax equal to \$21,600 (60% of \$36,000). An additional management fee of 9% is then added to the payable amount.

²⁰⁸ (Mason, 2017)

²⁰⁹ (Hopkins, 2017)

²¹⁰ (This Paris Life, 2019)

²¹¹ (Gréco, 2016)

²¹² (City of Paris, 2019)

²¹³ (Mason, 2017)

²¹⁴ (Impot Sur le Revenu, 2015)

²¹⁵ (Jurifiable, 2020)

²¹⁶ (Jurifiable, 2020)

Impact of the tax on the housing market

In an effort to incentivize homeowners to rent their vacant properties, the City of Paris introduced benefits in 2015 for owners who put their properties onto the rental market through a system known as Multiloc. Owners who utilize the system receive:

- an entry bonus of €2,000;
- a beautification and restoration bonus of €2,000 to €3,000 for accommodations that were vacant for less than six months, and €9,000 to €11,000 for accommodations that were vacant for more than six months; and
- a guarantee of unpaid rents up to €400.

In return, the owner must agree to rent the property for 20% below the reference median rent in the neighbourhood.²¹⁷ In order to qualify, owners are required to use a real estate agency that is part of Multiloc for a minimum of three years. Additionally, homes must:

- be bigger than 14m²;
- be vacant for over a month;
- be located within Paris;
- be an empty, furnished, or shared rental property; and
- be habitable (and meet associated habitability criteria).

Public opinion

Critics of the Multiloc system have argued that the incentives are not high enough to entice behaviour changes of owners in the lucrative Parisian market. Critics have also noted that real estate agents have not adequately promoted the program to potential renters – an element critical for the program's success.²¹⁸

Applicability to York Region

While there are a number of differences in the political, legal, and social compositions between York Region and Paris, there are nonetheless lessons to be learned from Paris. Paris' current high housing density has narrowed the policy options available to Government in addressing housing affordability (such as increasing supply through construction). As York Region becomes increasingly dense, Paris serves as a look at a potential future-state for the York Region and an opportunity to explore the impact of high-density housing policies. Additionally, the Paris case study demonstrates that more aggressive tax rates may be required to achieve desired effects within the market.

New York

Background of the tax

In recent years, New York City has been experiencing a notable increase in 'pied-à-terres' (i.e., an extremely small living unit that is generally not used as a primary residence and is often used as a commuter home) and short-term vacation rental units. Since 2015, the New York City has seen an increase of nearly 20,000 such units, bringing the total number to approximately 2.1% of all available housing in New York City. More broadly, vacant units that were unavailable for rent due to occasional, seasonal, or recreational use totaled 75,000 units in 2017.²¹⁹

²¹⁷ (Lodgis, 2020)

²¹⁸ (Thépot, 2016)

²¹⁹ (United States Census Bureau, 2018)

In an effort to address the availability of affordable housing, New York City explored the implementation of a ‘pied-à-terre’ tax on luxury second homes. The objective of the tax was to generate revenue which would be used to help fund public transit in New York City.

The implementation of the tax gained momentum in 2019 following media reports detailing the sale of a USD \$238 million apartment (to be used as a secondary home) in New York City. The movement was met with support with elected state officials, who drafted a bill aimed at addressing vacant secondary homes. However, once the bill became public, the real estate industry lobbied against it. Ultimately the government abandoned the tax. Instead, the government is exploring the introduction of a one-time fee on all real estate transactions over USD \$3 million (although the exact threshold is still under review).²²⁰

There is disagreement among officials around how much revenue might be generated through a one-time fee as opposed to an annual tax. Some officials estimate that the one-time fee might generate between USD \$300 million and \$400 million. In comparison, initial estimates indicated that the ‘pied-à-terre’ tax would generate anywhere between USD \$370 million to \$650 million, annually.²²¹ New York City has not yet implemented either of the aforementioned programs.

Applicability to York Region

Although New York has not implemented a VHT, the city demonstrates that ‘pied-à-terres’ (i.e., commuter homes) and short-term rentals can exacerbate local vacancy rates. Although commuter homes may not yet be relevant for York Region, growing populations and proximity to Toronto may necessitate such considerations in time. As such, this case study can help inform York Region on potential considerations and/or exemptions to include or not to include in a VHT.

London

Background of the tax

London has long faced what is considered to be a ‘housing crisis’.²²² The number of empty homes across England has increased for the second consecutive year to more than 216,000 (the highest level since 2012). Particularly, vacant homes in London have seen a notable increase of 11%, totaling 22,481 properties – valued at over £10.7bn.²²³

Since 2013, Councils in London have had the ability to impose a punitive ‘empty homes premium’ of an additional 50% in property taxes on homes left vacant for more than two years in the city.²²⁴ However, this policy has proven to be difficult to enforce, as homeowners are not obligated to report the occupational status of their properties.²²⁵ In an effort to address the shortcomings of the policy, the premium was raised to 100% in 2019. Further changes were implemented in 2020, with the introduction of a 200% premium to be applied to properties that have been left vacant for more than 5 years.²²⁶ However, critics have argued that the change is still unlikely to lead to the sale or rental of the properties in question, as the overall increase to the annual property taxes is considered to be relatively small.²²⁷

Councils can charge up to double the amount of their Council Tax if a home has been empty for two or more years (unless the property is an annexe or the owner is in the armed forces). Each Council has the ability to

²²⁰ (Wang, 2019)

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² (Dubiski, 2019)

²²³ (Kollewe, 2019)

²²⁴ (Barking & Dagenham, 2020)

²²⁵ (Pegg, 2016)

²²⁶ (Barking & Dagenham, 2020)

²²⁷ (Brown, 2017)

determine criteria for discounts to the additional tax, and if an owner would qualify for said discounts. To receive an exemption, homes need to remain empty and fall under one of the following criteria:

- The property is being sold on behalf of an owner who's died as long as the property is unoccupied;
- The owner is in prison (excluding for not paying a fine or Council Tax);
- The owner has moved into a care home or hospital;
- The property has been repossessed;
- The property cannot be lived in by law (i.e., if the property is derelict);
- The property is a compulsory purchase and will be demolished;²²⁸ or
- The Property is left by a member of the armed services, who is away from their property as a result of their services.²²⁹

Homes undergoing major repair work or structural changes are eligible for an exemption. The property exemption is only valid until a 'completion notice' is sent by the Council.²³⁰

The low-use and vacant properties are primarily concentrated in small, desirable areas across the city, most notably the London boroughs of Chelsea and Kensington.²³¹ The value of low-use properties in the Chelsea and Kensington has been estimated at £21 billion. Overall, researchers estimate that in England and Wales, 39-47% of the population lives in an area where low-use properties are more expensive than permanently occupied homes. Based on the estimates and current council tax base, changing the taxation to an empty homes tax of 1% of the fair market value of the home (similar to the policy implemented in Vancouver) could raise an additional £1.2 billion in taxes which is equivalent to 11% of the council tax currently collected in those areas. In London more specifically, the tax would raise an additional £2,100 per resident – the equivalent to 260% of current council tax in Chelsea and Kensington.²³²

Research by the University College of London argues that building new homes is not the solution to London's housing availability and affordability challenges, as increased supply is likely to lead to additional speculative property investments. Instead, the authors suggest that the government should focus on implementing a one percent tax on second homes within the city.²³³ The researchers argue that the tax has the potential to generate considerable new revenue for local authorities, while encouraging the renting or sale of vacant properties.²³⁴

Applicability to York Region

Similar to Melbourne, the London case study indicates that a voluntary reporting mechanism for vacant homes is less effective than a mandatory declaration, as fewer homeowners report vacancy. As a result, a voluntary reporting mechanism will likely bring fewer vacant homes back to the market and require more resources for enforcement.

²²⁸ (Government of UK, 2020)

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ (Knapton, 2019)

²³² (Springer, 2019)

²³³ (Bourne, 2019)

²³⁴ (Knapton, 2019)

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York Region VHT

A REVIEW OF
HOUSING MARKET
CONDITIONS WITHIN
YORK REGION

PREPARED FOR THE
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF YORK

AUGUST 24, 2022



Disclaimer

This report has been prepared by KPMG LLP (“KPMG”) for the **Regional Municipality of York** (the “Client”) pursuant to the terms of our engagement agreement dated April 29, 2022 (the “Engagement Agreement”).

Our review was based on research and analysis of publicly available sources and data, Region-provided information, and select stakeholder consultations.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| DISCLAIMER | I |
| INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| HOUSING MARKET CONDITIONS | 4 |
| APPENDIX A - REFERENCES | 11 |

Introduction

In October 2021, the Regional Municipality of York (“York Region” or the “Region”) Council directed staff to prepare a report on the feasibility and public benefits of implementing a Vacant Homes Tax (VHT). At the time, the City of Toronto was moving forward with the implementation of a VHT, while Halton Region and Peel Region were studying their own VHTs. In 2017, the Province of Ontario introduced amendments to the Municipal Act. This legislation granted designated municipalities the ability to implement an “Optional Tax on Vacant Residential Units” subject to designation by the Minister of Finance.

Should a municipality decide to pass a by-law, it could “...impose a tax in the municipality on the assessed value, as determined under the Assessment Act, of vacant units that are classified in the residential property class and that are taxable under that Act for municipal purposes.”

The two key requirements of the by-law are that it state:

1. the tax rate; and
2. the conditions of vacancy that, if met, make a unit subject to the tax.

In October 2021, York Region Committee of the Whole¹ requested that a report be brought forward to further analyze the feasibility of implementing a VHT in York Region.

In April 2022, to support the ongoing work of the Region, the Region engaged KPMG to perform independent research and provide evidence-based advice on issues related to the Region’s consideration and potential implementation of a VHT.

This report provides an overview of the current housing market conditions within York Region based on available market information. This is intended to be a supplemental assessment to provide York Region with additional context and data relating to the current housing market in the Region. Given the growing challenges around housing affordability within York Region, across the GTHA, and throughout the Province, it is important that all reasonable policy avenues that seek to increase housing affordability be explored by all levels of government. One of these options available to municipalities is a VHT, which can serve to increase housing supply while providing a revenue stream to support other housing initiatives. A subsequent report has been developed by KPMG on the feasibility and public benefits of implementing a VHT.

¹ The Committee of the Whole comprises of all members of Regional Council.

Housing Market Conditions

A recent survey commissioned by KPMG Canada found that increasing housing prices and rising personal debt are making it extremely difficult for many people to afford a home. The survey included 2,500 Canadians, including 1,000 millennials between the ages of 23 and 38 who now represent the largest population generation in the country.

Key findings were:

- 72% of millennials say their goal is to own a home, while 46% say home ownership will likely be unattainable;
- 42% of millennial homeowners received a financial boost from their parents in order to purchase a home; and
- 38% of those surveyed believe that their house won't be worth as much in the future as it is today.

In addition to the perceived challenges of home ownership, Canadian household debt has reached record highs over the past 30 years, with an average debt-to-income ratio of 183%, primarily as a result of mortgage debt.²

Additionally, although recent increases in interest rates have created a dampening effect on housing prices, they do not address the issue of housing affordability. The increase in associated financing costs of home ownership mean that housing remains unaffordable, while underlying housing supply challenges still remain.

The combination of rising house prices, increasingly high levels of personal debt, and incomes that limit the dream of home ownership for many individuals and families presents a pressing public policy challenge with respect to housing.

The remainder of this report focuses on trends observed in the housing and rental markets in the GTA and York Region.

York Region home ownership market conditions

York Region is home to the second largest tech cluster in all of Canada and the third largest business community in Ontario. Located in the heart of the Greater Toronto Area (“GTA”), York Region is one of the fastest growing communities within Ontario. That success fuels growth. It has led to significant population growth, sustained economic growth and an historic residential development boom. Since 2016, York Region’s population has increased by over 63,000 new residents.³ From 2012 to 2021, over 15,000 new residents arrived each year. York Region anticipates approximately 25,000 new residents annually, with nearly 500,000 new residents by 2041 and over 800,000 new residents by 2051. These new residents need spaces to live.⁴

From 2016 to 2021, over 42,500 residential units were completed in York Region.⁵ Approximately 47,000 units are currently reported as draft approved, registered or have received Ministers Zoning Order applications. In addition, over 75,000 potential residential units are currently under review by York Region and its nine local

² (Statistics Canada, 2022)

³ (KPMG LLP, 2019)

⁴ (Statistics Canada, 2022)

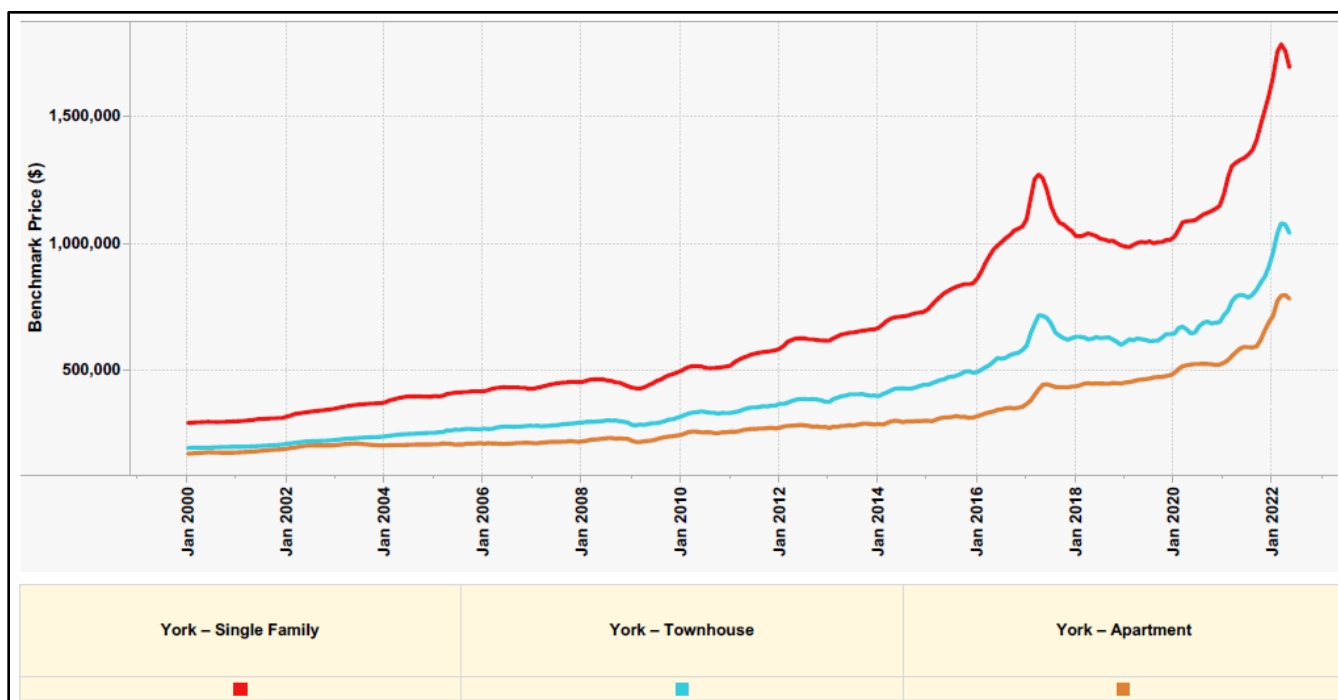
⁵ (Statistics Canada, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017 & 2016)

municipalities.⁶ While this growth in population will have economic benefits to the Region, it also presents significant impacts on housing availability and affordability.

Housing prices in York Region reached record highs in March 2022, with a reported benchmark price of \$1,571,900 in York Region based on the MLS Home Price Index (HPI). The benchmark indicates a growth in the average home price by over 160% over the last 10 years.⁷ When comparing prices today to those from over 20 years ago, home prices in York Region are more than five times higher.

The MLS HPI is calculated using a sophisticated statistical model that takes into account a home's quantitative (e.g., the number of rooms it has) and qualitative (e.g., whether it has a finished basement) features. The MLS HPI traditionally is less volatile than average and median measures, which can swing dramatically in response to changes in the number of very expensive or inexpensive home sales from one time period to the next. The MLS HPI is based on the value home buyers assign to various housing attributes, which tend to evolve gradually over time. It therefore provides an "apples to apples" comparison of home prices across the entire country.⁸ A visual representation of trends in sale prices (based on HPI) in York Region for different categories of homes between the years 2000 and 2022 is shown in Figure 1. As indicated in the graph, there has been a significant increase in benchmark prices for single family homes since 2010 and a marked increase in the benchmark price for townhouses and condominiums/apartments since 2016. Recent declines in prices for all structure types (as shown in 2022) may be as a result of increases in interest rates.

Figure 1: Trends in York Region housing prices⁹



In Ontario the size of new housing is changing. As housing prices increase, homeowners are increasingly buying smaller units. In turn developers are building a larger proportion of one- and two-bedroom units — typically condominiums. Using Toronto as an example, one- and two-bedroom units accounted for 77% of all housing completions in the City of Toronto between 1998 and 2018.¹⁰ While not as significant as what was observed in Toronto, apartments and other unit types (e.g., stacked townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, double

⁶ (York Region Housing Affordability Task Force, 2022)

⁷ (MLS Home Price Index - Toronto Real Estate Board, 2022)

⁸ (Toronto Real Estate Board, 2022)

⁹ (Toronto Real Estate Board, 2022)

¹⁰ (Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis and Canadian Urban Institute, 2019)

duplexes and row duplexes) accounted for approximately 40% of completions in York Region from 2016 to 2021.¹¹

In York Region, the housing mix is predominantly comprised of single-family dwellings. Figure 2 summarizes the housing mix presented in the 2021 Year in Review from York Region Economic Development, which is based upon data sources from Statistics Canada and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC):

Figure 2: December 2021 York Region housing mix¹²

| York Region | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Type | Estimated Households (2021) | % of Total |
| Single | 240,807 | 61.0% |
| Semi-Detached | 23,053 | 5.8% |
| Row/Townhouse | 52,481 | 13.3% |
| Duplex | 15,160 | 3.8% |
| Condo/Apartment | 62,982 | 16.0% |
| Total | 394,483 | 100% |

Although the housing mix is predominantly comprised of single-family dwellings, 2021 housing starts in York Region indicated that 62% of the starts were apartment and other structures, which is higher than the percentage of completions observed from 2016 to 2021 as referenced above.¹³ As Figure 2 indicates, condos and apartments were estimated to represent approximately 16% of the total housing stock at the end of 2021.¹⁴ This is expected to increase to 19% by 2031 and 27% by 2051.¹⁵

While the demand for high-density residential units increases, the size of single-family homes in York Region has actually moved counter to that trend with the average size of homes increasing since 2006. The average new construction single family home was 2,770 square feet in 2006 and has increased to 3,870 square feet in 2021. This is a trend observed in York Region across semi-detached homes and townhouses as well.

With this change in demand and housing type, it will be important for the Region to monitor the housing market over the coming years to ensure that there is an appropriate mix of housing that achieves the demands of residents in the Region.

York Region rental market conditions

In addition to rising housing prices, York Region is experiencing very low levels of rental vacancies which is contributing to substantial increases in rental rates. According to CMHC's 2021 Rental Market Report, the rate of residential rental vacancy in York Region was 1.8%, down slightly from 1.9% in 2020.¹⁶ This is higher than pre-COVID levels. Between 2015 and 2019 rental vacancy rates tended to range between 1.1% and 1.6%.

Vacancy rates for purpose built rental units with a monthly rental rate below \$1,250 have also remained quite low. For example, apartments and row homes with a rental rate of between \$1,000 and \$1,250 demonstrate a weighted average vacancy rate of 1.7%. Homes in this price range are typically considered to be affordable for households with incomes up to \$50,000. Approximately 24% of households in York Region make less than \$50,000.¹⁷

¹¹ (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2021)

¹² (York Region Economic Development, 2021)

¹³ (Statistics Canada, 2021)

¹⁴ Condominiums/apartments represented approximately 12% of York Region's housing stock in 2001.

¹⁵ (York Region and Watson's & Associates Economics Ltd., 2021)

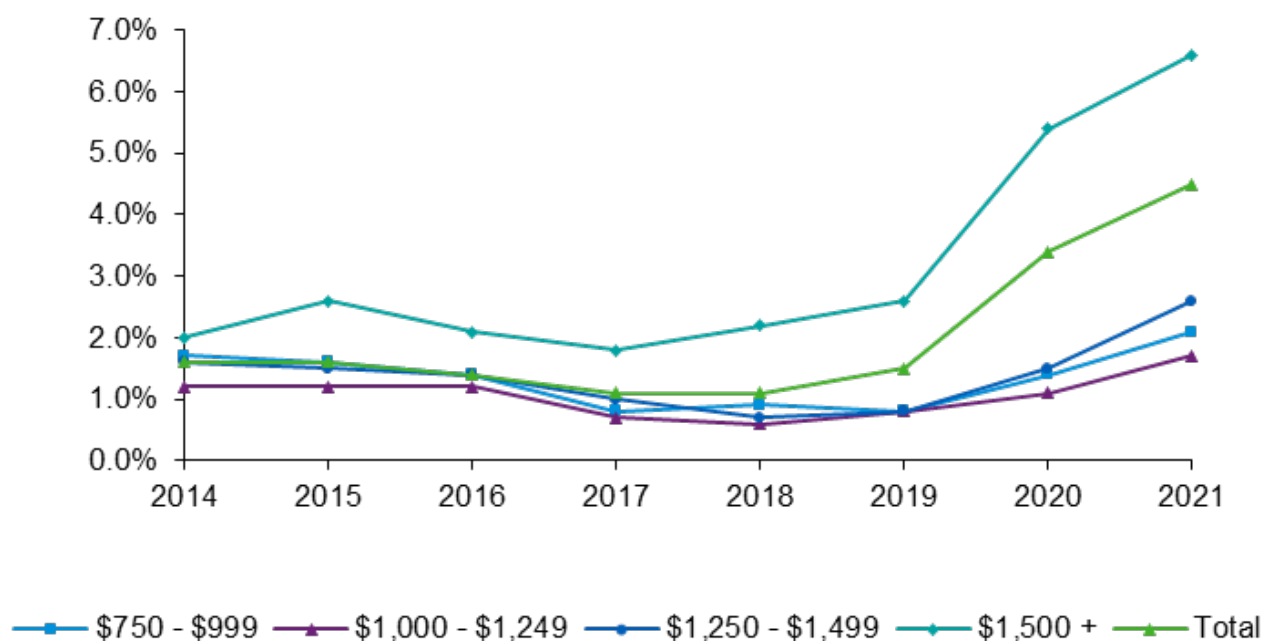
¹⁶ (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2021)

¹⁷ (York Region, 2016)

Condominium vacancy rates tend to be lower still. Condominiums are typically newer and with a greater range of amenities than purpose-built rental apartments. This drives generally higher rents and lower vacancy rates for condominium rental apartments. According to CMHC data, average condominium apartment rents were approximately 45% higher than purpose-built market rentals in the GTA in 2021, while vacancy rates for condominium rental markets were approximately 1.6% - statistically unchanged from the year prior.¹⁸

Figure 3 shows the vacancy rate over time by rental value.

Figure 3: York Region residential rental vacancy rate by rent range¹⁹



Low levels of vacancy typically mean that the real estate market cannot operate efficiently or effectively. Numerous renters are pursuing a limited supply of rental properties which will drive prices upwards. Furthermore, insufficient rental stock on the market fails to provide renters with a variety of housing choices or to facilitate changes in housing type when families' housing needs change. Housing advocates consider a healthy level of vacancy in the rental market to be around 3%.²⁰

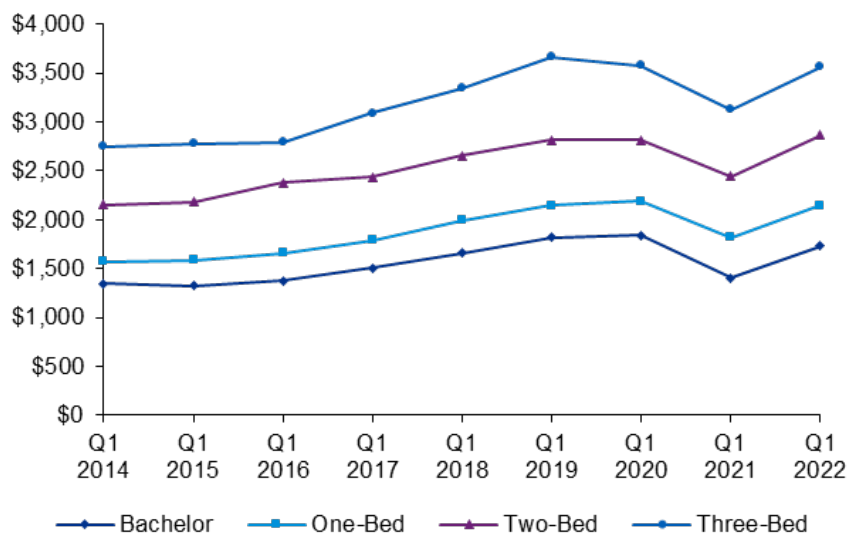
Average market rents in York Region have also increased steadily over the past few years. Although data specific to York Region is unavailable, data for the overall GTA shows substantial increases in average monthly rents for apartments between 2021 and 2022. Rents for bachelor, one-bed, two-bed, and three-bed apartments have increased by 23.2%, 17.9%, 17.2% and 13.9%, respectively between Q1 2021 and Q1 2022 in the GTA.²¹ Since 2014, rents for all apartment sizes within the GTA have grown by approximately 34%. Figure 4 provides an overview of average annual market rents within the GTA.

¹⁸ (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2022)

¹⁹ (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2021)

²⁰ (Ryerson City Building Institute, 2017)

²¹ (Rental Market Report - Toronto Real Estate Board, 2022)

Figure 4: Average Market Rent by Year for GTA Apartments²²

Trends in York Region population and home ownership

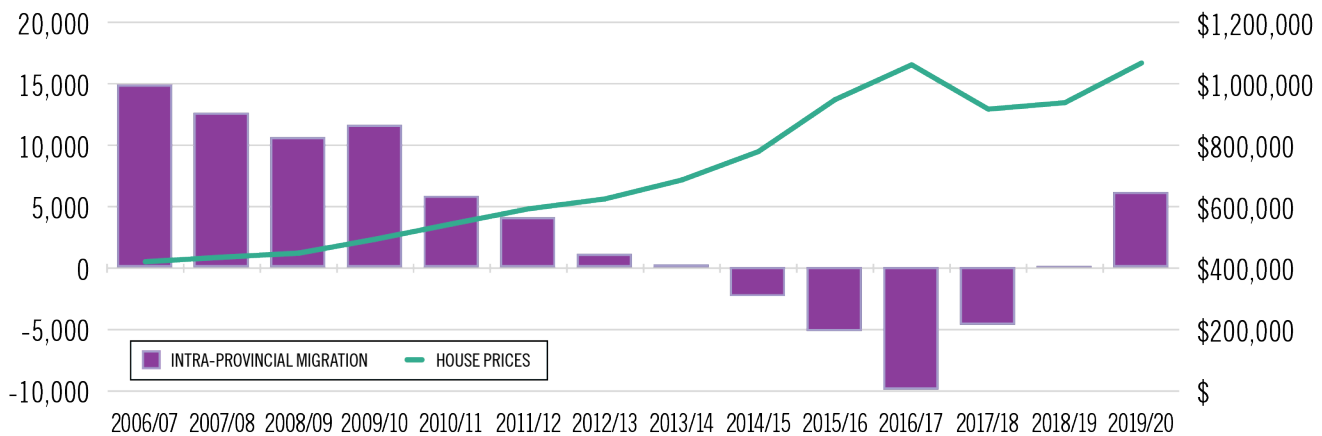
Recent population estimates show that York Region's population continues to grow. However, the net intra-provincial population change (that is, population change within the Province of Ontario) for York Region was negative, representing a decrease of upwards of 10,000 people from 2014 to 2019, which is highly correlated to resale house prices in York Region. This means that upwards of 10,000 people left York Region for other locations in Ontario compared to the amount of people that moved from other locations in Ontario to York Region. This corresponds with a significant increase in housing prices within the Region over the same time period. The largest source of population growth for York Region was from net immigration with upwards of 10,000 people, followed by natural increase upwards of 6,000 people between 2014 and 2019. In 2020, there was an increase in net-intra-provincial population growth within York Region, however it is unclear if this was attributable to COVID-19 and the limited movement in general or other factors. As data for other years is made available, it may become clear if 2020 was an anomaly or a new trend.

Figure 5 below shows York Region's net intra-provincial population relative to rising housing costs between 2006 and 2020.²³

²² (Rental Market Report - Toronto Real Estate Board, 2022)

²³ (York Region Growth and Development Review, 2019)

Figure 5: York Region net intra-provincial population change and average resale house prices²⁴



Source: Statistics Canada and York Region, Corporate Services, Long Range Planning

Affordability gaps present a significant challenge to York Region. According to census data, the median household income grew by only 17% between 2006 and 2016, or approximately 1.7% per year. Meanwhile, the median monthly shelter costs for rented dwellings²⁵ increased by 146% over the same period, or approximately 14.6% per year.²⁶ As the cost of housing continues to increase more rapidly than average income, so too does the affordability gap for York Region residents. The Canadian Rental Housing Index, a database that compiles rental housing statistics for cities, regions, and provinces across Canada, indicated about 27% of renters in York Region spend 50% or more of their income on housing costs.²⁷ This level of spending is significantly higher than the 30% value that has traditionally been viewed as the benchmark for housing affordability and represents a serious affordability issue for York Region and the GTA.

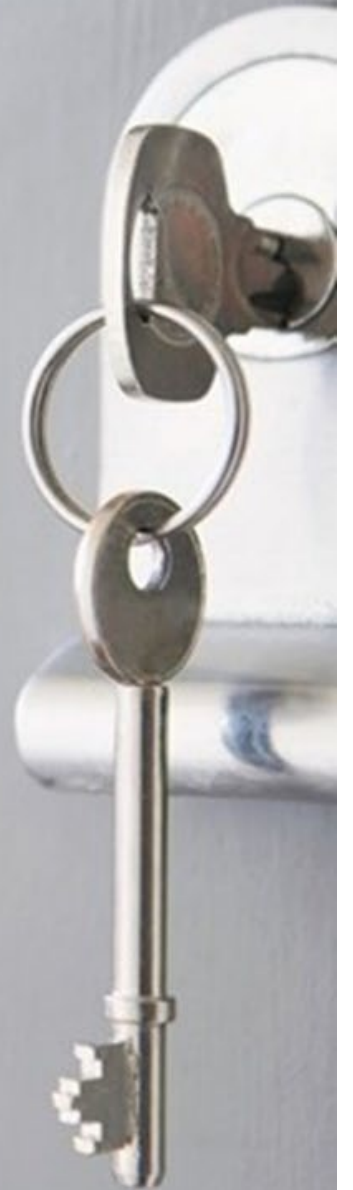
²⁴ (York Region Growth and Development Review, 2019)

²⁵ Statistics Canada defines monthly shelter costs for rented dwellings as the average monthly total of all shelter expenses paid by households that rent their dwelling, including the rent paid and the costs of electricity, heat, water and other municipal services.

²⁶ (Statistics Canada, 2016)

²⁷ (BC Non-Profit Housing Association, 2016)

Appendices



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York Region

Evaluating a Vacant Homes Tax

What We Heard Report

August 10, 2022



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| 1.0 Introduction | 2 |
| 1.1 Project Description | 2 |
| 1.2 About this Report | 3 |
| 1.3 Consultation Process Overview | 3 |
| Project Goal | 3 |
| Consultation Goals | 3 |
| 2.0 Consultation Process | 4 |
| 2.1 Online Survey & Project Website | 4 |
| 2.2 Stakeholder Meetings | 5 |
| 2.3 Public Meetings | 6 |
| 3.0 Consultation Findings | 7 |
| 3.1 Online Survey | 7 |
| 3.2 Stakeholder Meetings | 11 |
| 3.3 Public Meetings | 13 |
| 4.0 Consultation: Next Steps | 17 |
| For Further Discussion | 17 |
| APPENDIX A: Survey Questions | 21 |
| APPENDIX B: Overall Survey Results | 31 |
| APPENDIX C: Survey Results by Respondent Segments | 162 |
| APPENDIX D: Comments and Questions from the BILD & Development Community Stakeholder Meeting | 184 |
| APPENDIX E: Comments and Questions from the Local Municipal Housing Working Group Stakeholder Meeting | 188 |
| APPENDIX F: Comments and Questions from Public Meetings | 203 |

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Description

York Region is expected to see rapid growth and is actively working to shape a more liveable and inclusive community. The Region's economy attracts development, economic activity and investment which impact the supply of an adequate housing mix to meet differing needs—physical, social and economic. The Regional Council recognizes the need to take action to address the housing affordability crisis to serve the Region's current and future residents and is actively exploring innovative methods to begin to mitigate these housing challenges.

The introduction of a Vacant Homes Tax (VHT) is one possible approach to mitigating some of these housing challenges identified in *The York Region Innovative Housing Options to Support Affordable Housing Report*, (January 2020) and was an initiative under *Ontario's Fair Housing Plan*, (2017). It is aimed at addressing housing concerns through unlocking additional housing supply. A tax on vacant homes incentivizes owners to rent or sell their home, and disincentivizes real estate speculation.

In October 2021, Regional Council directed staff to explore the feasibility of a VHT. They also directed that any revenues from a VHT, net of costs, be used to support affordable housing initiatives.

KPMG was retained in May 2022 to support the Region with a comprehensive assessment of the feasibility of implementing a VHT. A core element of the scope of work associated with the feasibility assessment of a VHT was a robust stakeholder engagement process that involved several outreach sessions and approaches. PROCESS, as a part of the KPMG team, is supporting the project team with strategic public and stakeholder consultation.

1.2 About this Report

This report is a summary of what was heard during the public consultation and stakeholder engagement process for the potential implementation of a VHT between June 2022 and July 2022. The consultation included stakeholder meetings, public meetings and a public survey, which are outlined in [Section 2.0](#) of this report.

Across our consultation activities, the sizeable majority of participants were in favour of the VHT and the purpose of disincentivizing real estate speculation. Most

participants support the idea of using tax revenue to fund affordable housing initiatives. To see details about consultation findings, see [Section 3.0](#) of this report.

1.3 Consultation Process Overview

Project Goal

York Region's objective for a VHT is to improve availability and affordability of homes by incentivizing owners of vacant properties to rent or sell their residential properties/units. This engagement analyzes the feasibility of implementing such a tax and serves to inform the potential development of a bylaw. Following the assessment, York Region may seek 'designation' from the Province to levy a VHT in the Region, which could begin as early as Q1 2023.

Consultation Goals

Consultation is a critical interface between York Region, local residents, property owners and all other stakeholders. The Region understands the importance of consultation as it explores 'designation' for a VHT bylaw. Consultation aims to purposefully engage the public and key stakeholders to provide feedback and input, at appropriate times throughout the project in support of the broader project goal.

Consultation seeks to:

- Provide tools and mechanisms to keep the public and stakeholders informed and educated, with ongoing sharing of project information and opportunities to provide input or feedback.
- Create opportunities for engagement to support discovery, further inform the research and provide relevant local context to develop a regionally specific tax bylaw.
- Generate community and stakeholder support and gauge buy-in for the implementation of a VHT.

2.0 Consultation Process

Consultation is an important opportunity for local residents and key stakeholders to interface with York Region and inform the development and implementation of a VHT that considers local needs and context.

The purpose of the following consultation activities were to:

- Gauge the level of public support for the potential implementation of a VHT.
- Invite feedback and input from residents to inform the implementation of a VHT.
- Learn more about resident priorities.
- Learn more about residential property vacancies.
- Identify potential impacts a VHT might have on the building and development industry in York Region.
- Discuss potentially integrating the VHT administration into existing Regional and municipal processes.
- Inform the development of the tax policy, bylaw and approach to implementation and revenue allocation.

2.1 Online Survey & Project Website

A project website was created to act as an information hub, providing context and education about a VHT, sharing project details and updates. This website (www.york.ca/vacanthomestax) also hosted the project's online survey, which was developed to collect the public's thoughts about the potential implementation of a VHT in York Region. Public surveys are important tools, especially in a diverse area like York Region, as they are accessible by a wide audience. The public survey was live on the project website from June 23, 2022 to July 13, 2022. A total of 2,751 respondents took the survey.

Respondents were provided an overview of the project and the VHT. Those who indicated they were residents of York Region were asked about their residential property, tenancy, occupancy and within which municipality they reside, to learn more about the various perspectives. To disaggregate the data, respondents demographic information was collected to better understand and identify any key differences in the core experiences of specific respondents. All respondents were asked questions regarding the VHT implementation including their general level of support, revenue allocation, potential exemptions and methods of identifying a vacant home. See [Appendix A](#) for the survey questions and [Appendix B](#) for survey results.

As mentioned, a total of 2,751 respondents took the survey (**on a per capita basis, this response rate was equivalent to that of the City of Toronto’s VHT survey**). Survey respondents were grouped into several segments. Some segments represent a small proportion of respondents but they provide nuance, perspectives and experiences that the project team were particularly interested in. See [Appendix B](#) for more information regarding survey results and survey respondent segments.

NOTE TO READER: Survey participants were provided an option to self-identity for some demographic questions as they see fit or omit a response altogether. **There is a 2% margin of error and 95% confidence level.** The confidence level indicates the level of reliability regarding a measure and means if the same survey were to be repeated 100 times under the same conditions, 95 times out of 100 the measure would lie somewhere within the margin of error.

2.2 Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder Meeting: BILD & Development Community

We engaged a group from the development community at a virtual meeting hosted by the Building Industry and Land Development Association - York Chapter (BILD) on July 5, 2022. Following a presentation about the tax and potential considerations for its implementation, a Q&A and discussion was held.

There were 16 participants from BILD — including BILD staff, consultants, builders and developers from across the Region.

Stakeholder Meeting: Local Municipal Housing Working Group

York Region’s Local Municipal Housing Working Group participated in a VHT consultation meeting. The meeting began with a presentation about the project and the project components up for discussion:

- Should the Region implement a VHT?
- Identification mechanisms
- Vacancy duration
- Potential exemptions
- Potential tax rates
- Revenue sharing
- Revenue use
- Implementation models

Following the presentation, the Working Group was dispersed into three breakout rooms to allow participants a chance to further discuss in smaller groups.

There were 52 members of the York Region/Local Municipal Housing Working Group in attendance at the stakeholder meeting. They were staff from York Region and its nine municipalities, and included Planning Directors and Commissioners, planners, housing staff, Area Treasurers, tax staff, and development finance staff.

2.3 Public Meetings

Two (2) virtual public meetings were held to invite the diverse public across York Region, as well as York Region property owners, to learn more about the VHT and provide their feedback and input. Each meeting began with a presentation which provided project information, provincial and regional context for the consideration of the tax, and education about a VHT and its successful implementation in other jurisdictions. Throughout the presentation, participants were invited to populate the meeting chat with any questions. Following the presentation, participants were invited to use the “raise hand” functions and unmute themselves to have their questions answered by the project team. Questions added to the chat were read aloud and directed to the appropriate project team member for answer.

Twenty-one (21) members of the public participated in the public meeting held on July 7, 2022.

Twenty-eight (28) members of the public participated in the public meeting held on July 11, 2022.

The public meetings saw a diverse mix of participants. While no specific demographic information was collected, when asked we did learn the following perspectives were represented:

- Affordable Housing Coalition in York Region
- A local Councillor
- Homeowners
- Property Managers
- Landlords
- Markham Residents
- Richmond Hill Residents
- Georgina Resident
- Aurora Resident
- Member of the York Region Planning Advisory Committee
- President of the Unionville Residents Association
- President of the Markham Village Sherwood Conservation Residents’ Association
- Intergenerational Households

3.0 Consultation Findings

The following provides a summary of the key consultation findings and what we heard from the consultation process/activities outlined in [Section 2.0](#). Across our consultation activities, the sizeable majority of participants were in favour of the VHT for the purpose of disincentivizing real estate speculation.

3.1 Online Survey

Finding 1: The public is predominantly supportive of the implementation of a VHT in York Region.

Nearly 88% strongly or somewhat agreed that York Region is facing challenges with housing affordability. Overall, nearly 80% of survey respondents believed the Region should levy a VHT to help address these challenges. Of the respondents who prefer a VHT rate of more than 4%, 69.6% are homeowners and 8.7% are homeowners who own at least one non-primary residence.

Figure 1: When asked to indicate their level of support to the statement “York Region is facing challenges with housing affordability.” survey respondents indicated:

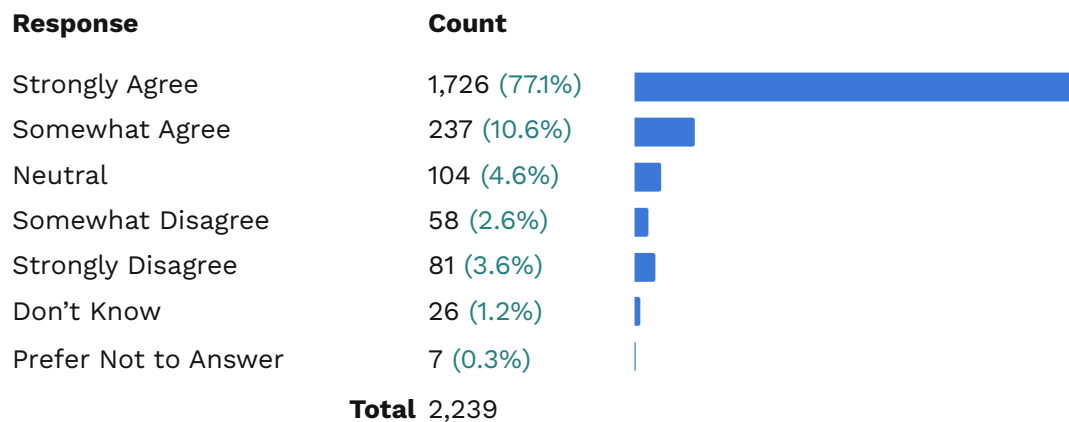









Figure 2: When asked to indicate their level of support to the statement “York Region should implement a Vacant Homes Tax.” survey respondents indicated:

| Response | Count | |
|----------------------|---------------|--|
| Strongly Agree | 1,599 (71.5%) |  |
| Somewhat Agree | 178 (8.0%) |  |
| Neutral | 47 (2.1%) |  |
| Somewhat Disagree | 59 (2.6%) |  |
| Strongly Disagree | 337 (15.1%) |  |
| Don't Know | 13 (0.6%) |  |
| Prefer Not to Answer | 3 (0.1%) |  |
| Total | 2,236 | |

“Too many people own residential properties with no intention of living in them. While I would prefer there to be more incentives for these people to just sell these properties to buyers who do not own their principal residence (as opposed to having the option of renting them out) but I understand this proposal is better than nothing. I personally find rampant landlordism to be a major problem impacting housing in this Region/province/country.” —Online Survey Respondent

“Empty houses negatively affect the look of a community but most importantly, the feel of it. Empty houses inhibit community engagement with neighbours. And if owners are not stakeholders in community building, then there is little incentive to reach out to improve the municipality. Thank you for embarking on this process to make owning a house in York Region something to be proud of, not just something to make money off of.” —Online Survey Respondent

“I have seen an increased number of houses in my neighbourhood that were purchased yet have been vacant or rather used as Airbnb for a lengthy period of time (over 2 years). I fully support introducing the Vacant Homes Tax that municipalities can use to build more affordable housing and maybe even use those vacant houses for a reduced price to rent for families in need of housing.” —Online Survey Respondent

Finding 2: Respondents want options when it comes to declaring the occupancy status of their residences.

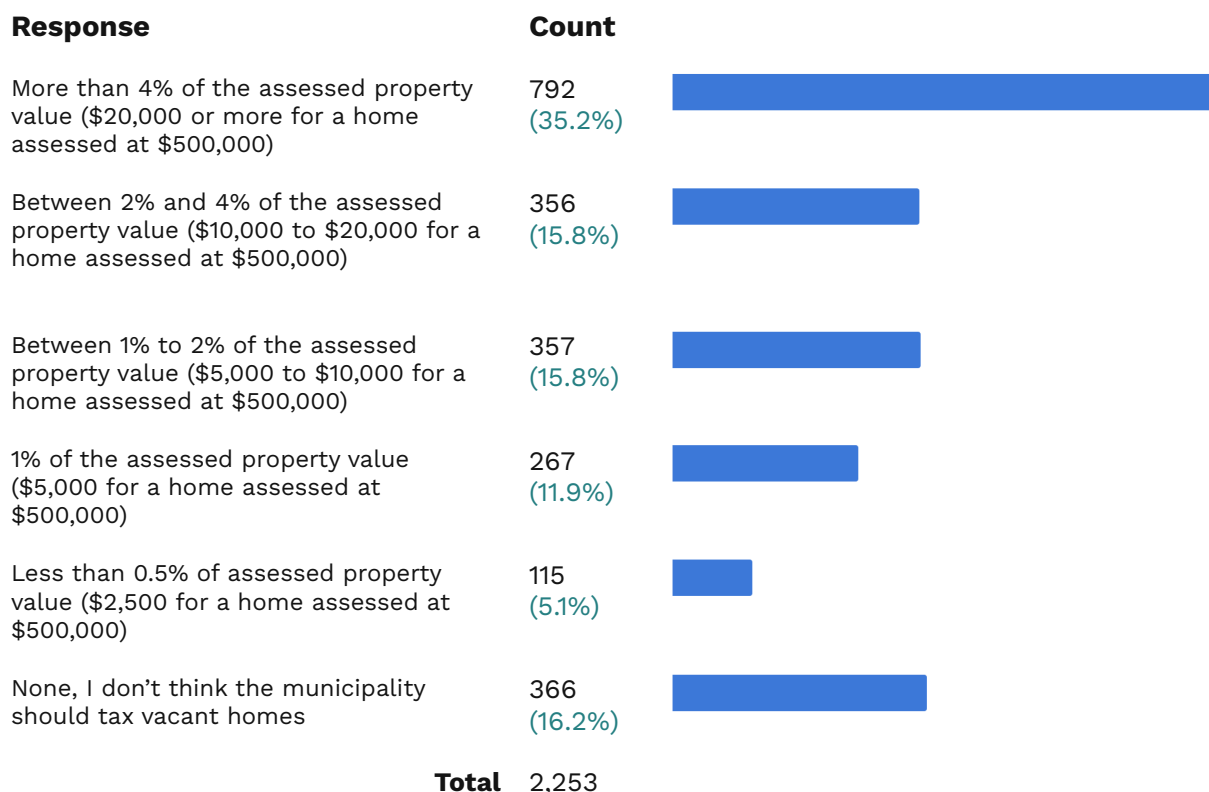
Residents strongly believe that there should be a Mandatory Universal Declaration of all residential properties, but some respondents also somewhat or strongly support the option of Complaint Identification. Most respondents are not in favour of Voluntary Self-Identification. Some respondents would also like to see more than one method to declare occupancy status to make it as accessible as possible (e.g., online, mail, in-person). But if it were a single option, online is the most popular channel for occupancy status declaration.

“ALL options should be given to people. Seniors or people with disabilities or the sick may not do it online.” —Online Survey Respondent

Finding 3: The majority of survey respondents prefer a tax rate of 1% to over 4% of the assessed property value.

Overall, 83.8% supported a tax rate of some capacity (from less than 0.5% to over 4% of the assessed property value). Of the respondents who prefer a VHT over 4%, 69.6% are homeowners and 8.7% of them own at least one non-primary residence.

Figure 3: When asked “If York Region were to implement an annual Vacant Homes Tax, what tax rate should be applied?” respondents indicated:



Finding 4: Markham, Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Aurora are popular locations for non-primary residences.

Based on declarations by survey respondents who own non-primary residences, Markham, Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Aurora are where most non-primary residential properties are located. According to our survey results, these municipalities could be most affected by the VHT.

Considerations

Some survey responses show inconsistency regarding the definition of vacancy, the definition and number of non-primary residences and the intent of the VHT. Because there were comments asking for clarification and contradictory answers submitted, some of the responses misunderstood the questions or concepts and thus, some responses may not truly reflect a participant's opinion. Addressing the exemptions early in the explanation may mitigate some of this misunderstanding. See Appendix B for detailed survey results.

“No definition of Vacant Home is provided, i.e., are Cottages/Seasonal Homes considered Vacant Homes? If so, I totally disagree with the tax. Where is the definition?” —Online Survey Respondent

“I don't know the definition of “Vacant home” so I can't answer. My rental property had been vacant for over 1 year because of the slow renovation due to the COVID restrictions. It would probably been defined “vacant” if the threshold is very low. That would be unfair. Another example, during the last 2 covid years it had been very hard to find any tenants. Many houses would be defined “vacant”. If this tax is levied on them, it is unfair too. People pay their property tax and it's up to the owners to do with their properties if it's well maintained. On the other hand, I agree that too many vacant properties impacts the economic ecosystem in the area. So I strongly disagree with this tax. It's hard to implement.” —Online Survey Respondent

“I have 3 residences, winter, summer & shoulder seasons. Since I don't live in any one of them for 6 months at a time they would be considered vacant and taxed under this proposed tax. In other words it would be a wealth tax, NOT a vacancy tax.” —Online Survey Respondent

3.2 Stakeholder Meetings

Finding 1: While BILD meeting participants are supportive of a VHT, they want to see that it's worthwhile from a cost perspective and over the long term.

Some participants questioned how many units the Region might actually be able to levy a vacant homes tax against. Others were curious if this tax would be ongoing, as it would likely be a declining revenue source.

“The goal is not for the Region to make a lot of money but to make more housing and make housing available for people to afford them. You know that they’re out there, our measure of success is just to see fewer and fewer houses being vacant. There are a lot of units that can be put back on the market and help the rental shortfall that we have. There is a need.” —BILD Stakeholder Meeting Participant

Finding 2: There is a need for rental in the housing market beyond what unlocking vacant houses as supply can provide.

Some participants pushed the Region to recognize the cost of application fees, lack of incentives for developers to build rental buildings and other barriers and challenges at play that prevent their industry from supporting those demands. While the need for affordable housing was discussed, some pointed to the need for regular average market rent units.

“Not just affordable housing, we need just regular rent in the Region. All the young couples need a place to live.” —BILD Stakeholder Meeting Participant

“York Region does not give you a break for rental buildings. Even application fees are so much money. Yet we all know that for anyone to do a rental building, they have to qualify at a financial institute proving they will be able to pay their loan with a certain percentage of their vacancy. The Region and the municipalities aren’t playing ball.” —BILD Stakeholder Meeting Participant

Finding 3: Local Municipal Housing Working Group participants prefer Mandatory Universal Declaration as the method for identifying vacant homes.

The majority of Local Municipal Housing Working Group members agree that the Mandatory Universal Declaration method is the most appropriate for data collection

and mitigating privacy concerns. The audit process and penalty for failing to declare occupancy are components of the VHT that need further discussion.

“I see the challenges with all three. Mandatory is the way to go as it appears the most effective but the enforcement piece will be the most challenging. Voluntary may not be as effective. I don’t know if other municipalities have the voluntary model.” —Member of Local Municipal Housing Working Group

*“The mandatory universal declaration is a good idea. It needs a soft launch. So if they don’t declare, don’t charge them in the first year. You send a couple warnings to give people who don’t understand or know yet a chance to learn.”
—Member of Local Municipal Housing Working Group*

Finding 4: In terms of the implementation model, Local Municipal Housing Working Group members agree on a shared approach, where the Region and local municipality share responsibilities for all operating and implementation activities.

Some municipalities expressed not having all of the resources required to administer the VHT. There was a lot of interest in tying it in with the existing billing system for property tax, as it is familiar and may be more user-friendly to York Region residents.

“Shared. Important for the Region to take the lead, we want the same message going to everyone.” —Member of Local Municipal Housing Working Group

“Not my area of expertise. But we can implement it through the property tax billing that goes out. There are various mechanisms for paying those taxes. Some sort of enrollment in a property stream, then something through that mechanism for those pre-authorized or monthly payments, where you have to declare what kind of property.” —Member of Local Municipal Housing Working Group

Finding 5: Many members of the Local Municipal Housing Working Group indicated a preference to test a 1% tax rate, and reassess every year or two.

Many participants from the Local Municipal Housing Working Group agreed with implementing a 1% tax rate on the assessed property value of vacant homes. However, there were also concerns that a low tax rate would not be effective in deterring real estate speculators.

“1% is a good start. Wouldn’t go beyond that. See how it goes.”

“When looking at Vancouver moving to the 5% range, we need to view this as a baseline. We’ve seen residential equity grow much higher than 5%. In

Newmarket we looked at the gains since 2018. We found that with a 5% tax, developers would gladly take the fee because their revenue they gain on an annual basis is much higher than that. We should push the percentage higher than that. We might see investors snap up the properties if we don't get ahead of it."

Finding 6: A clear and intentional communication plan is crucial.

Some participants are concerned about making occupancy status declarations as simple and as accessible as possible. As some members have suggested a shared implementation approach, York Region would be responsible for consistent messaging and educating the public about the tax. Exemptions and what constitutes a vacant home will need to be very clearly defined.

"But the devil's in the details of how it's administered and educating the public. I know I miss notices all of the time, so it's good to think about grace periods and ensure there's a transition period if we implement this." —Member of Local Municipal Housing Working Group

"Communication early on is key, especially those who aren't technologically savvy. It needs to happen overtime and be public in the media as well. Maybe a hybrid model of mandatory and complaint and incorporate it all in a central portal." —Member of Local Municipal Housing Working Group

3.3 Public Meetings

Finding 1: The public is largely in support of implementing a VHT in York Region.

They recognize that housing challenges facing the Region require action, and generally agree that this is one tool that is worthwhile pursuing. There were no dissenting voices, though some participants desire more clarity around exemptions and the definition of vacancy. There was also an acknowledgement that this tool alone would not be enough.

Finding 2: Markham's previous decision to forgo looking at a VHT is perceived as a potential concern.

Many participants asked for clarity around the Region's power and authority to implement and enforce a VHT across all the lower-tier municipalities. Some shared concerns about feasibility, should Markham staff share this perspective.

“Is it feasible for York Region to implement the VHT in Markham, if Markham council disagrees with a VHT? How would York Region staff identify ‘vacant’ without cooperation from Markham staff, and bylaw officers?” —Public Meeting 1 Participant

Finding 3: The public wants to understand how the VHT will be implemented to suit the Region's needs and the nuances of each local municipality.

Many participants asked if cottages and summer residences would be exempt from a VHT. The jurisdictional scan shared in the presentation informed them that many cities that implement a VHT consider a residence unoccupied for six months or more to be considered vacant. While there was no disagreement with any timelines provided, one participant did point to the number of seasonal residences in the Region.

“Are seasonal properties/cottages considered vacant? Georgina has many cottage properties used for only 4 months of the year. Are such properties considered vacant?” —Public Meeting 1 Participant

Finding 4: While there was little opposition to the tax, there were some concerns around its punitive nature.

There was recognition that renting out a residential property and acting as a landlord required effort and posed a risk. Some participants questioned if there might be other systems, tools or support that better incentivized property owners or protect them when there are legitimate reasons for vacancy. Other participants pointed to the privilege of home ownership and the perceived obligation to have these properties occupied. Residents have noted homes that have been unoccupied for many years in their neighbourhood and that those present blight risks.

“If it can be risky for owners to rent, have we explored why it’s risky as a part of the issue? The tax seems to be trying to ‘slap’ them for not renting it out, rather than rectifying the core reasons why they don’t want to rent out. I used to rent out a property and had bad tenants, and it cost me.” —Public Meeting 1 Participant

Finding 5: The public wants to see more affordable housing options in their community.

Many participants expressed support for the implementation of a VHT but emphasised the need for more deeply affordable housing options. Some were aware that unlocking supply might help the overall health of the housing supply, but that it was still not a tool to address affordable housing for the most precarious. A participant from the Affordable Housing Coalition in York Region pointed to their own survey conducted and shared that their results indicated overwhelming public support for a VHT.

“I am happy to hear about this tax, because while it doesn’t provide affordable housing, vacant homes being filled by those who can afford them might leave other options open. We might see homes available at different tiers and having a domino effect which will support affordability, so that those on the lower tier will be available for them.” —Public Meeting 2 Participant

Finding 6: Homeowners support a VHT for the purposes of disincentivizing real estate speculation, but worry circumstances beyond their control will cause the VHT to be levied against them.

Participants were somewhat concerned that a VHT that intends to target real estate speculators might impact homeowners. They spoke of challenges with renting, and properties being vacant for reasons beyond their control.

“How will the law protect people who fall into grey zones, who are trying to rent out their home, but no one wants to rent their home?” —Public Meeting Participant

Finding 7: The public is curious about domino effects like the potential impacts on property values.

Homeowners were curious about the potential long-term impacts of implementing a VHT, including if other jurisdictions had seen any changes in property values. They pointed to homeownership as an investment and a form of real estate speculation, even for those who live in their home, and the importance of that asset to appreciate in value for planning such as retirement. Though this group wanted to understand the implications to their financial future, they were generally supportive of implementing a VHT.

“When Vancouver introduced the VHT, did the housing values change as a result? People’s homes are also investments, and it would be a shame to see those assets lose value as a result of this tax.” — Public Meeting 2 Participant

Finding 8: The public is supportive of net revenues supporting affordable housing.

Recognizing that a VHT helps increase supply but doesn’t necessarily directly address housing affordability, participants were generally in favour of net revenues supporting affordable housing initiatives.

“Has it been discussed that vacant homes aren't a way to get affordable housing into the market? There seems to be a strong argument to allocate funds generated towards affordable homes.” — Public Meeting 2 Participant

“I generally support a VHT but I am not sure that releasing more homes will lead to more affordable housing options. I would agree that money has to go to affordable homes.” – Public Meeting 2 Participant

4.0 Consultation: Next Steps

Overall, the Vacant Homes Tax has strong support in York Region, despite the tax eliciting polarising responses. Perhaps due to a firm understanding that there is an affordable housing crisis in York Region, most participants in our consultation sessions were in favour of implementing a VHT in York Region.

In terms of net revenue accrued from the VHT, most participants are in agreement and would like for those funds to support affordable housing initiatives in some capacity (such as building new affordable housing, providing rental subsidies and supporting emergency shelters).

The public would like to have access to different channels for declaring the occupancy status of their residential properties. Online is a popular option but in order to meet a wide range of accessibility needs, residents would like to be able to mail in their declaration or to submit their declaration in person.

For Further Discussion

Most stakeholders and members of the public agree with having exemptions to the VHT, as extenuating circumstances can impact why a residential property becomes vacant. Many members of the Local Municipal Housing Working Group felt that heritage properties should not be exempt from the VHT, or if they are exempt, there needs to be additional nuance that incentivizes the restoration, maintenance and habitability of heritage properties.

The tax rate of the VHT has not been finalised. There were suggestions about starting at 1% and assessing the tax rate and its impact after a year or two of implementation.

In terms of identifying vacant homes, Mandatory Universal Declaration appears to be the preferred choice. Complaint Identification is the least popular among the BILD and Local Municipal Housing Working Group members, due to privacy and surveillance concerns. However, with members of the general public, 46.8% agree in some capacity with the complaint-based approach, while 40.3% disagree to a certain extent. A hybrid or combination approach was also suggested.

The sharing of net revenue is still up for discussion. There were suggestions about sharing the net revenue with municipalities based on the number of vacant units or property assessment value.

Most local staff representatives were in favour of a shared approach with York Region and the nine municipalities. There were discussions in favour of integrating the VHT in the property tax payment mechanisms. There were also some suggestions of involving Municipal Property Assessment Corporation in the implementation of the VHT. However, further analysis would be required to investigate revenue sharing and tax collection options.

Across the consultation process, there were questions around the cost of implementation and ongoing administration of the tax. This information was not available at the time of consultations and may have been beneficial to the stakeholders who were engaged.

Appendices

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| APPENDIX A: Survey Questions | 21 |
| APPENDIX B: Overall Survey Results | 31 |
| Overall Survey Demographics | 31 |
| Overall Survey Responses to Components of the Vacant Homes Tax | 31 |
| Housing Affordability | 32 |
| Introduction of the Vacant Homes Tax | 33 |
| Use of Revenue Generated by the Vacant Homes Tax | 102 |
| Defining Vacancy | 113 |
| Exemptions to the Vacant Homes Tax | 114 |
| Tax Rate for the Vacant Homes Tax | 124 |
| Identification Methods for the Vacant Homes Tax | 124 |
| Declaration Methods for the Vacant Homes Tax | 159 |
| APPENDIX C: Survey Results by Respondent Segments | 162 |
| York Region Homeowners | 162 |
| York Region Renters | 166 |
| York Region Single Investment Property Owners | 170 |
| York Region Multiple Investment Property Owners | 174 |
| York Region Renters with a Single Investment Property | 178 |
| Homeowners Who Reside in York Region for Less Than 6 Months of the Year | 182 |
| Renters Who Reside in York Region for Less Than 6 Months of the Year | 183 |
| APPENDIX D: Comments and Questions from the BILD & Development Community Stakeholder Meeting | 184 |
| APPENDIX E: Comments and Questions from the Local Municipal Housing Working Group Stakeholder Meeting | 188 |
| APPENDIX F: Comments and Questions from Public Meetings | 203 |
| Public Meeting 1 | 203 |
| Public Meeting 2 | 208 |

APPENDIX A: Survey Questions

Survey: Evaluating a Vacant Homes Tax for York Region

About the Survey

We want to hear from you! Whether you own your home or rent, your input is an important part of our review of a potential vacant homes tax for York Region. Your voluntary participation in this 5-10 minute survey is anonymous and will help to inform the potential development of a VHT tax policy, bylaw and approach to implementation.

[BRANCH 1: ALL USERS]

1. Do you currently live in York Region?

- Yes ([go to BRANCH 5](#))
- No ([go to BRANCH 2](#))

[BRANCH 2: INVESTMENT PROPERTY OWNER]

2. Do you own residential property in York Region?

- Yes
- No ([go to BRANCH 9](#))

3. How many residential units do you own in York Region?

- 1 ([go to BRANCH 3](#))
- 2 ([go to BRANCH 4](#))
- 3-5 ([go to BRANCH 4](#))
- 5-10 ([go to BRANCH 4](#))
- 10+ ([go to BRANCH 4](#))
- Prefer not to answer ([go to BRANCH 9](#))

[BRANCH 3: SINGLE INVESTMENT PROPERTY OWNER]

4. What best describes your residential property in York Region?

- House: Long-term rental
- House: Short-term or vacation rental
- House: Vacant
- Apartment/Condo: Long-term rental
- Apartment/Condo: Short term or vacation rental
- Apartment/Condo: Vacant
- Other, please specify _____

5. What is the current occupancy status of your residential property in York Region?

- Occupied
- Vacant
- Other, please specify _____
- Prefer not to answer

6. What is the longest duration this residential property has been vacant in the last 5 years?

- It hasn't been vacant in the past 5 years
- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6 months - 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 2+ years
- Prefer not to answer

7. What was the reason for its vacancy during this time?

- On the market to rent
- Waiting to rent
- On the market to sell
- Waiting to sell
- Renovations and/or redevelopment
- Transitioning to move in or move out
- Other, please specify _____
- Prefer not to answer

8. Which municipality within York Region is your residential property located?

- Aurora
- East Gwillimbury
- Georgina
- King
- Markham
- Newmarket
- Richmond Hill
- Vaughan
- Whitchurch-Stouffville
- Prefer not to answer

****FOLLOWING THIS SECTION CONTINUE TO [BRANCH 9](#)****

[BRANCH 4: MULTIPLE INVESTMENT PROPERTY OWNER/NON-RESIDENT]

9. **What best describes your residential properties in York Region?** (select all that apply)

- House: Long-term rental
- House: Short-term or vacation rental
- House: Vacant
- Apartment/Condo: Long-term rental
- Apartment/Condo: Short-term or vacation rental
- Apartment/Condo: Vacant
- Other, please specify_____

10. **What is the current status of your residential properties in York Region?** (select all that apply)

- Tenanted/Rented (including all long term occupied units)
- Short-Term Rented (eg: Airbnb, VRBO)
- On the market to rent
- Waiting to put on the market to rent
- On the market to sell
- Waiting to put on the market to sell
- Renovating to rent
- Renovating to sell
- Vacant
- Other, please describe_____
- Prefer not to answer

11. **Which municipality within York Region is your residential property located?** (select all that apply)

- Aurora
- East Gwillimbury
- Georgina
- King
- Markham
- Newmarket
- Richmond Hill
- Vaughan
- Whitchurch-Stouffville
- Prefer not to answer

****FOLLOWING THIS SECTION CONTINUE TO [BRANCH 9](#)****

[BRANCH 5: YORK REGION RESIDENT]

12. A principal residence can be defined as the home you live in for 6 months or more in a calendar year. Based on this, is your principal residence in York Region?

- Yes
- No ([go to BRANCH 8](#))

13. Please enter the first three characters of the postal code for your home/principal residence.

14. Do you own or rent your principal residence?

- Rent (including life leases)
- Own
- Prefer not to answer ([go to BRANCH 9](#))

15. Do you own any other residential income properties in York Region?

- Yes ([go to Branch 7](#))
- No ([go to Branch 9](#))
- Prefer not to answer ([go to Branch 9](#))

[BRANCH 7: RESIDENT HOMEOWNER + PROPERTY OWNER]

16. How many residential units do you own in York Region?

- 1 ([go to BRANCH 3](#))
- 2 ([go to BRANCH 4](#))
- 3-5 ([go to BRANCH 4](#))
- 5-10 ([go to BRANCH 4](#))
- 10+ ([go to BRANCH 4](#))
- Prefer not to answer ([go to BRANCH 9](#))

[BRANCH 8: PART-TIME RESIDENT]

17. What best describes your living situation:

- I own residential property in York Region where I live for less than 6 months in a calendar year
- I rent residential property in York Region where I live for less than 6 months in a year
- Other, please describe: _____

18. What best describes your residential property when not occupied by you?

- Tenanted/Rented
- Vacant
- Other, please describe _____

19. Which municipality within York Region is your residential property located?

- Aurora
- East Gwillimbury
- Georgina
- King
- Markham
- Newmarket
- Richmond Hill
- Vaughan
- Whitchurch-Stouffville
- Prefer not to answer

****FOLLOWING THIS SECTION CONTINUE TO [BRANCH 9](#)****

[BRANCH 9: ABOUT THE VHT]

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral Somewhat | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Prefer not to answer | Don't Know |
|--|----------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------|
| York Region is facing challenges with housing affordability. | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |

21. [Optional] Please elaborate on your answer.

22. Like many rapidly growing regions, York Region attracts real estate speculation, with investors sometimes purchasing residential properties they have no intention of living in or renting out. This can limit the availability of housing, and in certain cases a decrease in the housing supply. Some governments (such as the City of Toronto and City of Vancouver) have introduced a vacant homes tax to encourage owners to sell or rent them out. **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?**

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral Somewhat | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Prefer not to answer | Don't Know |
|--|----------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------|
| York Region should implement a vacant homes tax. | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |

23. [Optional] Please elaborate on your answer.
-

24. If York Region were to introduce a Vacant Homes Tax, how should any revenue generated be used?

- Housing initiatives and programs (e.g., building new affordable housing, providing rent supplements, supporting emergency shelters, etc.)
- General purposes (e.g., to support other municipal programs and services offered within York Region, etc.)
- Other, please specify_____

25. [Optional] Please elaborate on your answer.
-

26. If York Region were to introduce a Vacant Homes Tax, how long should a property be vacant in a calendar year before it is subject to a Vacant Homes Tax?

- 3 months
- 6 months
- 9 months
- 12 months
- Other, please specify_____
- I don't think vacant homes should be taxed

27. **Some governments have granted exemptions from a vacant homes tax for properties left vacant due to certain circumstances. Select all exemptions from the vacant homes tax that you would support.** *(multiple selections allowed)*

- Vacant due to renovations
- Vacant due to the death of the owner(s)
- Vacant because the occupant was residing in a healthcare facility for medical care
- Vacant because it is under court order prohibiting the owners from selling, occupying, or renting the property
- Vacant and designated as a heritage property
- Vacant due to ongoing legal processes such as transfer of ownership
- Vacant because it is subject to restrictions or prohibitions on sale
- Vacant for a period of time because the principal resident lives outside of York Region and requires property for employment purposes
- Vacant due to seasonal use
- Vacant due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., pandemic, natural disaster)
- Vacant because it's used for short term rentals (e.g., Airbnb, VRBO)
- There should be no exemptions to the vacant homes tax
- Other, please specify

28. **If York Region were to implement an annual vacant homes tax, what tax rate should be applied?**

- None, I don't think the municipality should tax vacant homes
- Less than 0.5% of assessed property value (\$2,500 for a home assessed at \$500,000)
- 1% of the assessed property value (\$5,000 for a home assessed at \$500,000)
- Between 1% to 2% of the assessed property value (\$5,000 to \$10,000 for a home assessed at \$500,000)
- Between 2% and 4% of the assessed property value (\$10,000 to \$20,000 for a home assessed at \$500,000)
- More than 4% of the assessed property value (\$20,000 or more for a home assessed at \$500,000)

29. **There are three options that might be used in York Region to identify vacant homes. For each option, please let us know your level of support.**

Due to privacy laws, York Region is unable to use information from water or hydro bills to identify vacant homes.

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Prefer not to answer | Don't Know |
|--|----------------|----------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------|
| <p>York Region should use Mandatory Universal Declaration to identify vacant homes.</p> <p>Mandatory Universal Declaration: Residential property owners in York Region would be required to declare to the Region if their home is occupied or vacant each year. If property owners do not declare vacancy status to the Region, they would automatically be taxed for the VHT.</p> | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |
| <p>York Region should use Complaint Identification to identify vacant homes.</p> <p>Complaint Identification: The Region would only be able to identify a vacant property if they are notified through a tip or a complaint.</p> | • | • | • | • | • | • | • |

| | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neutral | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Prefer not to answer | Don't Know |
|---|----------------|----------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------|
| <p>York Region should use Voluntary Self-Identification to identify vacant homes.</p> <p>Voluntary Self-Identification: Residential property owners in York Region self-identify vacant units and must declare if they own a vacant property each year. If a property owner does not declare their vacancy status, the property would be assumed to be occupied.</p> | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |

30. [Optional] Please elaborate on your answer.

31. If York Region were to implement an annual vacant homes tax, what would be your preferred method to submit the occupancy status declaration for your residential property to the Region?

- Online
- In person
- Via post/mail
- Other, please specify _____

[DEMOGRAPHICS]

As we collect input for this study, it's important for us to have an understanding of who is participating and providing feedback through this process. This helps us ensure we are hearing a diversity of perspectives and best serving a diversity of people across York Region. We don't need your name, but it would be helpful to hear the following information about you.

32. Please enter the first three digits of the postal code for your principal residence: _____ If principal residence is outside of Canada, please indicate country.

33. What was your total household income before taxes last year?

- 0 - \$24,999
- \$25,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$74,999
- \$75,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - 149,999
- \$150,000 or more
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

34. What is your age?

- 17 years old or younger
- 18 to 24 years
- 25 to 34 years
- 35 to 44 years
- 45 to 54 years
- 55 to 64 years
- 65 to 74 years
- 75 and older
- Prefer not to answer

35. Did you immigrate to Canada within the last 5 years?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

APPENDIX B: Overall Survey Results

Overall Survey Demographics

Of the respondents who left an answer:

- 25.9% of respondents live in Markham.
- 16.5% live in Vaughan.
- 16.3% live in Richmond Hill.
- 16.1% live in Newmarket.
- 6.8% live in Aurora.
- 5.5% live in East Gwillimbury.
- 5.7% live in Georgina.
- 3.4% live in Whitchurch-Stouffville.
- 0.8% live in King.
- 3.0% do not reside in York Region.

Of the respondents who answered, a large majority had a high total household income before taxes last year.

- 28.5% of respondents earned more \$150,000 or more last year, before taxes.
- 24.6% preferred not to disclose their gross household income from last year.
- 18.8% earned \$100,000 to \$149,000 last year, before taxes.
- 10.2% earned \$75,000 to \$99,000 last year, before taxes.
- 8.7% earned \$50,000 to \$74,999 last year, before taxes.
- 4.4% earned \$25,000 to \$49,999 last year, before taxes.
- 2.2% earned \$24,999 or less last year, before taxes.
- 1.9% don't know their gross household income last year, before taxes.

The survey responses represented people across a wide range of age groups.

- 20.4% were ages 35 to 44.
- 18.2% were ages 45 to 54.
- 16.8% were ages 25 to 34.
- 15.3% were ages 55 to 64.
- 12.3% were ages 65 to 74.
- 3.8% were ages 18 to 24.
- 3.6% were ages 75 and older.
- 9.2% preferred not to reveal their age.

The majority of survey respondents are not recent immigrants to Canada.

- 93% of respondents are not recent immigrants to Canada.
- 2.9% of respondents had immigrated to Canada within the last 5 years.
- 4.1% preferred not to disclose whether they are a recent immigrant.

Overall Survey Responses to Components of the Vacant Homes Tax

Housing Affordability

“York Region is facing challenges with housing affordability.”

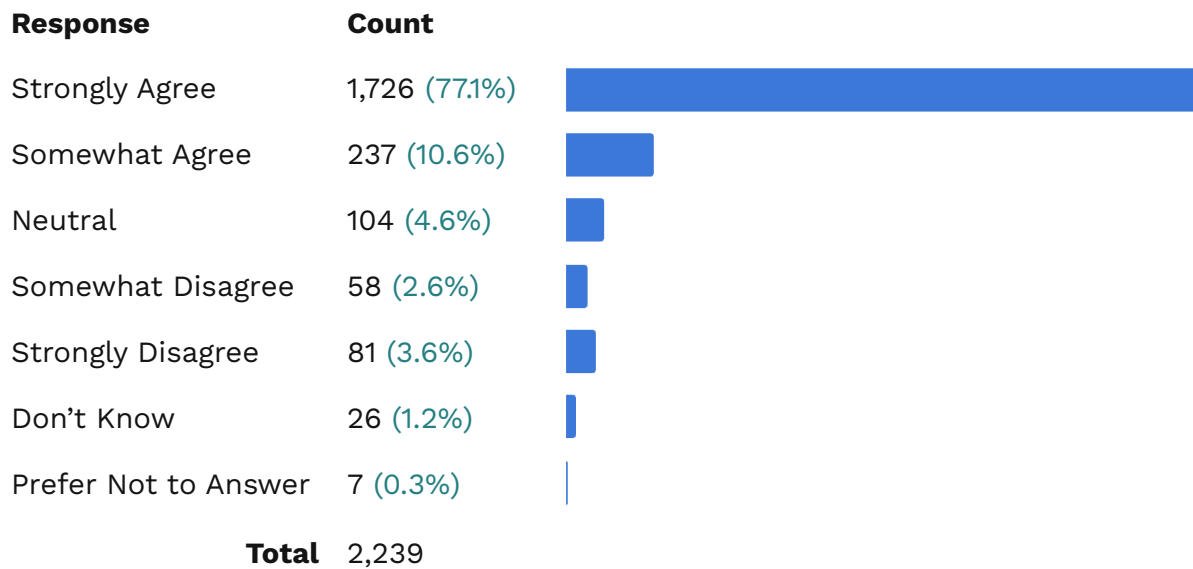


Figure 4: Graph indicating responses when asked to indicate their level of support for the statement “York Region is facing challenges with housing affordability.”

Introduction of the Vacant Homes Tax

“York Region should implement a Vacant Homes Tax.”

| Response | Count | |
|----------------------|---------------|--|
| Strongly Agree | 1,599 (71.5%) | |
| Somewhat Agree | 178 (8.0%) | |
| Neutral | 47 (2.1%) | |
| Somewhat Disagree | 59 (2.6%) | |
| Strongly Disagree | 337 (15.1%) | |
| Don't Know | 13 (0.6%) | |
| Prefer Not to Answer | 3 (0.1%) | |
| Total | 2,236 | |

Figure 5: Graph indicating responses when asked to indicate their level of support for the statement “York Region should implement a Vacant Homes Tax.”

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

1. Do not allow foreign buyers to purchase residential properties. 2. Put a limit on how many residential properties a real estate agent can own because they have an unfair advantage over the general public. 3. Strongly enforce all the rules and close all the "loopholes".

1. Local house prices are not in line with local wages. 2. If York has to stay competitive, housing prices will have to be more affordable. 3. Newer immigrants and young families who help with generating additional tax revenues will look elsewhere if house prices stay unaffordable. 4. Future of housing prices looks very grim for current youth who have to stay with parents for longer or look for housing in other regions which separates families. The impact of all of the above is because of someone who doesn't want to live in our Region but wants to generate profits selfishly? No thanks! Let local housing remain only for people and families who are interested in living here and in developing our vibrant communities.

10 years ago, 5 of my next door neighbours were owners and live there. Now they are all sold to investors. The house either sits there empty, or is rented out.

2 homes behind us have been unoccupied for most of the last few years. One is kept up, the other is not, and even has a pool unopened for several years.

2017 to 2020 I was renting a home in Markham. In that period, I have seen many empty properties in my neighbourhood that were kept vacant as investment property. This was artificially raising both rental prices and the sale prices in the area.

60 or 600 houses, what's the possible gain?

Table 1

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75% of homes here are investor owned, mostly foreign ownership. Just go see a house up for sale. These investors can carry this for as long as they want with minimal costs in order to get the inflated price they're asking for. No rules no regulations and OREA or Rico don't do squat in placing rules to eliminate blind bidding or multiple offer sale tactics.

8 out of 18 houses on our street are vacant and some have been vacant for up to 5 years.

A basic human right should not be subjected to market speculation and greedy investors.

A confiscatory tax will not increase housing stock. Therefore, why do it except to be seen as “doing something”? It's a cynical political ploy. Rather than ask my opinion, how about proving empirically that it might help? Guessing it can't be proven.

A home on my street was vacant for over 4 years. No one was maintaining the property. It is owned by a family who is buying real estate in Canada to invest money outside of their country. The Town has had to cut the lawn multiple times due to their lack of maintenance, costing taxpayers' money. Yes, it would be billed back but it is costing staff time to address the on-going issue. In addition, the unsightly look of an otherwise ‘abandoned house’ brings the look of a neighbourhood down. Picture mouldy siding, half fallen off rain gutters, a broken fence from wind storms that was never repaired. Thankfully this particular example is now rented out to a lovely older couple but the issue still stands.

A house should be a place to live - not just an investment.

A housing supply shortage is not caused by vacant houses. It's caused by lack of construction caused by municipal red tape taking years to get housing started and built. A vacant house doesn't solve these problems. Taxing a vacant house doesn't solve these problems. Building multi-family buildings, accessory apartments and garden suites solves these problems. In York Region, the Greenbelt prevents construction of hundreds of thousands of new homes. That solves these problems. How would you check to see if my house is vacant anyway?

A person who owns a property has the right to use or not use it as he pleases. In the case of real estate, the municipality collects the same property tax either way, so any additional "non-use" tax is discriminatory.

A significant portion of houses and condos on the market are sitting and doing nothing but rotting in the midst of a housing affordability crisis. That's insane.

A similar tax should be applied to commercial properties as well, particularly on-street storefronts (as opposed to malls).

A solution for a non-existent problem!

A tax on properties in York Region will have zero impact on affordability of rentals and I can't imagine that the money collected would actually be used to create affordable housing units; either for sale or rent.

A tax on vacant homes would incentive owners to either rent or put the property up for sale. Both of which could potentially help make renting/buying a home more affordable due to more supply on the market.

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| |
|---|
| A vacancy tax would be expensive, unfair, and ineffective. |
| A vacant homes tax appears to be a viable option that might make more residences available. |
| A vacant homes tax is a distraction from the real issue - housing supply. There are many legitimate reasons for homes to be vacant, including being between tenants, renovations, unexpected life events, and others. There are no legitimate reasons why Regional or municipal policy restricts gentle density from occurring on single-family lots, or imposes myriad taxes and administrative delays that increase the cost of housing. |
| A vacant homes tax is only one of the many tools available to York Region to address this problem. Other alternatives should be considered first. For example, reduce/eliminate development charges for affordable housing. Develop rent control programs for affordable housing. Require developers to assign 10% of all developments to affordable housing or pay “cash in lieu”. Some York Region municipalities still use this outdated concept for environment trade offs, which must be eliminated, however, it may be useful for affordable housing. |
| A vacant homes tax will do nothing to help people in need. Just build so many units that even if there was some investment buying, it wouldn't make an impact. Or just have money go into building affordable housing instead of mixed income units that only help those who actually can afford 85% rent and so aren't really struggling. |
| A vacant homes tax would help but this could probably be circumvented through renting. |
| A Vacant Homes Tax won't force owners to rent out vacant properties. If they don't want tenants, they'll merely pay the tax and write off the expense. It may be more prudent to leave it vacant than to risk getting a bad tenant, and have it take over a year to evict them because the LTB is so backed up. You can't dictate what an individual does with an asset. What about all the people who have significant amounts in the bank in cash? Are you going to push them to invest to stimulate the stock market? How many homes in York Region are actually vacant? Is this number even high enough that if they were all occupied, it would even come close to resolving the housing shortage? |
| A vacant homes tax would unfairly punish people like cottage owners who are not contributing to the problem. The tax could easily be circumvented (for example, saying one of your children lives at the house). |
| A vacant house is a wasted asset; it also leads usually to a lack of maintenance and upkeep. |
| A vacant property tax would be a slight incentive for investors to rent out their home but not all investors want to be landlords. I see homes being purchased and new homeowners with very large mortgages putting that cost onto renters. This is not a good investment as you are relying on decent tenants to not take advantage of Ontario's current landlord and tenant act, which can see a landlord seeing months go by with tenant disputes. My neighbour just went through this and has subsequently sold the property. |
| A waste of resources for which many people demand. |
| Additional tax on rental homes. |

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Additional taxation, specifically targeted or not, carries additional overhead and administrative burdens. The juice is not worth the squeeze. No one who owns more than one home wants to have it empty, it's purely punitive. If you want to do anything, it should be incentivizing the creation of multi-family homes / multi-unit dedicated rental buildings through zoning changes.

Address the problem through more houses. Not a money grab by politicians.

Adjacent house has been vacant for 3 years, exterior grounds not maintained and an eyesore devaluing the entire area.

Affordability in housing needs to be addressed by all levels of government. By implementing this tax, it is a great step forward by the Regional government!

Affordable housing is difficult to find for young people trying to move out.

Affordable housing is not just lower cost rental housing nor having a high interest rate to suppress the real estate climb but to allow citizens who ever had a job a chance to start their mortgage or a senior could scale down their house without paying more than 400K for a 1 bedroom apartment.

After a reasonable time period, maybe 6 months. If you aren't living in it, sell it or rent it.

Again I feel this is a penalty for people having other homes. We work hard to afford a secondary home for whatever purpose and now you want us to be taxed.

All my friends have had to move in with their parents or get multiple roommates in order to stay in York Region.

Allow for more density through the missing middle of zoning. Approve zoning for development faster to allow for more housing (including that of affordable housing). Vacant homes tax is just another source of income for the government and does not help with the housing crisis at all.

Allowing reasonable time for estate settlement etc.

Also a tax on homes that are rented.

Also believe homes that are multiple rentals (i.e., those with basement apartments) should pay more taxes due to the additional strain on the infrastructure and services.

Also need tax on developers who are sitting on land ready for development but waiting for higher prices.

Although I understand it's an investment if you have the money, but we have too many people who don't even live in Ontario, let alone York Region, buying property in York Region. With a tax it shouldn't include those who live in Ontario (primary residence).

Although not the root of the affordability issue, investors' speculation is a contributor, in my opinion, to the lack of available housing in York Region. Some houses are left with no occupants (we have all seen those houses with no activity and no cut grass for what seems like years). This behaviour should not be tolerated or allowed where we are trying to build communities that actually HOUSE residents, rather than for investors parking their funds

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into an ‘asset class’. We need more supply. Adding a vacant homes tax would at best reduce those vacant homes and at worst penalize speculators for taking housing away from someone/a family who would otherwise be an active member(s) of the community.

And also petition the province to raise/double ODSP & OW, as other municipalities are.

Any home owned by any foreign national should be taxed 30%, any home that is with no people living in it should be taxed 25%.

Any tax must be 100% directed to affordable housing projects with a lean management structure and not to support the bloated York Region administration which wastes millions of tax dollars on useless functions.

Any tax would need to be significant to actually have an impact in deterring the owner from keeping it vacant. Owners who can afford to keep additional properties vacant can also afford an insignificant tax.

Anyone who owns property and pays all associated costs should not be taxed if they don't live there as a principal residence.

Anyone who purchases a home in Richmond Hill should either live in it or it should be rented out; it should never be left unoccupied and therefore a tax should be implemented.

Apart from this, only one principal residence should be allowed. No multiple properties.

As a soon to be divorced working mother (I worked for York Region full time for 16 years)- I will not be able to afford to buy a house on my own. I will not even be able to rent a house at over \$3000 per month for a 3 bedroom house! I may be forced to move out of the Region.

At 32, my wife and I cannot afford a home within 1.5 hours of our place of work. We both make good salaries and do not have children or extra expenses. A vacant homes tax would benefit people in our position to make buying a home more affordable.

At a time when people can't afford comfortable accommodation...it is immoral for spaces to remain empty. Even plazas like Wellington and Leslie have huge big box stores that could be adapted for living. people wouldn't even need transportation..everything they need is right there!

At present 'tenants' and/or renter's have all the rights. The owner has to jump through hoops to get rid of a tenant. The rules to evict, collect past due rent and damage is astronomical. Until these rules change, I think citizens of the country should be able to own and have their 2nd, 3rd, 4th home vacant if they so wish.

At this point in time when people are looking for housing there should not be vacant houses while owners are waiting for a better deal.

Average people, especially young people who don't come from rich families, immigrants, and the elderly can't find places to live. The affordability crisis is out of control.

Ban Airbnb and short term rentals. Add a 30% vacancy tax.

Based on Vancouver's implementation of this program, I believed it served as a deterrent for speculation (which took houses out of both the sales and rental inventory) which I believe is

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essential. Unmentioned has been the impact vacant homes have on neighbourhoods. These properties are often poorly maintained, particularly when it comes to yard and garden maintenance. This impacts the quality of neighbourhoods for homeowners/residents. Empty homes also encourage vandalism.

Be the community you want to nourish.

Becoming a bad trend. Empty homes are a problem as well, typically an eyesore. Absentee owners don't care about the community.

Besides the fact that empty homes are usually not maintained and look worn down, there is a devastating housing crisis.

Between inflation and low wages, few can afford a (relatively) modestly-priced home.

Bigger issue is the condition of vacant housing. Lawns uncut, rodent issues, etc. it brings down the look of otherwise wonderful neighbourhoods. But money from the tax into actual enforcement and forced care of these properties.

Build more. Reduce the Greenbelt. Increased taxation is not the answer.

Builders only build a million dollar house that is not affordable to most people who need shelters. If people can afford a secondary housing as investment, they should be able to pay extra tax.

Businesses should not be allowed to own houses.

Buying a property for investment purposes only can drive up the cost of housing and make it hard for anyone to own a home.

Buying houses as investment (not to live in) makes the rich richer and denies our young people who are starting out a chance to own their own home.

By encouraging owners of vacant homes to rent or sell their home, more people will have access to housing. It might bring down the high price of renting as well, once there are more homes available for rent.

Can visibly notice several vacant houses around this area that could be put to better use.

Can't afford a home (first time home buyer).

Can't just rent out to any tenant. Impossible to remove a non paying tenant that also damages property. No recourse to recover losses. Better to let it sit empty than you get damaged.

City should get more rules to protect landlord benefits.

Common sense. More available housing = more affordable housing.

Concerned that any one with a cottage would have to pay extremely high amounts and this tax would cost more to administer than it would raise.

Corporate & foreign owners should be banned.

Table 1

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Corporate # company's, are controlling the market, I do not think we have a housing shortage. It is pure unregulated greed.

Corporations and criminal activity bring money into the real estate sector... drives prices up and it makes housing unaffordable for most people on regular incomes.

Corporations buying up housing stock is a larger problem than vacant homes. This is arguably a higher priority issue.

Corporations need to be banned from purchasing residential homes in York Region outright.

Could look into other means for solving housing affordability, e.g. easing zoning amendment to allow semi-detached or townhouse in existing single detached lot. Vacant homes tax would create a burden for Canadian residents to consider purchasing a seasonal-use home or a home for work purposes in another city, and this adversely impacts the overall economy. Economy is good when money circulates within the system, not sitting in one's pocket.

Current law/regulation protects tenants much more than landlords, then tenants easily refuse paying rental. Rental increase is much lower than inflation. Many rentals are in red profits.

Currently living next door to 2 empty houses, one of which was recently converted into a business, the other has remained empty since I moved into my house back in 2014. Caretakers take care of the empty house but no one lives there, it would be better for the population of Canada if houses were used for residences. Too many are either empty or being used as a head office for a business (that is usually empty too). Main Street North is a good example of the problems with empty houses.

Definitely and also the yards should be maintained on these properties and billed above the property taxes.

Depending on the details, e.g., how do you define if a home is vacant?

Depends on how long the home has to be vacant to attract the tax.

Depends on tax program design.

Depends on the amount.

Depends on the definition of vacancy. **[x 2]**

Discourage speculators.

Do not create any additional taxation for homeowners -it is punitive. Focus on building affordable housing Join the mini house prefab house movement. Smaller units are fantastic for our senior population as well.

Do something. This is unfair.

Do we have data on how many homes in York Region are vacant? Is this really an issue for us?

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Does this include houses considered uninhabitable and who makes those decisions?

Doesn't it make sense another way of taxing people?

Don't believe vacant housing is a main cause of the lack of affordable housing.

Don't agree with interference with private ownership unless I am causing unnecessary distress to neighbours.

Don't know of any vacant houses in my neighbourhood, they should make the process to get a house built faster.

Don't punish folks for other people's lack of initiative.

Due to the current high interest rate situation, an extra punishment for those homeowners who are seeking tenants is now reasonable. Once they find they are not only able to afford their mortgage and face extra charge from the government, York Region's eastern market will face more challenges. It also harms our economy.

Each year I observe an increasing number of empty homes with overgrown lots in my neighbourhood, presumably owned by speculators and investors. My children, in their early forties with university education and well paid jobs cannot afford to live here!

Efforts to increase "affordable" options in York Region have been limited to increase in the number of row houses. With these houses now also selling for \$1M+ the Region needs more purpose built rental, high density condos and mixed unit communities. A vacant homes tax could help but owning in York Region is becoming increasingly impossible for middle-income families looking to enter the housing market.

Eliminating the incentive to make what could be a home, a business proposition, could help more people get into the housing market. Affordable housing should be a human right, not a line item in a business proposal.

Emergency services.

Empty homes are unkempt, have a negative effect on neighbourhoods and could be used for rental housing.

Empty homes lacking maintenance.

Empty homes may not be the only reason for increasing housing prices. Taxes on multiple-property owners makes more sense.

Empty homes serve no one except the people that sell it, who might not even be part of the community.

Empty house on my street. It costs us neighbours time and money to maintain this property because otherwise it's a garbage dump.

Empty houses are not good for neighbourhoods. They neglect their property and neighbourhood cohesion.

Empty houses cause home prices to rise.

Table 1

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Empty houses negatively affect the look of a community but most importantly, the feel of it. Empty houses inhibit community engagement with neighbours. And if owners are not stakeholders in community building, then there is little incentive to reach out to improve the municipality. Thank you for embarking on this process to make owning a house in York Region something to be proud of, not just something to make money off of.

Empty houses not only push prices up but they change the neighbourhood. They are often not well maintained and they deprive families of options to live in family oriented neighbourhoods.

Empty houses should be utilised - either rented or sold. No Airbnbs.

Enforcement should be limited to reports from neighbours (like an anonymous website form). Don't waste time and money on trying to find vacant houses, just let the community provide that info.

Enough homes in the area.

Every little thing will help increase available homes.

Everyone I know can point out houses on their street with no one in them, and yet rentals were hard to find and even harder to secure, even at astronomical rates.

Everyone should be able to at least afford one home. Anything more than one is a luxury.

Extreme caution should be taken before introducing any new taxes. It may create more problems than it solves.

Exude heavy vacant homes tax (50%) to allow Canadians / permanent residents the chance to buy property for a fair market price.

Families are being priced out. In addition to a vacant homes tax, there needs to be stricter regulations on foreign buyers and rental companies outbidding taxpayers actually using the residences they live in.

Far too many investment properties are sitting empty while people struggle to find housing to buy or to rent.

Far too many out of country owners & the houses sit empty year round ... ALSO ... The properties aren't kept up either. It's not fair to other residents in the area.

Far too many vacant properties in my community. No yard upkeep.

Finding a place to rent in Markham is difficult and with basement rentals being banned, makes it even harder as there's not a lot of purpose built rentals.

First of all, there should be a law against non-Canadians purchasing property. There is too much foreign investment. We should be like the Bahamas and Philippines. Secondly, no assignments. Too many real estate agents and other investors are scooping up new builds and assigning them before they close. Lastly, we need a vacant homes tax.

First off, find out by survey why people feel that they need to buy a house and leave it vacant (foreign ownership or domestic)... probable answer will be the dysfunctionality of the

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Landlord and Tenant Board and the Residential Act. Currently I am a landlord in a registered duplex.

Fix the LTB and make it easier to put in a legal secondary suite and that would solve the problem.

For homes vacant for more than 8 consecutive months, have a vacancy tax. This allows time to find a tenant.

For how long must it be vacant before being taxed? What if a homeowner is moving and there is an overlap of time while getting the other property ready to move into?

For the bulk of 2021 and the first half of 2022, the houses on both sides of me and the two houses across the street were ALL empty. Thankfully, now they are occupied. This is ridiculous.

For young people who have lived in York Region their whole life, it has become nearly impossible to rent or own a home close to where we work and have built communities. Stricter measures for those driving up the housing costs and reducing supply for their own monetary gain is necessary for those that live and have given their lives in this community.

Ford and other people like him are building houses and condos. Consequently, people from overseas buy these houses as investments and leave them empty. In return, we Ontarians pay the price.

Foreign buyers are purchasing homes for whatever reason where they don't live in the house for periods of time. Their unkempt homes are also an eye sore to the curb appeal of the neighbourhood.

Foreign investment should be banned.

Foreign investors are destroying the chances of acquiring property. People who have lived in York Region their entire lives can't afford to live here anymore. It's sad.

Foreign ownership of an empty residence leads to unkept property

Frankly the reasons for speculation started was due to the real estate agents and all those flip your home shows. You should tax the agents more and also the companies flipping homes. Many are pawns to them and the government catering to them because it results in more getting paid to the government everytime a house is flipped. Isn't that correct?

From my condo, I can see an entire three floors where the lights never turn on. This leads me to believe the owners are not in the city, and the units are vacant. If a tax was levied, some of these units would be rented out.

Government has caused this because of overspending and inflation. And now what to implement more tax?

Government has no right controlling people's property. If they want additional units, they have to provide them. Houses and areas are being destroyed with rooming houses and in-fill, not to accommodate people, but for investors and developers to make a profit.

Table 1

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Government needs to stop resorting to "look good feel good" policies where impact is minimal. Housing supply will not suddenly increase when a tax is introduced. Vacant homes tax will only increase the costs, which will ultimately increase the price of the house leading to even less availability.

Government needs to take its nose out of people's business.

Government should ease steps of getting building permits for developers and builders so they can build new houses faster and in bigger quantities. Government cannot solve people's problems by taking more money (by adding more taxes) from other people. Those who have more than one property, pay enough taxes, interest and other fees.

Government should have no business with private property.

Government should stay out of the market. It always backfires.

GTA is relatively more affordable than any other first tier city in the world. The Canadian economy is also held on by a string to the real estate market.

Have Toronto and Vancouver's plans been reviewed? How much are they taking in from this tax? I'm not sure vacant homes are as big a problem in York Region.

Having a home vacant means that the cost of rent is high because of low supply. There also needs to be rent control as the rents are basically paying the mortgages of owners. With inflation increasing rent is going to be a challenge.

Having done the census around this area, too many houses are left empty either due to too high of a renting cost or house owners unwilling to part with the house due to no one willing to buy at the exorbitant price they want (trying to make money off their purchase).

Having houses sit empty is a problem not only impacts affordable housing but neighbourhoods as well. I don't want empty houses in my neighbourhood and those that choose to do this can definitely afford a vacant house tax.

Having lived in a condo, I was astounded at how many were empty investment units. We need our built properties to be homes for families. People are struggling to find a place to live and as a result of this, one of the factors that makes rent skyrocket...not that our new-builds have any protection for that anyway.

Home next door has been vacant for almost 4 years and owners live elsewhere while under construction.

Home owners are already paying property tax so why are they being punished for owning a second home? This is against constitutional rights.

Home ownership should be accessible for all. Having a roof over your head is a necessity, not a privilege. Tax the rich. Aggressively.

Homeless will become a bigger issue than it already is. Not enough affordable housing for seniors.

Homes are a necessity, not a gambling chip.

Table 1

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Homes are commodities like cars, not investments. People deserve affordable places to live. Build subdivisions and rental property that are not "luxury". Homes are not a luxury, they are a commodity. They build luxury cars and economy cars. Why have we stopped building economy houses?

Homes are essential to life and shouldn't be used as an investment opportunity!

Homes are for living in and should not be used as a piggy bank for non-principal owners.

Homes are more of an investment than a place for people to live. York Region should focus on community and ensuring homes of all values exist for residents. My wife and I will probably be leaving York Region to seek more affordable housing. Unless effort is put into making more affordable and community driven places to live. Including Vacant Home Tax, and alternative (and sustainable) secondary dwellings are affordable and uncomplicated to build; such as garden homes, tiny homes, and laneway houses.

Homes are not investment products to be collected and speculated on.

Homes are to be lived in not treated as a casino the way they are currently being treated.

Homes bought on speculation which remain vacant are contributing to the housing shortage and inaccessibility for people even to rent. If you can afford multiple homes, you can afford a vacant tax... the taxes should increase as per the number of vacant homes owned.

Homes need to be lived in. Speculation has caused increased home prices and taken away community feel from neighbourhoods. Homes and lawns are neglected while owners ignore their responsibilities.

Homes pending construction, variance approvals or listed for sale that are left vacant for long periods of time should be taxed.

Homes should be at least lived in and not be empty. At least in some way help the housing issue.

Homes should be discouraged to sit unvacated in any way possible. A tax should be one of those tools to discourage people buying homes with no intention of living in them.

Homes should be for families.

Homes should be for living in, not a financial asset plan based on property speculation. While this doesn't fully address that issue, it's a good first step.

Homes should be for people to live in rather than left empty for the hopes of an increase in house prices. Owners that do not rent out their extra houses have absolutely no interest in what we need as a community to ease the housing crisis. It also begs the question on whether these types of owners are laundering money from illegal activities. If a criminal wants to park their money, what better way than to buy a house and wait to sell?

Homes should be homes and NOT investments.

Homes should be lived in, not just investment. Young adults cannot afford to buy where they grew up and begin their careers.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

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Homes should be made available for people who live and work in York Region. Vacant home tax will deter investors from using housing for profit. Housing is a basic human right - it should be accessible to all.

Homes should be occupied and not just investments to park money in - if you can park money in real estate, you should pay more so the money can be put towards achieving affordable housing.

Homes should not be held empty as people can't find a place to live.

Homes should not be sitting vacant for any reason.

Homes should not be vacant, period!

Homes sitting vacant keep people on the streets [homeless].

Homes under estate should be excluded if the estate has not been resolved; sometimes this can go on for decades.

House across the street from us is vacant and is in need of attention. Makes the neighbourhood a mess.

House down the street has been vacant for years. I think this just raises the price of houses because there is less stock on hand.

House is for living, not for investment.

House nearby has been empty for several years. Sad that someone could be living there.

House prices (for both ownership and rent) in York Region continue to be some of the highest prices in Ontario making it more challenging to live here for most people. Some homes even within my own neighbourhood seem abandoned and perhaps adding a vacant tax, would encourage these homeowners to rent them for profit. Win for the homeowner, win for the renter.

House prices are expensive in York Region making it very difficult for new entrants. With the rental market sparse, this limits families struggling to live in York Region.

House prices have risen quickly. Pricing all but the wealthy out of owning their own shelter. Rents are high and again rising quickly. These should be capped. House prices and rent limits should be legislated.

Houses are for living and should never be allowed to be used as a commodity or a vehicle for investment. As far as I'm concerned, there should be an exponential increase of taxation for every additional property people own outside their primary residence. Nobody needs 2 homes!

Houses are for living in. Treating them as an item to be hoarded removes a critical public resource and is contrary to the public good.

Houses are not affordable and renting in York Region isn't affordable either.

Table 1

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Houses are private property. Owners paid with their own money. Owners have the right to decide what to do with their own property. They are not running a charity organization. It is against the constitution to force people on how to use their private property. Besides, current laws do not protect landlords' interest fairly.

Houses should not be left sitting empty when there is a shortage of rental properties. Some of these properties are unkept and would be better kept if someone lived in them. Please implement a vacancy tax.

Housing affordability crisis is impacted by many factors. Vacant residential properties are a small factor. With increasing land development costs from municipalities and cost of land, these expenses are downloaded onto the “consumers” from builders. Additionally, the process for permit approvals in the cities takes months and sometimes years. This affects the speed at which housing can be built for consumers, thus affecting availability and access.

Housing affordability is at a crisis point. Vacancy tax is a good starting point but please also consider more aggressive and direct tactics also.

Housing affordability is only an issue for those who have not yet entered the market. But once you are in the market, then it's not an issue. If you are a senior, then it can actually be good because you can sell your house and retire with a nice sum of money. Therefore, it only affects a subset of the population. My reason for saying that York Region should implement a Vacant Homes Tax is that it's nice to live in neighbourhoods where there are people living inside houses. People drive communities. Not much fun if the houses are sitting empty, then what kind of a neighbourhood community do you have left?

Housing affordability must be addressed. The number of people that commute into York Region to work needs to be reduced to help with sustainability and environmental challenges. Our children should be able to afford to live in York Region but I am afraid that most cannot.

Housing as an economic asset creates worsening financial conditions for regular people.

Housing as an investment should be heavily disincentivized. It should primarily be seen as a place for people to live, and a tax would help shift the public's perception in that direction.

Housing crisis is destroying lives while speculators are getting rich by treating residential real estate as a trendy stock. It has to stop by any means necessary.

Housing is a basic necessity. There should be limits to profit over affordable housing.

Housing is a human right (in the UDHR). It should be affordable for everyone. No one should be allowed to speculate on an essential right such as housing. We need to ban the owning of more than 3 properties by any person or company (1 principal residence, 1 vacation residence, and 1 rental maximum) and implement significant vacant homes taxes to eliminate speculation and increase supply.

Housing is becoming more and more unattainable for the younger demographic. Many homes in Markham are unoccupied and could be rented out to increase the supply of housing.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

Housing is becoming VERY unaffordable. There is a lot of vacant housing as investment, which is not beneficial to the residents of York Region. This needs to be addressed to ensure everyone can afford to buy or even rent a home.

Housing is for living, not for flipping.

Housing is going to be the biggest crisis besides global warming and tackling this matter needs to be proactive rather than reactive. If we choose to do nothing then homelessness will become more common, and housing should be a basic right.

Housing is much more expensive than five years, and more and more people cannot afford it. It will influence the quality of life, and less and less people want to immigrate to Canada.

Housing is no longer affordable for young people and families in York Region - even renting has become unaffordable for many people. More options would help the prices be affordable. The Region won't grow without young people and families to sustain it.

Housing is not a commodity. It is a necessity, and every person should have a place to live that they can afford.

Housing is not an investment, it should be for shelter, a residence. If people are buying homes and not using them, they should not own them, period.

Housing prices and rent have been driven up unnecessarily due to the greed of other people. There are people in Canada and other places in the world using their obscene amounts of money to buy whatever they want for whatever price, making it impossible for fair, good people from purchasing a basic necessity. It's ok to buy for the intent of renting it out if it's a fair, affordable rent as not everyone can get or even wants to carry a mortgage.

Housing should be for residents. No home should be vacant when there is a housing shortage.

Housing should be for shelter, not an investment vehicle.

Housing should be used, not held for speculators to keep shortages and increase prices.

Housing should not be allowed to stay vacant for any reason let alone when there is a housing shortage.

Housing should not be treated as a commodity.

Housing should not be treated as an investment. It prevents families from affording a house that they can own and grow their families. It also makes housing unaffordable and takes houses out of the market and properties are being left in poor shape. I think a tax rate high enough to discourage this speculation is needed.

Housing supply is limited, hopefully introducing the vacant tax will encourage housing supply to increase. And in turn rental and housing prices will be more affordable.

How do you monitor?

How will this be reported? What is the estimated impact? Is this a higher priority than looking at zoning laws? Or other options?

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

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Human Rights – these rights include the right to live free from torture, the right to live free from slavery, the right to own property, the right to equality and dignity, and the right to live free from all forms of discrimination.

I agree that people who can afford a second home are influencing high pricing by not 'sharing' what they have in making it available for rent, it feels as though they just want more rental money than what the market would list it at, in a time where people can't afford what's already out there. Then it also just takes one more house off the market, a market which doesn't have much to offer in the first place. However, I don't like the idea of it being a tax. Where is that money going, how is it being spent? I would prefer that it be tax money that goes directly into the housing market to help lower prices or to lower interest rates.... Essentially, I would love that tax to be recycled back into the housing market, but in favour of the buyer.

I agree that York Region is facing a housing affordability crisis and the laws should not favour real estate speculators who buy property and leave it vacant. This provides no meaningful economic contribution to the Region.

I am a 30-year-old female living with my mother because I cannot afford full rent for a decent home at the current market value, let alone affording a house. This is extremely disheartening and a huge cause for depression. It is disgusting that our government has even allowed things to escalate this far.

I am a 40 yr old York Region employee who will sadly never be able to purchase a home in York Region due to the outrageous real estate costs. I need to consider moving my family outside of the GTA due to this. My elderly parents do not own a home and the cost of rent now far exceeds their pension. They have been on a waiting list for affordable housing for over ten years and still have not been offered an opportunity for affordable housing, which is quite sad for taxpayers who have lived in York Region for over 40 years.

I am a real estate broker and I feel that the speculators of new homes have really messed up the market for buyers who want to buy but can't afford to as there are homes not in circulation as they sit vacant.

I am a realtor. You cannot believe how many homes on the market for rent or for sale are vacant. I estimate that 90% of the homes I show are vacant.

I am a renter and not sure if this survey assumes I am a homeowner.

I am a senior whose apartment is being intended for a family member from Japan in September. I can't find an apartment to rent for \$1100 inclusive and houses are sitting empty all over our Region. I say tax the owners to the gills!

I am a single parent with a decent salary, but can only afford to have my teenage daughter live in a windowless, door-less 8ft X 9ft "room" that is a den in a condo. The location is not great either. We are both very unhappy about this yet financially cannot afford anything better. Meanwhile, many people are buying one residential property after another, using money they earned from renting out those properties, or by "flipping" properties.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

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I am a young person finding it challenging to move out on my own due to the cost of housing. But I know that there are many people who have empty houses or are purchasing land for investment instead of leaving that space for people in my situation.

I am an adjudicator at the Landlord and Tenant Board. I have a front row seat to the suffering that is taking place in York Region due to the absolute scarcity of affordable housing. This is affecting families, the elderly, people with disabilities etc.

I am frustrated with people living on the streets or encampments in York Region due to there being a lack of rentals and then I discover that there are vacant homes in York Region. If a person buys a home in York Region and chooses to keep this home vacant then I definitely believe a very large penalty must be issued for this cruel and selfish home owner. I am angry that vacant homes in York Region have been left unresolved until now. A house is meant for people to live in. I wish there was a law that having vacant homes was against the law in York Region. Too many working poor families in York Region have nowhere to live at this moment.

I am married with 2 young children. We are a double-income household and we rent a 2-bedroom apartment in Thornhill. We would love to move into a larger place to accommodate our family, but we simply cannot afford it. 3+ bedroom apartments or homes are in high demand and are exorbitantly expensive. This has far-reaching implications for us, including making us feel that we cannot afford to have more children.

I am struggling monthly, and currently lease in a neighbourhood where there are clearly vacant homes. A vacant homes tax would open up the inventory to potential tenants or owners increasing the overall inventory in York Region of housing. Provided owners do not turn to short-term rentals such as Airbnb rather than vacant homes.

I am sure that people can find their way around this.

I am temporarily renting in Markham and I am shocked by the number of houses not occupied, the homes have automatic lights that go on and off and some homes have someone maintaining the property, but people have not lived in the homes for years. Some homes are not maintained at all and they look disgusting. My original plan was to purchase in Markham, but because of this I have changed my mind. Some of them sold a while back, but they remain empty.

I and many others struggle to afford housing. I believe that a vacant homes tax will encourage property speculators to open up more homes for occupation, creating more supply in the market and thus driving down prices to rent and to own.

I believe access to affordable housing should be a borderline right and we need to provide for those who struggle to find adequate housing over real estate speculators and foreign ownership. In fact, ban any foreign and/or corporations from owning property.

I believe access to affordable housing should be a right. Instead, housing has become another asset in a portfolio. I’m lucky enough to be able to own. I know many who cannot even afford to rent.

I believe in letting the market dictate outcomes. The taxpayer/investor should not be paying the price for and therefore burdened by governments inability to find solutions for the

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housing shortage. Removing the barriers to increasing housing inventory would do more good than punishing investors.

I believe it would help with speculator buying.

I believe the VHT would be an excellent idea.

I believe this could have a negative effect on small landlords. There seems to be less affordable housing despite all the government programs to support it. Perhaps letting the market economy work with less interference would be preferable.

I believe this is another tax grab, the number of vacant homes would have to be huge to make this worthwhile. Homes sit empty for a lot of reasons. If I as a Canadian citizen want to purchase an exorbitantly expensive 2 property or third I should be able to do so without further taxing!

I believe this would encourage homeowners to either rent or sell unused secondary residence thereby providing more housing options.

I believe those who are foreign investors should not be able to purchase property here if it sits empty or needs a limit on how many they can have. I love York Region but it's so expensive now.

I believe York Region should implement a taxing structure similar to the one that Singapore has, wherein you are taxed based upon the annual value and that the tax rates are progressive. Then, you are taxed upon properties that are fully rented, or vacant. With commercial and industrial properties being taxed at a flat rate.

I can understand buying to fix up and resell, but that doesn't help fix our lack of adequate housing or affordable housing.

I can understand one may have difficulty renting out a non-principal residence. Hence the Vacant Homes Tax should be justified based on the rental market's volatility.

I cannot afford to move into a larger rental because the prices are way too high. My husband and I both work hard but we get priced out. It is unfortunate.

I disagree with making this the "norm" for all municipalities as it is a blanket solution. Put the money for the infrastructure of this program toward subsidizing current rentals as well as allowing tiny homes on properties to be rented out and perhaps subsidizing a program for homeowners to participate in to accommodate this.

I do not believe foreign or domestic investors should own properties they don't intend to reside in.

I do not believe that punishing someone who has worked hard to achieve what they have is fair. I work hard and saved up to buy rental properties and I am a great landlord, why should I be taxed extra when I created a home for other families who could not afford it? My suggestion is to take the York Region office buildings that are sitting at 50% capacity, rezone them to multi-residential and turn them into affordable housing units. The other suggestion is to buy out motel/hotel units and convert them into affordable housing units. Why does the government always strike at the hard working citizen trying to get ahead to support

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themselves and not create a burden on the taxpayers? Be fair to hard working residents, do not over tax them. Thank you.

I do not think vacant homes are driving the affordability crisis. York Region needs to zone for greater density, everywhere, including areas that are single family detached homes. Greater supply will fix this problem.

I don't believe I should be taxed on a property I own that is vacant. It could be vacant due to a dispute over an estate or I could decide to live overseas for more than 6 months. I worked hard to pay for my home and should not have to incur extra tax if I decide to stay elsewhere for whatever reason.

I don't know the definition of "Vacant home" so I can't answer. My rental property had been vacant for over 1 year because of the slow renovation due to the COVID restrictions. It would probably be defined "vacant" if the threshold is very low. That would be unfair. Another example. During the last 2 covid years it had been very hard to find any tenants. Many houses would be defined as "vacant". If this tax is levied on them, it is unfair too. People pay their property tax and it's up to the owners to do with their properties if it's well maintained. On the other hand, I agree that too many vacant properties impacts the economic ecosystem in the area. So I strongly disagree with this tax. It's hard to implement.

I don't like it when the yard is left to go to weeds. Such as waste when people could be living there.

I don't think this initiative on its own will solve for affordability, but it's a step in the right direction.

I don't believe there is a housing shortage in York Region and feel taxing those who have multiple homes won't address housing affordability. Housing affordability could be fixed by increasing minimum wages, lowering interest rates and the cost of living.

I don't think anyone should be forced to rent out their property. Especially when the Landlord Tenant act is so lopsided in favour of tenants. The housing shortage should be fixed by creating higher density, less red tape and lowering development charges for those who are willing to build higher density.

I don't think homes should be vacant at all. If you own a house, someone should live in it. There is a housing shortage.

I don't think penalizing people that are fortunate to buy an investment house and not be able to rent it out is the right thing to do. I think the government needs to do many more things before they penalize people for the fruits of their labour.

I doubt it would have any real impact on the affordability issue and would be more expensive to enforce than its gain/income generated. A waste of time and resources.

I feel it is important to tax owners where the property is vacant and no maintenance is being done (ie. lawn is waist high) since this can reflect poorly on the neighbourhood and affect prices and desirability.

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I find most renters have little respect for property, who will cover the cost of any damages incurred and people do not wish to rent their properties b/c the renter seems to have more rights than the owner, now try and get them out of your home.

I find the current policies attract home builders, developers and speculators, none of which value the neighbourhood, style, or lifestyle more than the "money aspect." Our neighbourhood has negatively been impacted by this approach. Vacant homes and properties are generally not well maintained and not in the best interest of the Region or residents.

I grew up here and hold a very stable and well-paying job, but I will never feel like I will be able to move out of my parents' house that they bought nearly two decades ago.

I hate to add yet another tax but if it helped neighbourhoods keep their space nice then I am for it.

I have 3 residences, winter, summer & shoulder seasons. Since I don't live in any one of them for 6 months at a time they would be considered vacant and taxed under this proposed tax. In other words it would be a wealth tax, NOT a vacancy tax.

I have a PhD in Chemistry and work as a research scientist. If not for my family ties, I would not reside in Canada, as my salary and cost of living would be far better in the United States. This problem of housing needs to be taken very seriously. And if not dealt with soon, many young, ambitious, well-educated Canadians with hopes of sewing seeds of their futures in this country will leave for one that offers far more fertile ground to do so.

I have had friends forced to move to other regions & provinces as their landlord had them move out of their rental to raise the price, left it empty and they had to completely uproot young families due to lack of availability in York Region. We have had empty rental houses beside ours - unsecured, unsafe, unkempt landscape/grass which then caused rats & others pests to come into our home.

I have noticed the number of bungalows on my street being left vacant because developers intend to knock them down. These houses could provide a home to low-income families until the developer receives the permits necessary to start the demolition and building. Many single people and some families just need temporary shelter until they can find better places to live. Even the federal and provincial governments buy up land for future use as airports or parks but end up allowing the housing on those properties to deteriorate until they are unusable for tenants. These property owners could be bringing in a small income from these properties with just a small investment to maintain the property. Low rent properties are desperately needed in York Region. High rent condos are not needed.

I have seen a number of homes in my community sitting empty for years. These are homes that could be enjoyed by families. Instead they are not maintained and do not add to the community.

I have seen an increased number of houses in my neighbourhood that were purchased yet have been vacant or rather used as Airbnb for a lengthy period of time (over 2 years). I fully support introducing the Vacant Homes Tax that municipalities can use to build more affordable housing and maybe even use those vacant houses for a reduced price to rent for families in need of housing.

Table 1

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I have seen homes being sold by longtime residents to cash out in the hot market and be sold to owners who have no intention to live in them ever. These houses which were once well kept SINGLE family dwellings have become unkempt and abandoned homes or rented to multiple people who have no vested interest in keeping these homes maintained. It punishes those that have to live next to them or across from them. The city does very little if next to nothing to enforce those owners to ensure they maintain the property or even worse keep them as single family homes instead of rooming houses or a turnstile of renters. NOT OK.

I have seen houses sitting empty. The house is not properly cared for and there are families in need of housing.

I have seen many good homes sit vacant for +5 years that could easily be rented out, including our immediate neighbour. York Region has a large population of people experiencing homelessness, and very few shelters and other services to support them. We need to take every step we can to provide housing - especially deeply affordable housing.

I heard only 4,000 homes fell into this category which is a small number of houses given the total of residences in York Region. What is the cost to manage and administer the tax, as the tax collected must cover the cost to manage the vacant homes tax system?

I know 5 houses within 1 block of my house which sit empty. Grass is not maintained. No neighbourhood feel.

I know homes that are sitting empty on my street. It is unfair for people who are looking for homes to live while you have homes sitting empty everyday.

I know in our neighbourhood several houses are for sale and belong to people overseas. They've been on sale for months. One of these owners won't lower his asking price. In the meantime, I know of several families who are looking to buy (or even rent) a detached house to no avail. It does seem idiotic to see these properties left on the market with zero maintenance for months while some families would love to move in there. The owner should be free not to sell/rent if he doesn't want to, but since he's not living in Canada anymore he should contribute to the economy. A tax on vacant properties might be useful in that respect.

I know many new immigrants working hard but couldn't find affordable housing with their salary. I also knew some others not working in Canada but own multiple houses in GTA. Some of them are vacant because they care more about housing price gains rather than rent.

I know of two vacant homes in my immediate neighbourhood. Together those two detached homes could conceivably house four families. They have been vacant for 8 months. A person's need for housing should not be trumped by an investor.

I know people with deep pockets buying up properties just to flip it later. This drives up the housing price and rents. Meanwhile, first time homebuyers can't afford a house and renters can't find a place to rent.

I know several people (one of which is a family of 5) at this time that are currently looking for affordable housing and they are having an extremely difficult time. Everything is 25% or

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more than they are currently paying and are being forced to leave. This is causing them great stress and I hate to see this.

I like the concept but I think the implementation will be difficult and there will be lots of loopholes making it a barrier to its enforcement.

I like the idea of a vacant homes tax, but it's easier to actually answer once you've seen details.

I live at the top end of Unionville Main Street. There are at least 6 empty homes in my immediate area.

I live beside a house purchased by a speculator who lives in Markham and it has been left to fall into ruin. It is unpleasant to look at and attracts vagrants, vandals and animals. I have had to call the police and bylaw.

I live in a new construction neighbourhood. Many homes here are vacant and have been for years. They are also the homes that are unkempt.

I live in a new housing development in northern Keswick. A very good majority of these new homes are vacant and owned by speculators. OR, they are rented out as Airbnbs. It's sad to see these homes sitting empty when there are so many people needing a good place to live. No one wants a neighbourhood like this, with homes owned by greedy speculators that do not care about the community.

I live in a newish townhouse development. Have been here for about 3 years. Over the years I watch multiple townhouses sit vacant with no renters/owners using it. Sometimes a sold sign stays up for 6 months or more. I think a vacant homes tax would encourage and/or force many that treat the Canadian real estate market as a casino to either occupy or rent the home thus improving supply and competition in the rental market. This may help reduce rental pricing and/or stop "Investors" from eating up all the housing.

I live in a small neighbourhood and many of the surrounding homes have shifted to become rental properties. We are very fortunate to have had some wonderful neighbours over the years however they are unable to stay long due to the affordability of rent. This also means there are times when the properties sit empty with no one to maintain them. Yards become overgrown and calls to the town are made to clean them up as this really dampens the spirits of the neighbourhood for others who own and rent here. As we often have never seen the landlords we have also had to deal with large trees crashing onto our properties with no one to trim and maintain them, this poses a risk so I do feel these properties should be taxed to cover the cost of the town having to support the other residents and ensure these vacant properties are taken care of.

I live in a subdivision with many homes that have been vacant since the purchase date more than five years ago. These are multi million dollar homes. Having this many vacant homes in a 209-home subdivision is unacceptable.

I live in an upscale neighbourhood and several houses in my area have been vacant for years, one for over seven years. These are houses, bought years ago, that could have been purchased as residences by a family not bought as an investment.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

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I live in geared-to-income seniors housing- there is a long wait list BUT several apartments are empty permanently because their tenants live out of the country and just keep an address here in Canada- this process should be stopped- we have too many people waiting for apartments!

I live in King City and we have dozens of empty homes- just sitting there waiting to be redeveloped by the speculators. York Region should consider a vacant homes tax. Some houses in my neighbourhood have been vacant for 5+ years. There are 6 within a 5 minute walk from my house. These houses should have people living in them.

I live next to one and it is so disgusting to look at. It also brings about trouble with people trespassing and causes problems.

I mainly believe in a free market where people should have the right to choose what they want to do with the home that they've purchased. The rise of real estate is a natural progression. I agree that the increase at times has been drastic, and I agree with a small (reasonable) tax to help address this. However, there will always be financial challenges in acquiring a home, and it's also an unrealistic view to assume everyone should own their own home. To introduce a high tax (over 2%) is an option I don't agree with.

I make 100,000 a year. A very good salary. I was almost unable to live in my own town, where I have lived for 20 years, upon my divorce. If I can barely hang on, how can anyone with one salary make it? Or two salaries less than mine? Then there are the taxes. :(

I moved here in 2020 into a basement apartment that was affordable. If I ever want to move I can't even find a room for rent for the rent I pay now. It is terrible. I will be leaving York Region because of this, spending my money elsewhere and finding a new job outside of the Region. This does not make sense to me. It is hard enough for employers to find good workers but to force good workers to leave because of housing issues? Bad for the Region.

I need more info.

I need to know more details. Who will benefit from this benefit? How will it help with the younger generation affording a home?

I own the property...I can do what I like with it....if it sits empty...that's my right... Stop taxing everyone.

I pass houses regularly that are unoccupied, many are owned by owners that do not live in Canada. This is causing a problem by increasing home prices, lack of home availability, the only winner is the property owner gaining financially. Rules need to be changed.

I prefer to live in a populated neighbourhood with real neighbours (whether owners or renters) rather than live beside empty houses

I see homes in my area that are empty. If there are many, it kills the overall vibrancy of the community for everyone else - it's like living in a ghost town.

I see many houses on my street empty, some for years. Speculators are buying houses and driving prices up. Many are not interested in renting to tenants or living there. These houses are taken off the market for families who could be living there.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

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I see many houses sitting vacant for months and months. Some have been a year or more. And rental prices are unaffordable. Especially for a single income family (single parents) or retired people. If the supply increases, then the affordability will as well. Homelessness will increase if we don't do something now.

I see so many houses sold and stay empty. It's a crime.

I see the houses that are empty, grass is over a foot tall. There are several I see when I walk my dog everyday. I understand they want an investment, but they should be paying the equivalent of rent each month. Then it would encourage them to rent out their investment property.

I see too many vacant properties while many people struggle to find affordable housing.

I see vacant homes in my neighbourhood.

I should be able to decide if I want to rent my property rather than being taxed forcefully. I paid for it with my own money with no government subsidies.

I strongly feel the government should mind their own business! What do you care if a house is vacant? As long as the property taxes are paid it's not your concern! Tax grab in disguise of housing advocates... MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!

I strongly support this tax, it's necessary!

I strongly suspect there are illegal rentals in the area along with landlords not maintaining properties but charging exorbitant sums to renters, making our Region, in effect, less desirable to live in and unsafe for tenants. The amount of crime has skyrocketed as well which also concerns me...with a lack of government oversight and enforcement, thieves know they can get away with it. York is no longer safe or desirable to me as a homeowner. Municipalities have a role in enforcement, they cannot wait for the province or Feds to do something. A Vacant Tax can help support enforcement resourcing (police and municipal inspectors and data collection).

I suggest you should implement a tax that will actually financially disrupt the real estate investors and not just be a minor inconvenience to them. The primary use of housing should be for living in, not for profit.

I think buying a house in the York Region is impossible and when I heard that a lot of the houses that are bought are empty because the owners were outside Canada, I was furious!

I think it's unacceptable for someone to essentially take housing off the market for personal gain.

I think keeping a home that is not in use merely for speculation should come at a cost.

I think that we already pay property taxes for our homes whether we reside in them or not. It is unfair for homeowners to pay extra taxes just because they own multiple properties.

I think the government should leave people alone with their choices of what they do with their property. If it's vacant they have a reason...no one is just going to leave a property vacant without a reason.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

I think this is a good idea for foreign buyers who do not plan on living in Canada.

I think this should go even further. Lots of houses in our area were torn down and a mega mansion built. No one lives in it. 1 year later it's put up for sale. They claim it as their primary residence, putting it under the name of a family member. Tons of examples. This is a home that could have been rented out or sold to some who wanted to live in it.

I want to live in York Region, to have kids and raise them here. However you walk in what are amazing neighbourhoods and there are houses sitting empty. There is nowhere to actually live. People are buying houses and they are just sitting empty. It's awful and sad.

I want to stay in York Region but homes are crazy expensive now. My wife and I, along with our 2 yr old daughter, are likely going to have to move further north in order to get the home we desire, now. This would mean a longer commute to work for me.

I was on the Rent Geared to Income list for 16 years before I got a spot. That is beyond unacceptable in my opinion.

I will never be able to buy a home. Houses are sitting empty while people can't afford a place to live.

I work in the shelter system and there's a real problem. Availability and Affordability.

I would have loved to buy a detached house but I could only afford an apartment. I'm hoping the tax will make more options available.

I would like to upsize but it is almost impossible to afford in York Region. I fear that my children will never be able to afford housing.

I would not like to have a vacant house on our street, it is bad enough with all the renters.

I would simply prohibit any property being sold to non-residents of Canada. Follow the example of Australia, Switzerland and a few more who did that. All successful as far as I know.

I would vote for any actions that take speculators out of the real estate market including improved rules and regulations for real estate agents who have caused much of the issue by not being honest and forthright.

I'm 22 and studying to be a welder. It's clear to me and my immediate friend circle that the prospects of living near where we grew up look pretty grim. While you're at it please change zoning laws so developers don't have to either build huge condos or detached single family homes. I believe the GTA is in dire need of in-between housing options. I know it's wishful thinking and this will fall on deaf ears, I can only hope otherwise.

I'm 35 years old and was fortunate enough to purchase my first home (detached, 1700 sqft, built in 2011) in Simcoe Landing in Keswick in 2015. I purchased my home for approx \$485K and was able to secure an affordable mortgage of \$1,089 bi-weekly. At that particular time that was expensive for a house in York Region, especially in Keswick. For the 4 years I lived in that neighbourhood, I would walk my dog throughout the different blocks. I remember seeing home after home after home being vacant. Some streets were completely devoid of life! It was so bad that some homes had overgrowth of weeds and I recall seeing notices

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Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

posted on doors from the local by-law indicating the homeowner would be fined for not maintaining the property. Fast forward to 2019, I sold my house for \$625K and bought a new build in the Georgina Heights community in Keswick, just off of Church St. I purchased my new home for approx \$789K and if I wanted to sell it today, I can get up to \$1.4 million. Overall, I've made around \$107,290 in equity per year since 2015. How is that even possible when just 20-30 years ago the equity of a typical house in Canada would be maybe 5-10% per year. If you had a lot of money, it's a no-brainer to buy homes in York Region and just sit on them. Since I purchased my new home in 2019, it's gained 25% equity on the purchase price each year! Whether it's foreign buyers, local investors, or national/international companies buying homes in York Region to make a profit, vacant homes must be taxed heavily – no exceptions! As of today, there are four vacant homes surrounding my house, and I haven't seen a soul living in them, it's disgusting. I'm tired of gentrification plaguing York Region neighbourhoods and my friends being forced to live in unsafe neighbourhoods because that's all they can afford.

I'm between 25-30 and I cannot afford a home. I will have to find a wife first before I ever come close to buying my own place.

I'm not sure a vacant homes tax is the answer. What about issuing fewer permits for the construction of McMansions and forcing developers to produce affordable housing?

I've seen a number of homes, obviously unoccupied or have never been occupied, which are deteriorating due to lack of maintenance.

I'm a civil engineer and can't afford to continue living here much longer. Plus there is no diversity. It'll be one race dominating an area. I want it to be mixed like Cornell but for that we need to be more inviting to everyone, not just people who can afford to pay higher prices.

I'm looking to buy and the amount of investors who own vacant or rental properties here prevents supply for regular families who just want to buy a home to live in.

I've seen many condos along Yonge street which you can tell are empty. I've seen the same things with houses. Empty houses either that are perfectly maintained or in bad shape.

Ideally, it should be a non-principal residence tax or outright ban. That would be easier to administer and provide a greater dampening effect on real estate prices.

If a home is purchased by a foreigner and sits vacant for 3 months or more it should be taxed.

If a home is vacant for reasons described in question 6, I 100% agree. In instances where an elderly individual must vacate their home so they can transition to another residence, such as retirement living, I don't agree with the vacant tax for a set time period, such as a year.

If a house is vacant for over a certain period of time, the owner should be taxed. One month is probably too short because perhaps they are looking for tenants.

If a resident of York Region owns a vacant home they should not be taxed. Since they are a resident, they have to pay taxes and maintain their properties which provides income to the cities. If it's a non Canadian resident then I would propose a tax to non Canadians owning vacant property or property in general. Not just an added sales tax as there is today.

Table 1

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If a unit is waiting for sale or rent, or during renovation, the homeowner should be charged for vacant homes tax.

If I choose to purchase a second property it is no business of the government what I choose to do with that property. Who the heck do you think you are to tax me based on what I choose to do with my own property?

If I have a cottage in northern Ontario & I spend 7 months a year there I should be able to keep my principal residence in York Region for use 5 months out of the year without paying a vacant homes tax.

If I own property, I should be able to choose to leave it vacant.

If it is on unused property for the purpose of speculation, yes. But this won't solve our housing affordability problem - it would merely be a small part of a larger strategy.

If it means cheaper housing prices and rent, then do it.

If it will help reduce prices I agree. If it has no impact, then it's pointless.

If it would help young families have a better selection of affordable houses to buy as they are starting out, in York Region, then I'm all for it. I get frustrated seeing houses in my neighbourhood sell & then sit empty. My son wants to buy his first home but would have to move pretty far away to find something affordable.

If not used on a principal residency, extra tax would be helpful.

If people have money in their account, they get taxed. So instead they put it into a different asset.

If someone owns property and pays municipal taxes on said property, they should be given the freedom to do what they wish with it.

If the housing crisis is not addressed, many people will leave Canada in search of affordable housing. Implementing vacant homes tax deter selfish and greedy individuals from buying all the available housing.

If the owner of a second property isn't going to rent out the home, they are simply hoarding what could be someone else's shelter.

If the Region collects all of the property Tax that is on the Regions' Registry , then they have no Business telling or directing the Home Owner what to do with his asset.

If the tax can address affordability, then any investment in infrastructure is not required. Since the vacant rate is low, it is a housing supply issue caused by increased population. If more houses are built, the price will be down and more people can afford, the government can collect more property tax and fees. This is a win-win situation. If a new tax is introduced, people and businesses are moving out of this area. Less tax/fee will be collected. It is a lose-lose situation.

If there are vacant homes then we do not have an issue with housing affordability. It's called capitalism.

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If there is a high number of vacant units that are actually causing the problem then yes implement the tax. Especially if the units are foreign owned. If they are locally owned and used as Airbnb, I'm not so sure I would go after those as passive rental income is taxed at 50% and so they are actually contributing back to the economy.

If they can afford a vacant investment property then let them pay extra taxes for it.

If they have the dough then why not. When things crash, who will help... investors will.

If Toronto has implemented that tax, how well does it work? High rental housing may not solve the problem with this tax. Someone in my neighbourhood rents a small house for 3800\$ and there was a betting war on it. The owner is not a resident of Canada. How would a tax help the renter?

If vacant homes are truly contributing to housing affordability, then yes implement a tax. What is the evidence to support the premise that it is?

If vacant homes were rented, it would increase rental supply. However, BNB should be regulated and or discouraged.

If vacant then the whole premise of renting for profit is not being achieved.

If vacant they must cut grass and keep it respectful.

If York Region wants affordable housing, then go after the developers so they build 900 sq ft bungalows like post war homes in Toronto. They were more affordable than the monster homes people are 'speculating' on now, and there would be more people able to afford to purchase those starter homes.

If you are using a property for income/investment, the empty space should not go to waste (either leaving it empty for investment purposes or waiting until the rental market picks up after a downturn).

If you can afford a property, you should be able to afford a vacant homes tax. Vacant properties are mostly apparent, unkempt looking and can affect property sales of other homes in the area. It's criminal to buy up property and leave it empty when there are so many people looking for somewhere to live.

If you can afford to leave a home vacant, then you can afford the taxes on it. **[x 2]**

If you own something but don't use it, do you pay tax on it continuously? It is simply not right to have vacant tax.

If you tax a vacant home then the owner who could be looking for the right tenants will probably be forced to sell due to financial upkeep with the extra tax and therefore will have to sell and then who will buy it if no one can afford anything anymore? Don't tax it...

If you're not living in a house and someone else is breaking themselves trying to find somewhere to live that isn't 75% of their income you're a jerk. This needs to stop.

If your definition is strictly that of the paragraph above, then a tax should be implemented.

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Implement the vacant homes tax, including tax on second home tax which is not a principal residence.

Implementing a Vacant tax makes it difficult for families with overseas relatives. Especially during Covid-19, they might have to, or be forced to stay overseas due to travelling restrictions for over 6 months within a one year period.

Implementing this will encourage property owners to make use of vacant homes. It favours strongly in the direction of equity, which would benefit York Region. York Region cannot afford to have a homelessness crisis, but at the rate that the housing market is going it's very possible we might acquire unfavourable numbers. I applaud the government for proposing this, as it's a chance to: a) have homeowners make money back from the property they are buying and b) provide more housing for people who are seeking. It will be a rocky situation at first, but I believe this Vacant Homes Tax will be a step in the right direction. As supply and demand battles out, we will hopefully have housing that is a touch more affordable for folks who are seeking to reside in York Region. If not affordable at first, it will at least open up the market for otherwise vacant spaces. Additionally, it will discourage people from keeping empty homes; this will benefit businesses in the area who may be negatively affected by the house numbers vs. people actually residing there.

In a time where homes are in short supply and extremely expensive, having empty homes is extremely unconscionable.

In addition, vacant homes tend to be unkempt. This trend erodes neighbourhood value.

In an effort to deter foreign buyers from having good houses sit empty. There are 3 on my street alone.

In Aurora there are tons of vacant homes bought by foreign investors. Houses sit empty and not maintained.

In my area as long as the home is taken care of the owners should be free to decide what to do with their property.

In my mind, a vacant homes tax is like taxing people who are holding onto their money and not using it. There should be nothing wrong with saving your money for a rainy day. The question is why are they saving a house and not making money renting it out? Perhaps they know too well the horrors of getting a bad renter and how the laws are too one sided against landlords. Maybe if we focus on protecting law abiding citizens we would strike a better balance.

In my neighbourhood, many vacant homes are owned by investors who do not live in the Region or the country. As a result they do not care about maintaining the property, not cutting the grass and not working with neighbours to put up a fence. Having to pay a tax would motivate them to rent or sell the property.

In my Region there are so many newer constructed houses vacant since the ready date, it results in a ghost community and is not good for people looking for a home here.

Increase supply not decrease demand.

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Individuals are already overtaxed and this type of tax would just be punitive as interest rates/inflation/cost of living are all going up at the same time. Individuals who have saved up and were fortunate enough to be able to buy a second property whether as an income property or to enjoy shouldn't be punished as they are not responsible for the lack of affordable housing and often the houses they own still wouldn't be affordable to someone looking to get into the market. York Region should spend its time and money to promote/subsidize the building of affordable homes for residents to increase supply without taking away from others.

Instead of taxing, create incentives for homeowners/investors to rent their properties. Have a program like Salvation Army where property owners are protected and guaranteed their tenants will pay and not destroy property. The Landlord Tenant Act does not protect property owners enough, so they are hesitant to rent out. Create programs, tax incentives, better protection for property owners

Investment home for rent is an optimal solution for landlords. It is the rental rules overly leaning towards tenants that cause the vacancy period while landlords have to spend time with bad tenants. No landlords would like to keep the property vacant if the rental can be reasonably managed. For example, my previous tenant blocked potential new tenants from seeing the house and I had to wait until the house was vacant for the next rental showing. It took two months before I could rent the house out again. The vacant time varies based on the market condition.

Investment is not a dirty word but there needs to be controls to motivate owners of vacant homes to rent them out. There also needs to be better protection for landlords.

Investment properties not cared for and not available for long term rentals should be taxed. This should not apply to homes that are vacant for example due to inheritance while the family is setting things.

Investment properties or foreign buyers who do not live in the residence purchased should be taxed substantially.

Investments are driving prices too high and creating fake demand for those who actually need to buy/rent a property. Vacancy tax can help stifle property hoarding.

Investors purchasing several homes to leave vacant is down the list of my concerns with the affordable housing crisis. People with low incomes would not be purchasing this category of home anyway and would not likely be able to afford to rent them either. My concern is the minimum wage worker trying to support a family. There is just nothing affordable for them even outside of the vacant homes issue. Having said that, I would like to see foreign investors taxed more than domestic investors and think there should be a scale on the amount of tax based on the number of homes the investor has like this - the % increases with each additional vacant property they own.

Investors who have the funds to purchase additional properties, will have the funds to pay for the additional taxes. As long as the law is on the renter's side, no landlord will lease their houses. Not worth the headaches.

Investors, speculators, foreign buyers and money laundering are a significant contributor to the housing shortage. This is not just hearsay. There are numerous cases where someone

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has bought 20 houses or more in a new development. Homes are not meant to be an investment.....that's why they're called a "home". A vacant homes tax is good, but not enough. There needs to be significant taxes for anyone who owns more than two homes. Even investors are admitting what they're doing is unethical and if the tax system was different, they'd sell the homes. Our children's chances of owning a home is shrinking by the day unless significant measures are taken. A small tax on a vacant home might not be enough. Investors, and money launderers have deep pockets.

It costs less to have a house sit vacant than it does to get bad tenants out.

It does not make sense how I work for York Region but I can't afford to live in York Region.

It doesn't make sense to use a home as an investment vehicle. These are places to be lived in, not to make an individual more money.

It feels like people are being punished for working hard and then choosing to invest in a family cottage.

It is a form of robbery. Many homeowners are reluctant to rent because Ontario's laws are stacked against landlords. Fix that and more owners will be willing to rent. Also, extra properties people own are not the problem. If every individual who owned multiple properties were to sell all but 1 this year, there would still be a housing problem.

It is a money grab, the town council mismanages tax revenue and spends with very little to no accountability to its taxpayers. They allow developers to destroy our land at the taxpayers' expense. They should raise the cost for new development permits and land transfer tax for new development, using those funds to create affordable housing.

It is a waste of precious land and home if it is sitting there not being used. By implementing vacant homes tax. The property can be rented out for people to live in.

It is against everything we stand for in Canada to support capitalism and ownership as private citizens. Fundamentally, it IS the government's role to solve housing affordability and NOT force or penalize private citizens into that role. It is interesting that the government at this point is not restricting vacant home ownership but simply penalizing this ownership! Another point is the idea of exemption based on certain criteria, as in exemption for a cottage owner in Georgina. What about the owner who enjoys more urban vacation and hence has chosen a second piece of property in that kind of environment? Can and would this lead to favouritism, inequality of citizens, government judging what is OK and not OK? I do NOT currently own a second property vacant or otherwise so I am not speaking out selfishly. I am speaking out against the loss of any Canadians' right to freedom of ownership, something every democracy has enjoyed. Just because times are currently hard does NOT justify reducing people's rights. That is abhorrent.

It is an important way to deal with speculation.

It is clear that housing has become unaffordable and we should do what we can to change that.

It is dangerous for any municipality to permit its limited supply of housing to be treated as a trans-national commodity.

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It is difficult to give a reasoned answer without knowing implementation details.

It is no one's business what one does with their investment and we already pay wayyy too much taxes in this country!

It is not certain if a vacant homes tax will make housing affordable. We need a variety of housing and York Region needs to increase affordable rental housing to people who can not own a house. The vacant homes will have a rent of \$3000 and up. Some homes in my area are \$3500! And renters can be kicked out when homes are sold, so no stability.

It is not the place of government to interfere with private property and the free market. If I am already paying property tax the Region shouldn't meddle in how my property is used in the future. If I want to stay in the US for a period of time I shouldn't be penalized if I am already paying property tax and don't want to rent to strangers.

It is not working in BC. This punishes people who have two homes and live in both. I have no problem with trying to deter speculation, but this is not the tool for that.

It is unfair to keep uninhabited housing from rental inventory.

It is very difficult for a landlord to find tenants who are responsible and respectful of the property they rent. Landlord and tenant laws unjustly favour delinquent and destructive tenants. Revise these laws and property owners will be very willing to rent out their property. I am a former landlord and I chose to sell my property. My property was rented out in excellent condition and it was repeatedly damaged and ill kept by tenants. I found the laws did nothing to support honest, respectful and well-intentioned landlords. It was a frustrating and stressful experience and not a worthwhile investment. No wonder property owners prefer to keep property vacant.

It is very important that we tax empty dwellings to collect money or push those dwellings to be available to rent.

It never occurred to me that real estate agents (and wealthy individuals) would buy homes - not to live in, but as an investment at a time when house prices are skyrocketing - this is mean-spirited, but as long as municipal taxes are paid and the grass is cut, IT IS NONE OF THE CITY'S BUSINESS! Were I to own another property for investment, I would risk having tenants who fail to maintain it, fail to pay utilities, AND fall behind in paying rent and refuse to move out, or even cut the grass. In other words, they trash my investment. My investment property may be a home I'm saving for my son when he's back from overseas, and gets married; it may be my retirement home once I decide to "cash in" and sell my present home. York Region with all its 9 (?) municipalities, has no business interfering with any of my assets, whether detached houses, apartment units, a Porsche AND a Lamborghini AND a couple other nice cars, who are you to tell me I must allow others to drive them if they cannot afford a car. My "vacant home" could be used by family living abroad, when they visit. WHY NOT IMPOSE A VACANT "COTTAGE TAX" ON COTTAGES THAT AREN'T OCCUPIED YEAR ROUND? Why not tax people who own more than one vehicle? Why not investigate plumbers, electricians, roofers, landscapers, music teachers, tutors, interior decorators and painters....who work "for cash" and "don't charge tax"? (They also give no receipts or warranty.)

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It seems a shame that young couples are finding it next to impossible to afford to purchase a home in the vicinity of where they were born and grew up. This forces them to look further afield and ultimately make a purchase in an area that isn't close to their parents. Once they start a family, this means their parents/grandparents (biggest support network) may need to drive hours to help with babysitting and other needs, so the negative financial and emotional impacts are significantly larger than home affordability alone.

It seems logical that it would be more difficult to purchase additional properties than for a first time homebuyer to afford a home at all. Combine that with the environmental impact of sprawl and social inequities already present with the disappearing middle class, there seems to be little argument in favour of keeping the status quo.

It should be used as an incentive to have homes immediately rented out to those who are in search of housing. One example is that a few years ago when I sold my previous home, it stayed unoccupied for over a year as did several other houses in that area.

It should have been done years ago!

It took me 15 years to save for a down payment for a home. Upon finally being able to consider bidding on homes, I came face to face with bidders who weren't even in the country and had never seen the house they were bidding. I lost out countless bidding wars, often to owners who were never using the home as a primary residence. Give us hard working York Region citizens a chance and implement a vacant homes tax.

It will cost more to enforce than it would be worth. After expenses, even in a rapidly appreciating market, there isn't much to be made by speculating on real estate in a place like York Region.

It would be good to get facts as to how many homes currently meet the criteria of being a "Vacant Home." I don't see many, but perhaps I don't know where to look!

It would be nice to be able to afford a house and not have it snatched up by “investors.”

It would depend on how long it is empty. As a landlord, it sometimes takes a few months to repair, renovate and re-rent our property. It wouldn't be fair to be taxed in such a situation.

It would not fix the problem. Many houses are run down and being renovated, the price of housing outright needs to come down ASAP.

It's fair.

It's hard to answer without knowing all the details. There should be circumstances for which homes sit vacant for a period of time and are NOT taxed (i.e., vacant for a good reason).

It's nobody's business what I do with my property or how many people might live there.

It's not ok to scalp tickets at a concert or game but it's perfectly ok with homes? Morally wrong for both.

It's very challenging to find a reputable tenant. House owners are facing all the risks of bad tenants without government's help or support. Sometimes they just can't rent them out due to this factor.

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It's very clear that there is inequity in our current system in terms of housing affordability. In a truly caring, just democracy/ society, everyone deserves to have access to safe, affordable housing. Despite being well educated with very good jobs and minimal debt, neither of our married children would have been able to afford a home, including a condo townhouse, without financial gifts from us. The gap between the haves and have nots is growing at an alarming rate. It's far past time to address this disturbing state of affairs. Not doing so will result in a more dangerous society where the quality of life for everyone will be seriously compromised. I'm glad York Region is starting to discuss this important aspect of life and I sincerely hope that concrete action will follow asap.

It's disgusting to have so many vacant properties and Airbnbs with such limited and overpriced options available to renters. Housing is a human right. Making profit and vacationing are not.

It's mostly houses here, so it makes no sense. Only along hwy 7 are most of the condos.

It's my prerogative to own property just like it is my prerogative to own stocks and bonds. If I want to diversify my portfolio with real estate I should be able to. Home ownership is not a right. The government should think before they let people into our country. If there's not enough housing, stop allowing people in. Simple!

It's not clear to me whether a Vacant Property Tax would be imposed on secondary properties already being rented out? If so, would that not raise the cost of rent therefore contributing to the problem of unaffordable rentals?

It's not right or fair to our community that houses sit empty because the owners are rich and need a safe haven to stash their money and let it grow more. Tax the ever living crap out of them, and help our community members.

It's not the government's business if someone wants to keep a residential property vacant. The government should make it more appealing to develop new residential properties.

Just a money grab won't do anything for the housing shortage. I pay enough taxes every year. I should be able to do what I want with my own property.

Keep out of our business.

Keep your hands out of our pockets. I own it, end of story. What I do with it is none of your business. And stay off my property as I will defend my property with extreme prejudice.

Landlord tenant rights need to be updated. People don't want to rent out homes because the tenants have too many rights. They don't pay, you can't get them out. They damage property and you can't do anything about it. They don't follow rules set out in the retail contract, there is nothing you can do. They don't pay the damage and they disrespect and the property owner has ZERO recourse.

Landlords have the right to choose not to rent if they cannot find a good tenant. Landlords are taking too much risk now, and tenants are overprotected.

Leaving homes vacant degrades the neighbourhood and should be discouraged.

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Like any policy issue, the specific intervention has to be fully understood to avoid unintended consequences or ensure the intervention will be effective. More importantly, housing affordability is a fundamental issue that will likely require more than a vacant homes tax to address, like more inclusionary zoning and housing mix, including rentals. So yes to a vacant homes tax if analysis says it will help increase stock and have an effect on housing costs, but not to the exclusion of other policy interventions that will address housing affordability, particularly for residents who are experiencing insecure housing.

Like many others out there, I want my children to be able to afford and live in York Region....close to us (parents). Housing affordability is such that this wish of mine is becoming less and less realistic. Something needs to be done!

Limit housing ownership, build more affordable for the younger generation.

Limited senior residences that are geared to income threshold is too low. Yes, if you have a vacant home, you do not need it.

Local landlords providing well maintained, affordable units should not be penalized or taxed if they decide to leave their properties vacant. Instead, provide incentives such as zero interest loans to residents to create more secondary units that can be rented out at market rent.

Long term rentals (30 plus years) and overseas landlords / owners are not an asset when they do not maintain their properties.

Lower house prices in proportion to income. The government controls real estate speculation and raises prices, limiting brokerage commissions.

Many condo units in my condo are sitting vacant (5+ year old buildings). it appears that many of the condo unit owners are oversea buyers or snowbirds.

Many empty homes in my area.

Many empty homes in my neighbourhood. I know many families struggling to find a rental property they can afford, very scary for them!

Many homes remain unoccupied. These homes are empty and keep people out of the community schools and neighbourhoods where they could potentially be living and interacting with people in the community. Yards are often unkempt.

Many houses in my neighbourhood have no one living in them or are rented out. The property is not maintained. The grass is not cut. They look terrible.

Many new homes/units in York Region were built after 2018 and so although affordable at first renting in the first year, many landlords are able to increase rent without standards or checks which make housing not affordable.

Many of the vacant homes have grass a foot high in summer and snow not shovelled in winter making the surrounding neighbourhood look bad. The city should do these services and tax them even more!

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Many residents have seasonal homes -- simply being vacant can't be the only criteria. Should not be related to primary residence.

Many vacant and untended homes in my neighbourhood. This erodes the look and feel of the community. Tax them, BIG time!

Many vacant owners do not maintain any property standards. Increase fines as well. No warnings. Fine immediately. Vacancies can attract break ins, squatters.....

Many York Region real estate are being listed on Airbnb. York Region real estate should either be rented out or owned to live in. How will upcoming families pursue to live in York Region?

Many young families are paying more than 50% of their income on rent. In occupied homes are not being kept up, long grass, overgrown gardens.

Markham has a lot of immigrants. There are families who cannot return to Canada due to Covid and have other obligations in their home countries. They may not be investors or speculators but a place in Canada they can live while keeping families or business connections overseas. Most York Region's properties are not built with separate entrance or side doors for owner occupied rentals like Vancouver. Owners cannot easily rent out a portion of their home in the market. While you rent out a room in your house, there are many other risks and insurance coverage becomes difficult as well. It will create a domino effect if a vacant homes tax is implemented. With the interest rate keeps going up, landlords would be worried about finding renters that can afford their increased costs. If the landlords cannot keep up with their costs they will end up selling the properties. Renters may not be able to afford owning a house as well in today's market. I don't think a change is needed at this time.

May increase the rental unit capacity and ideally help in making neighbourhoods more attractive. A tax on unkempt rental homes should also be evaluated.

May reduce the number of vacant houses. Affordable housing is desperately needed. Vacant house = neglected property.

More taxes can never make anything more affordable. The best way to help the problem of high prices is to let developers build what they want. Relax zoning restrictions and other red tape so that they are more motivated to build. It doesn't matter so much what they build as long as the overall available residences increase along with demand for it.

More taxes is NOT the solution to affordable housing. Never seen something more affordable because of extra taxes (have you seen the gas prices for the past 10 years?). Is there a way to repurpose under-utilized commercial/government buildings into affordable housing?

Mortgage rate is so high, not many people will leave home vacant. Government should refocus effort to build more affordable housing with amenities nearby. Why is everything in Markham on the west end and nothing on the east? I have to drive everywhere putting west end Markham residents at risk of poorer health due to lack of opportunity to be physically active. Please build more healthier communities with more shops and small integrated into residential communities. One or two shops under a condo (hwy 48) or townhouse (Copper Creek Drive) is not well integrated. We need more mid-rise affordable housing so they can support the local business with more parking aside from the big box store. All of this

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community planning should be done by the local government and not outsourcing it to the developers. In conclusion, don't waste time on vacancy tax, focus on local community development with more mid-rise government housing. Also think outside the box. Instead of providing people with a rental supplement with no other means for them to improve themselves, why not also introduce them to better paying jobs, better work experience, and educational upgrades so they can be more self-sustained?

Most of my neighbouring homes are vacant for over 5 years!

Most of this area was built as single family houses, but increasingly we are seeing basement apartments and multiple tenant homes. There are at least three homes nearby that appear to have been vacant for more than a year. I'd rather not have this trend continue.

Most vacant houses were bought legally. Canada is destroying its credit by heavy taxes after people buy a property. The root cause of housing is that Canadians are poorer than before. The solution is to improve the income by improving our competitiveness, not by scaring the rich away.

Multiple vacant homes in my neighbourhood.

Municipalities should not use this as a means to acquire more sources of revenue by assuming this would cool the housing market and increase the probability of home affordability. Although the housing market is greatly overvalued, inflation and interest rate risk, combined with slow wage growth is the underlying pressing concern and all levels of government should focus on lowering costs of living, aside from housing (which governments have zero impact on, truthfully, other than approving developments and collecting development charges).

Must investigate where the black money comes from to buy the houses.

My adult son (born and raised in R Hill), cannot afford to buy a home in his own community, and is desperately trying to find rental accommodation! It really bothers us, as parents, to see (and know) that houses are sitting vacant in our municipality and across York Region, AND that speculators are buying up houses and then leasing them out at high prices. I sure hope a vacant homes tax would discourage speculation, and give York Region more tax money to invest in affordable housing (of ANY kind!).

My daughter and her husband are both professionals with good jobs and can't afford to buy a house, even though they are careful with money.

My daughter who is 33 and her two children have been living with me for the past two years as during covid her landlord sold (she was paying \$1300 a month) and now rent in Georgina is well over \$2000, she works for Bell and can't afford a place to live! And she is lucky as she has family support, but what about the thousands who don't? It's disgusting!

My family had a VERY difficult time finding a rental in Newmarket. They are overpriced and have terribly large amounts of applicants applying for the same rental! Not enough housing!

My family is struggling to buy. We have been renting for over 15 years with no end in sight. We have tried to buy it but the prices are unreal. We also tried to move because our apartment is becoming too small for the family, but new rent is now so expensive.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

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My house's price has quadrupled in only 17 years, but my income has not. This reflects the affordability deterioration over the years.

My mom (88 years old) owns a cottage next door to my sister's house. It is well cared for and used as extra bedrooms for my sister and as a vacation property for family members. She pays a lot in property taxes already.

My neighbours house is empty, what a waste.

My only concern about the tax is that it could start infringing on owners' rights if it is not carefully and vigilantly managed. That said, our own son is unable to find a rentable townhouse in his price range (\$2,600 per month). This will force him to rent further from his family of origin, upon whom he currently depends.

My only concern maybe i don't fully understand is how cottages fit in. I want to purchase a cottage and go to it regularly but i also don't agree with those buying homes just to sell at a higher profit as their sole purpose of buying. You would need to target those individuals.

My partner and I both have good, stable jobs earning more than \$65k per year and no debt, but we cannot afford to buy a house in York Region because housing prices are too expensive. We have been in the same rental unit for the past 8 years and it is prohibitively expensive to move into a newer unit based on current rental rates. The situation is out of control and leading to landlords engaging in suspicious or sketchy behaviour because they know they can get away with it; "if you don't like it, move out and I'll find someone else to rent."

My postal code is L3Y. I have been forced to move 4 times in 4 years. I rent. It has become unaffordable. I move because of the greedy real estate agents and banks that promote high sale prices for homes whereby new investment buyers remove tenants to replace with higher paying tenants to cover their mortgages. They know full well that those who sold their homes and now have money will and can pay higher rents while they wait for the market to drop. People who need a roof as a home cannot afford it now. There are homeless who actually have jobs. With Covid affecting credit ratings, it is impossible to be successful on a bid to rent a space. And no one cares. Karma will come around. There are foreign owners who also only want tenants of the same cultural background. There is also discrimination everywhere. Some real estate agents will not even deal with you if you are from a different cultural background. They won't return your call or show a property.

My son is 27 years old with a Bachelor's degree in Business Management and work experience, still living in a basement in Markham because it is impossible for young professionals to afford even a bachelor's apartment in Toronto.

Need to differentiate vacancy due to speculation or from other legit reasons such as upcoming renovation or overlap time for occupancy, etc.

Need to establish deep rules to address the root cause. For example, do not tax cottages.

Need to target foreign buyers and foreign money as well.

Neighbourhood looks like crap. Some renters don't cut grass and the empties definitely don't. Houses are worth 1.5 million and it looks like we live in a derelict town. York Region,

Table 1

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| |
|--|
| you win. We will sell and move just like you want us to do your developer friends can tear hood houses down and build huge mansions that people will sell every 2 years. |
| No definition of Vacant Home is provided, i.e., are cottages/seasonal homes considered vacant homes? If so, I totally disagree with the tax. Where is the definition? |
| No elaboration. We need to change both the zoning types for more low-rise and density areas coupled with things like vacant taxes to get the prices down. I don't care if I go slightly underwater on my home evaluation, society needs this badly. |
| No home should sit unlive in. |
| No residents of Canada should be able to buy houses here, so people who live here can afford them. |
| No space for vacant homes. |
| No young people cannot afford to live here. at all. I feel EXTREMELY STRONGLY that York Region should be doing much more for young professionals to live here. Once all the boomers are gone, Vaughan is in trouble. |
| Nobody can afford basic shelter...this country is broken beyond repair. |
| Not 5%, 50%. |
| Not a viable solution. Better to cut government red tape, HST and land transfer tax. We are taxed too much! |
| Not all secondary homeowners are large companies. This sells small private families short and doesn't take into account their circumstances. |
| Not an expert on the situation, but it makes sense to tax those owners who can afford to let a property sit empty. |
| Not only a vacant home, but just a multi-homes tax. If anybody owns more than one home, they should be taxed incrementally more for each home (2nd more than the first, 3rd more than the 2nd, etc.). Additionally, if any person or business entity owns residentially zoned land and has no plans to build homes on them within the next 2-3 years they should have to pay a hefty fine every year they do not utilize the land. |
| Not only are empty units a terrible waste of a scarce resource, the owners often don't maintain them. |
| Not only are the homes going vacant but they are unkept and are bringing down the beauty of the neighbourhood. |
| Not only does it drive up the price of housing for people who need it but it also reduces quality of life for those in the neighbourhood with typically uncared-for lots and an empty house rather than great neighbours. |
| Not only does the practice of vacant properties reduce housing, they are often neglected and create eyesores in the community and may even attract squatters or be used for other undesirable activities. |

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

Not only should this be implemented, foreign buyers should be completely banned, and rent control introduced.

Not only would this create possible housing options for those in need but also, vacant and broken down houses would soon be fixed up and taken care of bringing life to neighbourhoods.

Not sure anybody wants to have a vacant property and don't know what the tax would achieve.

Not sure how much help this will provide.

Not sure if that is the actual problem with lack of affordability.

Not the issue. The issue is supply. Focus on the issue.

Nothing more than a tax grab by the government to screw over residents and line government pockets.

Nothing more than a tax grab. Will not do anything to help with affordability.

On my daily walk, I see at least 1 house per street that is vacant with no sign of anyone living in it. Weeds are 3 feet tall, sidewalk and driveway not shovel, newspaper not picked up on the front door, etc.

On my street of 15 houses there are 3 empty houses... people haven't lived in them for 5+ years.

On my street we have several empty houses. All of which owned by foreign owners, even if managed through a Canadian agent of some sort. It isn't right that they sit vacant, foreign speculators hedging bets to earn a huge profit while local people can't afford a house to live in.

On our street there are numerous residents whose adult children have had to move back in with them even though they have good jobs because these adult children cannot afford their own home.

One of the few solutions to the problems, so implement quickly.

Only if property is never occupied and then it's a slippery slope situation. I thought second homes were already taxable. Now if many homes are owned they should be under a business classification and taxed accordingly first as business second as shareholder.

Ontario's over-protective tenant ordinance is the biggest obstacle to renting a home, because landlords have a lot to lose if they meet a bad tenant.

Other family members who have difficulty finding housing at a reasonable rent.

Other people are able to get into the housing market.

Our kids shouldn't have to move out of the area for affordable housing.

Our street has many homes sitting empty for years. What a waste! We have a great school and I am sad for families living in hotel rooms because there are no other options.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

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Outdoor maintenance is not maintained with empty houses.

Overseas investors speculating and purchasing real estate is making it difficult for the younger generation to own in the places they grew up in.

Owner has a right to do what he or she wants with their property. The current tenant laws make renting a property an extremely risky proposition since a tenant can end up costing an owner thousands in repairs, back rent etc.

Owners already pay high taxes. Why would they rent their property to people that could cause damage or not pay? This forces the owner into a horrible and unfair system to get their property back and unpaid rent. They are not banks but are treated as so by the system.

Owners should be free to handle their property however they want. Any attempt to regulate the market through targeted taxation is an assault on private property rights. Housing affordability should be improved through other means, such as deregulation, lowering the burden on the builders, intensification, transit improvement, etc.

Owning residential property and being a landlord has become increasingly challenging. Rent control does not allow the landlord to increase rentals even in line with inflation. With rising interest rates, it's become more expensive to own properties and the rent doesn't cover the costs. Introducing a vacant property tax may deter potential landlords from buying properties. It may be difficult to find a suitable tenant in a given year. And then to be on the hook for an additional tax.

Paying a vacant homes tax should be a requirement and part of the "cost of doing business" for those wealthy enough to invest in homes that sit vacant and are not made available as rental housing.

People are unable to afford basic accommodation and rents keep increasing. Many condos are renting for 3K a month or more which is way more than the average person's salary. This also makes it impossible to save for a down payment to buy a home. The tax is a good idea but my concern is how are you going to enforce it? People will find ways to get around it to avoid paying it so will it really help the issue?

People buy up homes and let them deteriorate and then tear them down to build monster homes no one can afford. The homes they destroyed would have been a lovely home for a family. It is a shame.

People buying as an investment should pay a high price for this privilege.

People have different reasons when they can not live inside their primary residence for that long but are not willing to rent it out, especially during a pandemic. E.g., we are now taking care of my daughter and grandsons during the pandemic given she is having her 2nd baby now and only 15 mins drive from us so we do not want to rent out our own home but mainly live with them in the past 2 years. Raising a tax for this is ridiculous! I think if you only do it for non primary residence it would make sense.

People have the right to do what they want with the properties they own-including leaving them vacant if they can afford to do so.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

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People in my area have signs that read: "Richmond Hill against development." It's absolutely disgusting and anyone who is opposed should be ashamed of themselves for not giving access to high density housing in the area. It's almost like they don't want economic growth and opportunity. I know of multiple families who used the last 3 years of low interest rates to borrow ridiculous sums of money due to their inflated home prices, living cushy lives off the backs of renters who are squeezed everyday. I don't have those worries but many do. Homes are for people, not investments. High density housing is the only way to go.

People living and working in York Region can not afford to buy a home or rent in York Region. It should never have been allowed to get this far. This is the least that should be done.

People may own two homes and use one as a cottage. Why should this second property be taxed as a penalty?

People need affordable housing, period. If those with the luxury of multiple homes aren't going to use them, then they should at least be taxed for that so we can provide support to those who don't have homes.

People need homes to live in. Investors should choose other avenues for their money or offer their properties for a reasonable rent.

People should be free to do whatever they please to do with their homes. Whether it be occupied or vacant. It will be an additional responsibility for residents to declare their status which takes time. Vacant homes tax unfairly penalizes people who cannot rent out their units that are out of their control.

People should not be able to “hoard” homes for real estate value or simply to rent them out to others (in the case of owning 2+ houses). It encourages the inflation of value in the market and leads to unsustainable rent and mortgage rates for everyone. Allowing people to have multiple empty homes also inflates the current housing bubble by overvaluing houses that are not actually that valuable.

People should not be forced to rent out or supply their secondary homes to help the housing crisis but I do believe it should apply to people who have 2 or more vacant homes.

People shouldn't have so many homes when young people can't afford to buy any.

People use their home as a retirement vehicle. If York Region impacts the value of homes by reducing the value of already purchased homes and dramatically increases the amount of homes available, we will be forced to find ways to financially assist these families as they retire. Vacant home tax will do the same thing as the rush of people to sell their homes will drop the value of homes significantly. I hope to use the home I hope to purchase in the same manner. I will not have a pension to assist so although I find purchasing a home difficult, I want to be able to access those funds at a later date as well.

People who are trying to launder money don't care about the cost.

People who buy houses as investment / profit should be taxed heavily. Housing is not an investment instrument.

People who work in York Region can't afford to LIVE here. How can we truly represent York Region if we can't afford it?

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

People will never be able to afford housing in Markham. I grew up here and have a great job and am looking at leaving the city and the province as my only option to live. I try to be proud of my city however I reflect on the current situation and the issues many residents, especially younger residents, are not being considered. People are buying multiple houses and renting them out at unreasonable and unregulated prices. People are buying homes that are vacant just to watch prices go up. Foreign investors are buying houses either themselves or using a resident to manage the house/properties as an investment and that will not show up on this tax. This is a great start, however this does NOT address the systemic issues that have been and continue to plague a place I am no longer proud of to call my home because our MPs even on a local level are not representing the citizens interests and growing issues.

People work hard for their investments. If someone purchased a home for future investment that's their business. Affordable homes could be built. Build more town homes for families instead of single dwellings on large lots.

People working in King City in service jobs can't even find an apartment they can afford to live in. This is so wrong.

Perhaps a VHT will incentivize owners to sell their property or at least rent it out.

Perhaps people should not be allowed to own multiple homes.

Perhaps the government could actually do something to make money, instead of taxing people.

Perhaps the home is difficult to sell and the owner doesn't want to face the capital gains tax. Can a program be put in place to supplement the capital gains program to encourage owners to sell vacant homes?

Policies should match the problem. We don't have a supply problem. We have a “supercharged demand” problem. If everyone wants to own multiple homes, it limits normal supply and drives up costs.

Policy is to be implemented according to the present situation. We can always make changes in the future or from time to time so that this would not hurt the economy.

Politicians should stay out of people's private personal lives. Talking about FREEDOM, whether on the issue of investments or any other area.

Preference is to have non-owner-occupied homes such as Airbnb to be taxed as if it is vacant.

Prohibit corporations from buying up homes which they then rent at inflated prices.

Properties are purchased with after-tax money. A vacant tax is effectively taxing again on income. It is flat out wrong.

Property owners should not shoulder the brunt of affordable housing. This is the government's responsibility not asset owners. All levels of government should shoulder the financial burdens of solving this issue, not residents.

Property tax is not enough of a contribution when we're trying to establish a 'community.'

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

Property tax, taxes on maintenance, taxes on sale. No more income redistribution is needed in York Region.

Property taxes are paid for the property therefore the city is getting its share for it already.

Question #6 is very leading. How can you expect to get reasonable replies to this question when you lead with the statements you've used. I am a Realtor working in York Region. Do you have statistics on true speculators that leave properties vacant, purchasing them only for capital appreciation? Anything that I have read puts these true speculators at a very small percentage of the market. Everybody likes to blame the surging prices on various boogeymen that are out there (speculators, vacant properties, etc etc), but demand and supply appear to be the main drivers.

Question: Do owners of vacant homes currently pay taxes like the rest of the residents of York Region? Would the “ Vacant Homes Tax” be an additional tax? Or an initial tax? For clarity it would be helpful if a statement such as this was added to this survey... Some municipalities have introduced an additional tax called the “ Vacant Homes Tax” which would be collected over and above the regular taxes that each homeowner pays.

Quite a few homes in neighbourhood are vacant or rented more than 6 months a year

Real estate in York Region is completely unaffordable— it is so difficult to find a house in the Region. As someone who may want to live here in my own house after graduating college and joining the workforce, it is completely infeasible seeing the rise in costs for housing and I fear I will have to move elsewhere.

Real estate is unaffordable and it does not help when people can purchase investment properties. Homes are for people to live in, not for speculators.

Real estate should not be an instrument for speculation. It should only be used for housing.

Real estate speculation is harming affordability.

Reduce foreign and excess investment whereby driving up the cost of real estate

Rent is low, relative to surrounding areas, home prices are falling.

Rent prices are absolutely skyrocketing and it often feels like nothing is being done to limit this or take care of renters in Ontario

Rental housing has become unaffordable for single people living in York Region at a time when purchasing has become unattainable for first time buyers without strong financial support by parents. Young people who do not have this support are at an extreme disadvantage

Rental properties are in short supply. No reason why an empty house cannot be rented out at a reasonable rate to lessen the impact of rising rents due to shortage of properties

Rental property is very difficult to find in our area

Renters rarely take care of the homes - Especially the exterior. Too lazy to even cut the grass

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

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Renting is no longer a stable housing option. Housing has become an investment vehicle first and foremost. Therefore, renters are under constant stress, worrying about when their landlord is going to apply for a rent increase beyond what they can afford, evict claiming they want to live in the residence, only to wait a few months before renting it out to been tenants for higher rent or selling the residence when they assess the market to be at maximum value to new owners who may want to live in the residence.

Renting out empty houses gives more availability of homes to those who need them AND enables properties to be cared for in the owner's absence.

Rents are also going up and finding affordable housing on a limited budget is necessary to keep people from homelessness.

Rents are sky high and homes are unaffordable for young adults.

Represents a very small % of properties. You own it, you pay taxes for it, your right to use it or not.

Residential properties should not be used as money making opportunities at the expense of the public.

Rich people will just pay the tax and this will result in nothing being done.

Seasonal cottages should be exempt.

Seems more like a cash grab than help.

Seems the Region is an action that is not a solution for the problem. If speculators did not buy and hold the property, would they automatically become viable low income housing, or would they simply sit and rot? If only 4% of new housing is affordable, has the Region no leverage over the municipalities that permit developments of such exclusive housing? How would any vacant house tax gathered be used? Maybe the Region could build a shelter building to house a dozen or so and claim they are making an impact on the issue.

Seems to be more equitable - those who can afford investment properties make a bit less and city income will help address affordable housing issues.

Several homes on John Street are vacant, owned offshore. Property is not cared for and Markham does nothing to enforce bylaws.

Several vacant homes in my upscale neighbourhood that are not maintained and are simply left to nature. Some of these properties have dead trees and are truly a mess. The owners should certainly be taxed additionally.

Several vacant homes within a 5 minute walk of my house. Also a multi million dollar new house that has been under construction for probably close to 10 years...it's reportedly a pet project/hobby for someone. Both scenarios tie up land that could be used for prospective residents.

Shelter is a necessity for survival, and encouraging the commodification of housing by failing to address the issue effectively serves to tell the people of York Region that the government

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truly doesn't care about them. To prioritize the wishes of investors and the wealthy over the material needs of the people is an indefensible and outright immoral act.

Should not apply to cottages.

Should not tax cottages of people that live elsewhere in the country, but should tax those who live outside of the country but have vacant homes in Canada. Should tax those who have second properties for speculation purposes only and do not use the houses at all.

Since 2017, social workers have had to advise their clients on Ontario Works and ODSP to relocate out of the Region if they are evicted from their home because of affordability. Morally and for practical reasons, York Region should not become a region available only to the well off. Any and all steps should be tried to fix this situation.

Since there is a housing shortage, no one should be purchasing homes unless they plan to inhabit them.

So against this - and I am full time living in my home - am terribly worried my granddaughter who is a Nursery School teacher in York Region, will have nowhere to live when her parents retire and move elsewhere - what you are doing will not help at all in affordable housing - just give you tax money which will not help in providing affordable housing for our younger family members who don't have rich relatives to help them. Do things like allowing more private rentals - stop all the massive mansion buildings and allow property to be sold and either at least two houses to be placed or even small multi housing if property size allows, etc. etc. Think outside of the box and not of getting tax money which won't even be used for AFFORDABLE housing.

So many empty properties are just sitting vacant while there's a housing crisis.

So many homes in my area are vacant. They look horrible as they do not cut their lawns or fix chipping paint. One home has been like that for 15 years.

So many houses and condo units in our area are vacant, held by "investors" and money launderers. We are unable to find an affordable 2 bedroom unit to house our growing family.

So many investors own multiple properties. The issue is they stagger the properties between various members. I have witnessed this with renting. A couple owns 3 homes, each home is in a different person's name. It's hard to catch up to them as they are always a step ahead. With “vacant” homes they can merely add a name of a family member who supposedly lives there. I also know many retirees who leave their homes vacant as they travel south. These ppl will do the same as above. I know several couples who own cottages, chalets and a permanent residence. I'm guessing these ppl will do the same thing. The biggest issue is that our government has let down people by allowing all the condos and homes to be built without building apartments and affordable housing for retirement. We have so many homeless and there will be more. The Government needs to build affordable housing. Taxing those who own multiple dwellings won't do much. They will find loopholes.

So many investors who do not contribute in any way to our society, but inflated housing prices such that we cannot afford even the down payment for a home. Even PHYSICIANS need help from parents for a down payment! And that was 5 yrs ago - the situation is even worse now.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

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So many would-be homeowners were outbid by investors and driven out of the market. Investors then rent the property, which is seldom looked after (or remains vacant). This prohibits a family wanting to live in the community and adds nothing to the neighbourhood.

So more people can afford housing.

So we even know how many homes are empty? If we don't, how do we determine this tax will be effective? Also, a tax policy that changes people's behaviour is not a good tax policy. There is much research done in this area. Also, this will drop pricing in York Region but increase pricing in surrounding regions without vacant homes tax...why are we doing this to hurt the wealth of existing York Region residents when compared to surrounding area residents?

Some homes may be vacant for different reasons. Some could be families being out of the country for a short period of time. Also with the existing landlord tenant act, landlords are not well protected so it may not be in the best interest to rent out for everyone.

Some houses I've seen haven't been used in at least 10 years. Tax them all bruh.

Some people should not be landlords. Until the LT Board is sufficiently resourced, creating pressures for more people to private landlords may not be in the best interest of the people who need to be housed.

Some vacant homes are not properly kept and could be a safety hazard, e.g. neglected swimming pools, overgrown lawn, breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Sometimes housing is empty because the people who were left after a loved one passed a home has to clear the home. This happened during COVID-19 and took us a long time to clear a home (4-6 months) as the person had a lot of stuff. The last tenant registered and why the unit is empty should be taken into consideration. I agree the housing in York Region is definitely not affordable. The problem I also see is that we have a big older adult population... and a lot of the housing is meant for families as opposed to singles. For this reason even if a vacant home was up for sale, it would be usually geared towards those that 'need' more space. I am worried about York Region becoming like Toronto (congested). The other question I would have, if a house is possessed by a bank or corporation... would they be subject to the vacant homes tax as well?

Speculation is a major contributor to the housing shortage and should be dealt with ASAP via a tax.

Speculation is driving up the cost of homes to new home buyers making the market even more difficult for new immigrants and our young adults to buy into the market.

Speculation only hurts the economy. The tax should be high enough that speculation may not make sense. Also, businesses should not be allowed to purchase residential property.

Stop creating more taxes and do something. Get more developers and get rid of the restrictions causing them to not build as many new homes.

Stop financializing homes.

Table 1

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Stop foreign investors from buying properties and leaving them vacant. They don't do proper PDI anyways and new homeowners get stuck with inferior products and Tarion won't help because warranties have expired.

Stop foreign money laundering.

Stop granting building permits for unaffordable housing! 4% affordable in 2021 is outrageous. Raise this to 25%.

Stop letting speculators buy homes, driving up the market out of reach of true home owners.

Stop selling homes to foreign investors who have no intent on living in them.

Strongly agree that a vacant house tax would encourage owners to make them available for renters or to sell them out right for the new purchasers to occupy.

Studies have shown this will further decrease housing availability.

Support would depend on how long the property could remain vacant before the tax takes effect. There are justified reasons why a landlord may leave a property vacant for an extended period of time. How would charging a vacancy tax ensure housing affordability? Is vacant properties really a problem in York Region?

Take the tax, and divide it to non-vacant homeowners.

Taking viable residential housing stock out of the market by leaving vacant, and often unmaintained, is a relatively new phenomenon encouraged by the movement of global capital and is completely corrosive and unacceptable. This hollows out neighbourhoods and at minimum negatively changes the character of a community. Using the tax system as a tool to discourage and eliminate this practice is not only reasonable but required.

Talk of support is always directed at prospective home buyers but never given to people to have no ability to buy a home and never will. No one seems to care about renters.

Tax does NOT solve homelessness. Tax does not open up housing to the vulnerable or less fortunate. Tax is a \$\$ opportunity to penalize those who work extremely hard, are extremely busy.

Tax foreign home buyers more, tax corporations that purchase single family homes more.

Tax homes that are empty and not looked after. They ruin the look of the community and we pay enough tax to make it look respectful.

Tax never resolves an issue, only brings money to politicians. Build more, build cheaper - this will resolve supply issues, not tax on air.

Tax the rich who do not rent out vacant properties or are flipping houses.

Tax the sale at the time of purchase for foreign buyers.

Tax them heavily .. They must get a local permit to leave them vacant for 6 months .. They are a stigma in neighbourhoods and may reduce values around their locations.

Table 1

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TAX THEM, HOMES ARE FOR PEOPLE NOT FOR INVESTMENT IF A HOME IS SITTING EMPTY TAX THEM 25% OF THE VALUE PER YEAR.

Tax vacant homes so people will sell to actual families that can enjoy our cities.

Taxes should increase based on the number of vacant homes and income generated.

Taxing doesn't solve the issue. We need more housing supply. York Region needs to cut administrative red tape so developers can build homes. Building permits need to be fast-tracked.

Taxing people does not encourage them to rent their property. Give a big enough tax break to encourage. Renters often cause damage. Owner's get stuck paying for repairs. So taxing is not the answer.

Taxing vacant homes is more likely to get the foreign owner to sell to a family who lives and work here

Technically a good measure to penalize vacancy and theoretically speculation but doesn't encourage more upzoning and redeveloping and densification which I think would be more productive

The “solution “ will do nothing to solve the problem

The answer is Dependent on the definition of the circumstances when the vacant homes tax is applied.

The answer is to give incentives to build more homes. Give new construction purchasing tax breaks. No property taxes for 1 year or land transfer tax on new construction first time buyers that live in the property for 2 years +

The average person in York Region pays enough tax as it is. It is up to the people that use the tax money collected and use it properly... leave private money alone.

The fix for housing affordability is to build more housing, not crash the market. The answer is not adding another tax we are already taxed to the maximum.

The future citizens of Canada are being forced to rent for life due to companies (with millions or billions in profit that can buy houses for cash quickly or do overasking easily) buying up available housing or holding onto housing, forcing people to rent from them or inflating the housing market artificially. They should be taxed severely on empty homes they can't/won't rent in order to allow individuals or families (not companies) to grow and thrive in York Region. Better yet, prevent them from buying houses or apartments or condos in the first place. Companies do not and will not ever need family homes.

The government has no business in what people do with their own homes.

The government needs to stop interfering with real estate value. Every time the government interferes it impacts the value of residents' most significant investment. The real estate market is a free one. Let the market do what the market does.

The government should not have the right to tell me what I can or can't do with my investment. I pay my taxes and if I want to leave it vacant that's my prerogative. This isn't

Table 1

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Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

the solution to the problem. Why doesn't the city of Vaughan like many other municipalities need to speed up the process of development and permit approvals so more units can be built.

The house across from where I live has been empty for over 2 years. There are also others in my subdivision empty.

The housing crisis is becoming a serious issue with many families left literally homeless. The housing market is majorly foreign money and the ones who can purchase are already from affluent families.

The housing crisis needs attention and the tax is the tool to use in my opinion

The housing supply and demand is severely imbalanced in GTA.

The key is to eliminate non-Canadian resident ownership of homes.

The landlord is at huge disadvantage because of the act and villainized when attempting to collect rent or requesting payment for damages done by tenants. Tenants can get away with pretty much anything and all responsibilities fall on the landlord.

The level of absentee landlordism is staggering. Viable housing options sit empty or are used for short term rentals. Family housing prices are untenable.

The low income - seniors, disabled, single parents are suffering under high rent. Increase in assistance required at food banks.

The main problem is a lack of supply. A vacant homes tax is politically popular but will not help much for housing affordability.

The multiple house owners are profiting from raising the rents. It's not just about availability, it's about the high cost/price of rent and buying property. My sister has been evicted twice from Newmarket in the last 2 years, as the owners either sell or pretend to live in the house so they can keep increasing the rent.

The neighbourhood I live in has become a block of unoccupied and neglected homes and properties, but my taxes just keep going up.

The objective of this tax should be to deter speculators. A proper vacant tax requires well designed compliance tools and specially algorithms to detect empty homes.

The owners who are not in their houses for long periods of time also do not look after them. In winter the snow was not cleared from the walkways or driveways and in the summer they did not cut their grass. The weeds are two feet high.

The people who live in York Region are being forced to look elsewhere to afford a place to live, without housing affordability, it helps perpetuate toxic relationships within families and those who live in multi-house homes as those who suffer from the toxic relationship cannot leave without needing to move hours away for affordable housing.

The percent should be based on the cost of the home, the people who can afford to purchase the home can easily afford the tax you are implementing

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The policy needs to be reasonable for investors to have time to rent out their units and there needs to be adequate resources to prosecute "professional tenants"

The primary problem is not the overabundance of vacant homes, but the overall lack of housing supply relative to demand. Taxing vacant homes tinkers on the margins but does not address the underlying issue fully. Moreover, the effects of the tax on affordability are in question (available evidence is mixed), while the costs are steep: the tax increases the already over-grown bureaucracy and further complicates the tax code, erodes private property rights, will increase tax avoidance schemes, etc. A better alternative would be to motivate or force municipalities to ease their zoning laws to allow multi-family dwellings, allocate funds for infrastructure development (so developers don't wait as long for the city to complete sewer/electrical work), fast-track local permitting process, and so on.

The reason owners don't rent their property, because it's hard to evict bad tenants. The government should look into the law of eviction, before they try to milk more money. :(

The Region should be for people to work and live in. The homes should be for residents, and not for hoarders to accumulate to rent or to wait for price inflation

The Region should not interfere with how people use or don't use their homes. It is their property and they should choose how to use it. This is ridiculous and a money grab. Stay out of people's business.

The Region should plan better and validate its own budget where many unnecessary spendings are taking place including over stuffing. People are working hard to get a property and maintain it. It's their money and choice whether to rent or keep vacant.

The rental property we own is the core part of our retirement plan as we don't have private employer pensions. There are many like us - York Region is home to a lot of self-employed individuals about to retire with no employer pension plans or benefits. We have planned carefully over a lifetime and are not asking for help, just not to be hindered. Sometimes the house is vacant - when preparing the house for sale or rent, when looking for a renter, when cleaning and repairing after a renter, when renovating, etc - and unforeseen circumstances always pop up that extends its time vacant. There's nothing we can do about that, it's a reality of life. It would be callous and severely damaging to our retirement finances to be hit by a big tax bill too when we're already missing out on rental income. Any vacancy tax needs to include a tolerance for vacancy that ensures beyond a reasonable doubt that property owners who are genuinely just trying to have some cash flow in retirement aren't unduly punished. It would be more fair if this tax applied only to homes purchased after the policy was enacted. Just as it wouldn't be right if an airline suddenly added a baggage fee and applied it to people who had already bought non-refundable tickets, it's fundamentally changing the rules of the game on people who are locked in and captive. Again, please keep in mind the impacts will have on people who count on their property for their retirement. We don't have the flexibility to change our plans on a dime at this stage. Our interests matter just as much as everyone else's, we are numerous, and after decades of paying our share of property taxes you have a moral obligation not to screw us in retirement.

The rich and the greedy are tiresome and draining on the economy.

Table 1

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The shortage of rental properties in my neighbourhood has driven rents so high they aren't affordable. I'm concerned about the next generation being able to rent within the Newmarket area.

The staffing cost to administer such a program will exceed the minimal revenue incurred. All GTHA municipalities should focus on more tangible ways to address housing affordability and the lack of affordable housing.

The state of off-shore and on-shore owned homes in my area is appalling. Eyesores and dangerous.

The street I live on has been a "dogpatch" for 25 years due to speculators sitting on empty lots, abandoned houses, and poorly maintained rentals.

The tax rate should be at least the same as the tax rate in BC.

The tax should be punitive. Large enough to discourage speculative investments. The rapid growth in condo developments in the south of the Region will certainly result in vacant homes and condos.

The tax should not be imposed on properties that are actively being marketed, with proof of listings and affidavits verifying the listing.

The tax will increase rent, not availability.

The tax would encourage people to sell or rent out properties they are not using.

The tax would help for more affordable housing.

The vacancy tax is deemed as 'low lying fruit'. Maybe understand why mom and pop landlords are keeping units vacant. The Landlord Tenant Board process is broken and no one is willing to get the Ontario government to fix it. It is too heavily weighted to tenants. Where else can a tenant live and not pay rent or utilities...it's theft and if stores can prosecute for minor theft, why can't a landlord? Affordability is not one area's responsibility. It has to be seen from a macro perspective not micro. Go lobby the Ontario government to stop rent control (inflation is 6+% but rent only can go up 2.5% and fix the LTB...make the system more fair.

The vacancy tax must be high enough to deter investors.

The vacant homes tax has to be well defined. E.g., to exclude caregivers for example, who have to move in to care for a family member for a time but wish to leave their home vacant. Or people who have to move into another property and are selling their home as a vacant property.

The Vacant Homes Tax should apply to residences that are used for short term rental like Airbnb.

The vacant homes tax should be one of many levers the Region can pull to help with housing affordability.

The vacant house pays property tax? It doesn't blast music until 2am every weekend, I think we should have more....

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The vacant tax and house flipper tax (buying the property not for use and selling it in one year without any justification) is the first and right step to improve the affordability.

There are 2 homes on my street alone that are vacant and the owner lives abroad. And lengths are taken to make it not appear such as snow shovelling to mask the vacancy.

There are already too many taxes and this is one that will be difficult to collect correctly. Just think about all the schemes that will be created by the people that actually keep properties vacant, including assigning (pay for) a fake resident, pretending major renovations are being done, just plain lying. The common people will pay more taxes. The foreign schemes will find a way not to pay.

There are at least 2 homes in my sight line that are unoccupied. One has been vacant for years and the other is one of 3 homes owned by the same person. Properties are not properly maintained.

There are homes that are not being looked after, yards unkempt, great opportunities for raccoons to thrive.

There are hundreds of vacant condos and houses owned by offshore foreign buyers.

There are many homes vacant and owned by foreigners who do not even come to the house(s). For example the house next door to us is owned by a foreigner and left empty, they never come to the house and has a property man maintain the house once to twice a month. This should be available for Canadian residents to purchase or rent not left there vacant, with a tax at least more houses will come available for rent or to own and if not our city will make more money for what is needed here.

There are MANY houses in Aurora in my neighbourhood that sit empty. My area is now 14 years old and some of these big homes have never had anyone living in them. With the housing crisis happening this should not be allowed.

There are many vacant homes in my neighbourhood. These homes are needed for people to live in, not hold onto indefinitely to make huge cash grabs.

There are many vacant homes on our street - held, we believe by speculators.

There are multiple houses on my street that are empty, backyards are overgrown and this is all in a recent development. My family and I are renting and will be doing so for the foreseeable future because the housing market requires us to either have inherited a great sum of money or to have my parents contribute a significant sum.

There are not a lot of rental options. Anything to add more will be great.

There are numerous houses in our Aurora neighbourhood that are vacant. They are not upkept and some are in dire need of repair and yet irresponsible owners do not upkeep the property in accordance with By-Laws. By-Law can only do so much and honestly, it's time to start reigning in people using the housing market when there is such a massive demand for housing. They also purposely price rent way too high out of greed or simply to deter people from renting. Not to mention the obvious money laundering schemes etc. Forcing these houses to be sold on the market will also have positive environmental effects where York Region can stop decimating every single parcel of green space we have and creating more

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adverse climate effects (aka a massive tornado destroying Uxbridge, Barrie etc). It's time for York Region to step up and stop playing nice with the people directly causing a housing shortage.

There are several homes in my neighbourhood that have been vacant for years.

There are so many empty homes in this area that could be better utilized by families needing affordable and available rentals. The lack of care and attention paid to these properties is alarming...there is absolutely no upkeep or property management to speak of and the outside conditions make living close by an embarrassment. All of these vacant homes should be reported to the city, a maintenance team dispatched and all costs associated be billed to their taxes. The costs should be in excess of the property management costs to make a point.

There are so many empty houses. It is kinda sad.

There are so many houses sitting vacant in Unionville now. They are never cared for and ruin the look of our beautiful town!

There are so many houses that we see just walking around the neighbourhood that are completely abandoned. Not only does it make housing unaffordable, it affects the character of the community.

There are so many vacant homes in my neighbourhood, owned by developers who are sitting on them, or by owners who live elsewhere and are holding onto them. So many families would love to live in my neighbourhood but can't find a home because of these situations. There were also party homes in our neighbourhood rented out as Airbnb's only in the summer months and vacant most of the year. Same as cottages, empty 9 months of the year.

There are streets where 30% - 50% of the houses are empty. If there was a vacancy tax this would encourage rentals and reduce housing costs.

There are thousands of homes that are vacant - many are not maintained. they could be home for a family.

There are three empty homes on my street. So we lack neighbours. It is less safe. The properties are not well cared for. They are not rented out. Wasteful.

There are too many homes in the area where you know no one is currently living...uncut grass, weedy garden, uncleared snow, houses looking in need of some tlc, and window coverings that never move. It does nothing to improve the area.

There are too many houses in our neighbourhood that sit empty, sometimes for years on end. In some cases the property is left poorly tended with long grass and weeds abounding. Others have ugly orange fencing put up around trees and these fences remain in place for years, despite nothing being done to the residence and no occupant present.

There are too many houses that are vacant used for “income” property that are never used. They are taking valuable housing options away from young families or renters.

There are too many vacant homes in my neighbourhood. Looks bad, tall grass etc...

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There are too many vacant homes. The other homes rented out are owned by persons who do not live in the country and they don't deal with the problems on the properties (electrical issues, trees that are decaying, fences falling down) or with bad tenants. I know because I live next to one.

There are too many vacant houses across the Region.

There are vacant homes for legitimate reasons. Why penalize those when the affordable issue has nothing to do with vacant homes?

There are vacant properties on my street. They are unkempt, an eyesore, and more importantly could help ease the housing crunch.

There are way too many vacant houses while houses are put up at crazy rates. Way too many homes are sold and immediately up for rent in my area, but some I'm sure are vacant as well.

There can be situations where people need to maintain two residences but may not be able to fulfill the 6 month residency requirement for example deciding to work in another area with full intentions of returning to make the residence their full time one in the future and using it more like a 'cottage type' facility in the meantime. More like taking a leave of absence while working in another area.

There is a crisis in affordable housing both for renters and buyers. We must address this.

There is a home on our street that has been vacant for a number of years.

There is a house in our neighbourhood that has been empty for 6 and 1/2 years. It is overgrown, there are gigantic weeds and it is a hazard. It can attract animals. If the house caught fire, it would be a risk to the entire street. Is there heat, electricity, property insurance?

There is a house on my street my family wanted to buy. Was sold before we could so we settled for another option. The original house we wanted the owners to not even live in the house. It's vacant. It's extremely frustrating seeing a home someone could live in being empty.

There is a house on my street that has been vacant for about 2 years now. Apart from vacant homes driving up house prices, they are an eyesore to the general public. This is because the owners have not been around to do basic maintenance such as pick up trash, mow the lawn, water grass, etc. so the vacant s homes stick out like a sore thumb.

There is a housing crisis in the York Region and we need to ensure as a community people have access to shelter.

There is a social responsibility to take any and all steps necessary to free up housing.

There is an empty house on the street in my neighbourhood. Not good for the community.

There is definitely a crisis of affordability and I support this idea. Good investment owners have tenants in their properties.

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There is no doubt there is a lack of affordable housing. I am unsure however if you can solve this.

There is no reason for a home to sit vacant in the Region for more than a couple of months. Only significant structural work would require it. Investors holding properties empty don't bring anything to the community. Foreign investors doing this, cause lack of affordability and housing to residents. If they can't rent a property, it's due to not finding a market rate. Empty liveable homes should be taxed after 6 months. If owned by a corporation or any form of business or foreign buyer, the vacant tax should be doubled.

woulThere is no reason for homes to sit vacant in a vibrant area. People should not be hoarding real estate.

There is no reason for houses to be empty when families are struggling to find a place to live.

There is too much money sitting in vacant houses, while the owners wait to resell at a profit. That profit should be taxed, and heavily. Or fines should be imposed if a property is vacant for longer than 3 months.

There might be some legitimate exceptions.

There should also be a landlord license requirement, for both long and short term houses with an annual fee.

There should be a ban on ownership for businesses past a certain amount.

There should be a reasonable time for a buyer to take possession and move in or rent out.

There will always be loopholes to a system like this. The real problem is all the red tape around building and not enough incentive towards builders to continue to build. This has been over seven years of lack of inventory, we simply need to build enough homes, housing starts are far too low.

These non-residential homes and many residential homes sit for years unoccupied and poorly maintained - often as place-holders awaiting capital appreciation while Canadians search in vain for residential opportunities. Buyers must designate at the time of purchase that this is to be a primary residence then occupy the same for a minimum of three months per year. Otherwise it should be deemed to be an investment property.

These properties are often neglected. Should not be allowed to be vacant for more than six months at the most.

These properties aren't being taken care of, reducing the look and feel of your community and neighbourhood.

They are already paying property tax. And not using the services they are paying for like roads, garbage, libraries etc. The municipalities (upper & lower tier) benefit from collecting property taxes but don't have to deliver services on those vacant properties. BUT property standards MUST be maintained, however, so that lawns are mowed etc.

They own property. Why would they not pay land tax or property tax?

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This also impacts the ability for hydro, water, sewer, etc to accurately gauge the demand and processing quantities. Leaving the systems either underutilized and a waste of tax dollars or inaccurately scoped for real demand depending on how the measurements are taken. If inadequately scoped then an uprise in usage would result in systems and infrastructure that cannot support the residence. Leaving years to plan and recover while the real residents are impacted.

This does not help with affordability...only driving away investors. And lots of people have cottages! This is crazy.

This is a good start but you need to go WAY farther. Single family large lot home ownership needs to stop being the focus of new developments. High density is needed.

This is a must and it needs to be big. I see empty homes in my neighbourhood all the time and many of them are empty for years and years.

This is a strictly supply vs demand issue. The reason our supply is not meeting demand is the fault of all levels of government. We need immigration due to our falling birth rates, but it is beyond irresponsible for all levels of government to not ensure that housing is available for all Canadians. More taxes are not the solution, streamlining the building process and making more permits available is the solution.

This is just another tax with no specific plan to explain what this tax will be used for! Is it for more spending on Viva bus lanes in the middle of the road causing enormous traffic problems?

This is not justified based on the stats provided.

This is not the way to fix the problem. The way is very obvious if you talk to any small landlord. Fix the laws in Ontario to give the landlords more rights! It is exceedingly hard to be a landlord in Ontario, and many don't want to do it. Look at the backlog in the court system. Look at Ford telling landlords they can't evict someone over covid. Look at just how hard it is to get out a bad tenant. We only rent out our house because we have to. I know plenty of people who wouldn't even consider it, and you should not force people to pay a useless tax on their own property because they choose to protect themselves and their property by keeping it vacant. A tax won't make people rent out their properties if the laws won't protect them. Just another way to line the Region's pockets.

This is the first time hearing this, and if true, then yes, implement the tax. People unable to get affordable homes, while a few investors keeping homes vacant to keep prices high is wrong, if not immoral. I am not sure that it will totally solve the problem, but it is a good start. I would be in favour of eliminating home vacancies altogether, for the purpose of speculation.

This needs to be done, but also enforced. Furthermore, home ownership, especially multiple home ownership, should only be allowed for people who live AND Work here. If you have an offshore shell company in a tax haven, you shouldn't be able to own multiple homes in York Region or Canada.

This tax has worked in other places. Anyone who owns a second home and does not use it should be penalized.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

This tax is long overdue!

This tax should ramp over time to put increasing pressure on landlords to drop their rental prices to reasonable values.

This tax will affect people renting their houses under Airbnb, it will affect people that purchased housing units for once a year or stay in the city for a conference/business trip. Maybe I have that house for my lover. It is no one's business why I have property and who lives in it.

This tax will discourage speculators and help affordability for first-time buyers.

This tax would ensure proper property maintenance is adhered to & ensure minimal break-ins.

This will help the lower and middle class people by offsetting their property tax portion by taxing the Uber wealthy who can afford to have vacant homes.

This will simply introduce more cheating to avoid paying additional tax. The overhead from the government goes higher too. It's not an effective way to control the house price.

This would be the only part of the free market to be legislated by the municipal government and to what end? It will not increase housing availability.

This would motivate speculators to put places up for rent and more supply could lower rents.

This would negatively impact seniors who have two properties. Especially when these seniors are going to rely on the home for their retirement.

Tired of rental/vacant homes on my street - investors have no pride of ownership and I fear younger generations will never be able to afford a house.

Tired of seeing houses sitting empty and the maintenance isn't being kept up. That house is now an eye sore and my children will never be able to afford their own home if this keeps happening. I want a very high vacant home tax to be implemented!

To make housing affordable for the young generation particularly.

Too many empty houses in our area, unkempt.

Too many families cannot afford to rent therefore these empty spaces should be rented out at a reasonable price.

Too many folks looking to purchase a home are being priced out the market by large and small property owners looking to make a large profit renting out multiple homes.

Too many homes are being purchased by foreign investors who don't feed into the local economy and leave the property in less than acceptable appearances bringing down the value of our communities.

Too many homes are held by speculators and make home ownership pricing higher than is demanded to house the resident population because of a lack of housing supply.

Table 1

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Too many homes are sitting empty while families looking to move into the neighbourhood have few, if any, options.

Too many houses are left vacant while so many can not afford to live in this Region. We need to prevent speculators.

Too many houses are sitting vacant as others are struggling to find a place to live.

Too many houses on my street have sat empty for a long time. Someone comes and checks the homes for an hour on Fridays, but otherwise they are vacant and are reducing the supply of homes available in the area. While the enrollment in the area schools is reducing due to less families with young kids being able to afford homes in this area.

Too many houses sit empty today here while you hear of people moving further east to live since nothing here. Plus the empty houses are becoming eyesores in this area.

Too many houses sitting empty , owned by offshore speculators, driving the rental and selling prices higher just to satisfy the speculators.

Too many newer homes are vacant in my area.

Too many of our younger generations are struggling to own or even find affordable rentals.

Too many of these homes are neglected and that has an impact on pride of ownership of neighbours adjacent to the litter and overgrowth.

Too many people being overcharged on available rentals leading to illegal and poorly run homes.

Too many people have several houses and leave them empty to wait for prices to go up.

Too many people own residential properties with no intention of living in them. While I would prefer there to be more incentives for these people to just sell these properties to buyers who do not own their principal residence (as opposed to having the option of renting them out) but I understand this proposal is better than nothing. I personally find rampant landlordism to be a major problem impacting housing in this Region/province/country.

Too many properties bought as investments, to flip, speculation.

Too many scenarios to ‘Tax’ all 2nd non-primary residence. Empty houses, used occasionally still provide property tax, and basic minimum utilities generating revenue for those service providers. Often landscape is hired, generating more small business revenue. A financial investment is a bonus, accomplishment and although there are some who don’t have it, it is NOT democratic to continue to punish and burden those who have worked hard and achieved some success. No development of rentals? Why? Because costs are too high and Tenant Landlord laws are difficult.

Too many speculators own more properties that bring up the market price.

Too many unkempt vacant homes in York with too many people and families without affordable housing.

Table 1

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Too many vacant homes in neighbourhoods have not been kept and are making the areas run down.

Too many vacant homes in the area - not maintained.

Too many vacant homes not being maintained is a big issue (e.g. grass not being cut, overgrown weeds, etc). Those looking for homes can't afford them because house speculators/investors appear to be driving up the cost of housing.

Too much speculation buying going on from people not even in Canada. This is driving the price of homes tremendously.

Too often vacant homes are not taken care of. People have little pride in their properties such as not regularly cutting grass, etc. Homes should not be purchased solely for speculation!

Toronto (and GTA) is considered a world class metropolitan city which naturally drives up both rental and house prices especially when there is an imbalance between supply and demand. In order to make housing and renting affordable, we increase supply fast enough to keep pace with the demand. Although increasing the interest rate may bring the house price down, however, the mortgage rate goes up accordingly. The buyers end up paying the same periodic payment if not more. So I do not see how increasing the interest rate can improve affordability. In order to increase supply, we can speed up the development process by reducing the red tapes. Condos and townhomes provide low price entry points which should be encouraged. I believe one of the main reasons why there are many investors in real estate is because of the low interests that they earn in GIC, saving accounts, etc. The stock market is volatile and not for everyone. The vacant homes tax appears to be penalizing those who try to secure a self-sufficient retirement out of the limited options that I just mentioned. Please keep in mind that retirees who can help themselves without extra assistance from the Government will help the Government down the road.

Trying to solve complex problems with simple taxation never results in the intended outcome. It's nothing more than a headline grabbing publicity stunt that is used by officials to make it appear like they are doing something, and added taxation plays well with the portion of the public that thinks (in error) that rich people and large corporations are causing the housing situation.

Typically vacant homeowners do not maintain their outside property which runs down the neighbourhood.

Unacceptable that vacant houses are often not maintained and become neighbourhood eyesores - with reasonably priced rental properties in high demand and in short supply, vacant houses are highly objectionable.

Unfortunately those that are rich enough to buy a place for investment and not rent it out, will be more than rich enough to pay a vacant homes tax. We rent many farms with empty houses on them because it is easier for the developer to not rent the house out. They have deep, deep pockets. Many are heritage homes left to rot which is the saddest part.

UNOCCUPIED HOMES ARE RECEIVING CITY SERVICES (POLICE, SNOW CLEARING ETC.) AND SHOULD THEREFORE BE PAYING TAXES.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

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Until the LTB is changed & landlords are given back rights to deal with bad or undesirable tenants, no property owner should be forced to rent the property that they legally own nor should they be taxed for not doing so. They already pay taxes.

Useless bureaucrats think that can easily be bypassed.

Vacant dwellings are often poorly cared for, might attract criminal activity and take up inventory falsely inflating competition and value.

Vacant home owners should be disincentivized to avoid renting / living in them. We need to make units that are already existing available to those who need it.

Vacant home tax just adds another layer of cost to our Government with no real ROI. Additionally it just adds another heavy handed approach to make housing "affordability" which isn't the correct answer. The recent interest rate increases alone are already crippling things.

Vacant home tax now please! Next steps should be tax on ALL non primary residences and ban on corporate home ownership.

Vacant home tax should be one tool in achieving affordable home goals.

Vacant home tax violates civil liberties and infringes on residence's rights.

Vacant Home tax will not cool down the market, just add more burdens for someone who built his/her nest in York Region, but have to go back and forth to another province or country to work to bring bread home. I would suggest creating a tax for foreign owners who are not Canadian and permanent residents, and increase their property tax.

Vacant home tax will not resolve the root issue, at all. All this suggestion does is dealing with the consequence, but not addressing the root issue would mean this is a temporary solution, if at all.

Vacant home tax will only help so much. To make housing more affordable we need to protect housing as a means to live instead of investments.

Vacant homes also negatively affect the neighbours and neighbourhood. One sees 'just enough' being done to keep the bylaw officers away re: property maintenance. Further, it deflates the sense of community.

Vacant homes are a blight to neighbourhoods. They are often unkept and York Region does not do enough to make people comply with upkeep by-laws. look at cathedral town. It could be a lively community but consists of closed storefronts, no grocery stores, and uninhabited homes.

Vacant homes are a blight, no one takes care of them, weeds everywhere.

Vacant homes are a lost opportunity for those who need housing. It benefits no one but the owner, and we need solutions that benefit society, not individual investors.

Vacant homes are a security risk - drawing attention and increasing vandalism and opportunities for crime and break ins.

Table 1

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Vacant homes are an issue, but even more proportion of speculator investment is also renting them out - regardless of whether it's rented out or vacant, investors are bidding and driving up prices (causing affordability issues) due to the fact that they can leverage on existing equity on the other homes. It's multiple ownerships that are the prime reason prices are being driven up.

Vacant homes are left unkempt and risk property crime.

Vacant homes are negatively impacting access and affordability of housing. A very high annual vacant tax should be assessed. New bylaws should be created that prevent future vacant homes. Perhaps a home should be sold if it remains vacant for more than a year. Also, investors should be taxed extra to allow for families to purchase homes.

Vacant homes are not contributing to the community. It's better to have people living there and contributing to society.

Vacant homes are not only a travesty for those in need of housing, but a vacant home is a deteriorating home and it shows.

Vacant homes are often left to "demolition by neglect" and many such homes are destroying our current neighbourhood (vermin, squatting, weeds, garbage etc) and perfectly good homes that could be rentals.

Vacant homes are sometimes not maintained. We had one in our neighbourhood where racoons made a hole in the roof. Bylaws had to step in and ask the owners to repair it or they would hire a contractor to do it. We are renting right now waiting for the housing market to calm down. Vacant homes mean that people like me have fewer homes to buy.

Vacant homes are typically uncared for (yard not kept up, driveway full of snow) and lower the value of adjacent homes and take up city resources (responding to neighbours complaints). Terminally vacant homes are a blight on the beauty of Markham.

vacant homes can be bothersome for neighbours. Grass unkempt, gardens messy, snow piled up & critters moving in. We have a vacant home on our street (5 years!) & raccoons & squirrels live on the porch, in the back yard & probably in the house.

Vacant homes destroy the look and feel of the community. It is not right that selfish investors benefit, while residents lose out.

Vacant homes diminish housing stock for people who want to come to live in York Region, are for real estate speculators and attack dirty money.

Vacant homes in my neighbourhood are often poorly maintained and look abandoned. I would not like to live next to a house like this. There is no care or concern for the greater community in which the property is owned. Vacant homes are detrimental to our communities and contribute to higher house prices and less inventory.

Vacant homes not only deplete the housing supply but are also generally a blight on the neighbourhood, unkempt properties need to be maintained.

Vacant homes still benefit from services.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

Vacant homes tax is a wonderful idea. It will help clean up the vacant houses hopefully or better yet allow for someone to have a roof over their head due to lack of housing available.

Vacant Homes Tax should be levied on (i) the initial purchase, and (ii) on an ongoing basis whilst the property is vacant, and could be a multiple of the property tax (e.g. 2x property tax on top of the normal property tax).

Vacant Homes Tax should be very high (like 2% of house value per month), and onus to explain vacancy fully on the owner. Failure to pay leads to expropriation for non-payment of municipal taxes. Got to be serious about this.

Vacant homes tax should never be on a principal residence, occupied or not.

Vacant homes tax will force them to sell residential properties to those that will actually occupy them.

Vacant homes tend to be uncared for...besides detracting from the aesthetics of an area, they may attract undesired pests like raccoons to a neighbourhood.

Vacant homes that aren't being looked after should absolutely be taxed.

Vacant homes, while owners pay taxes, they do not necessarily contribute to other services such as water and sewer costs.

Vacant houses draw down on the value of the homes around it. The houses are always poorly maintained, attracting rodents and other animals.

Vacant houses lead to a run down appearance in the neighbourhood as they are not maintained. This also applies to the rental properties as well. The buying up of properties has led to people not being able to afford a home in Unionville.

Vacant houses means less supply plain and simple.

Vacant properties are a problem on two counts - not only the fact that they exist as "property speculators" take advantage of the market and ever-increasing pricing but also that most properties are not kept up especially in summer with overgrown lawns and weeds.

Vacant properties are mostly unkept and an eyesore to neighbourhoods. **[x 2]**

Vacant properties should have laws for maintaining lawns, some are a terrible mess.

Vacant tax is not going to help... Speculation tax and/or commercial tax rates on residential property used as investment/income property is more effective and logical.

Watching homes sit empty and become an eyesore to the community. Home prices have left a lot of people out of the housing market but on the other hand, people can no longer afford rental properties.

We are 'newcomers' to Canada. We've been able to purchase a home, however, we are cognizant that many Canadians and newcomers are priced out of the market and it's unaffordable. Communities will suffer, in the long run, as the local conveniences such as coffee shops, grocery stores etc won't be able to attract local people to work there as they simply won't be able to live/work/commute to these expensive suburbs. I work in healthcare.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

I too am considering cutting my losses and taking a post that is walking distance so as to not have rising commuter costs. This ‘housing situation’ has far reaching consequences.

We are currently lifelong renters. Our family income is about 120k a year but it really isn't reasonable to spend such a large amount of our monthly income on a mortgage. We rent and have extra to save and have no interest in being house poor as so many in this Region are.

We are fighting to try and live , with everything going up. How can we even afford to put food on the table, if we're struggling to pay the high cost of rent?

We are in a crisis. Implement the tax now!

We are in a housing crisis. As a young person I am scared I will never own a home despite having savings and a good income, there is no reason for homes to be empty.

We are on the outskirts of the GTA. The prices are lower.

We are taxed on the income, the property plus the gain. What else do you want? Hands off! Stop controlling what we can do on our own property!

We currently have many young people and seniors who cannot afford housing in Markham. These homes should be rented out at a reasonable rate or face or an empty house tax. We are hosting a Ukrainian family and I can't see them ever being able to afford a place in Markham.

We do not want house investments speculators.

We don't have a tax problem, there are already enough taxes for homeowners and those of us who work for our money. We aren't taking CERB payments and we aren't protected as homeowners and landlords. Enough is enough.

We have a housing crisis and many homes in my neighbourhood are empty; I do not think this is right.

We have a property on our street that has never been lived in by the owner but is used as a very disruptive Airbnb. Also the tax could be put towards maintaining the many properties that are eyesores due to absentee owners and landlords.

We have a severe housing shortage in York Region - any tool to increase the supply of shelter options should be considered.

We have a supply issue and a new tax will not solve that; restrictive zoning and burdensome regulations restrict supply more.

We must do something! Rents are through the roof and there are empty houses everywhere!

We need a stable roof and people with vacant properties should be taxed or forced to sell. Landlords should be monitored including putting a limit for rents.

We need homes for people and families, not vacant shells for investors.

We need land.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

We need more than a Vacant Homes Tax. There are currently four empty homes on my street. This shouldn't be allowed, period. People are struggling, rents are rising beyond what people can reasonably afford. York Region needs to implement programs to allow people to stay in their communities and close to their elders and families.

We need to assist where we can with housing and having houses left empty isn't helping anyone.

We need to do something about housing affordability. I have worked in social services for over 40 years and the situation continues to get worse every year. For individuals relying on government assistance their options for housing are virtually non-existent. With rent supplements the street is their reality. Homelessness is a real problem and the numbers continue to rise. Housing should be available for everyone but it is not. Emergency shelters are just part of the continuum. We need more rental units, with supporting dollars for ongoing support.

We need to elect councillors that have better ideas other than more taxes. York Region has one of the highest property taxes in Ontario outside of Toronto and way too much red tape for new developments.

We need to find another way to address this issue. Government and developers need to work together to build affordable housing.

We pay enough property taxes already.

We pay tax, they should pay tax.

We should ban foreign investors from buying domestic real estate just like China. Further, the vacant tax should be punitive enough to discourage the behaviour. A 1% tax just doesn't cut it.

What is the home price to income ratio on average? Is it within historical norms?

What is York Region gonna do when nobody under 30 lives there unless they are pulling in \$300k a year?

When a property is purchased, it is the land that is wanted, not the house. However, if a house is demolished and not rebuilt, DC will apply if not rebuilt within 4 years. Not every landowner wants to be a landlord, and I speak from experience when I refer to the headaches if one ends up with a “bad” tenant. I strongly disagree with taxing vacant properties. Perhaps it is the population forecasts that should be adjusted. We currently do not have resources to those who live here

When houses are left vacant it has been my experience that they are not maintained the same as if someone was living there. Lawns not cut, full of weeds, no maintenance is actively done on the property, in winter snow not shovelled, garbage lying around. Overall, it brings down the neighbourhood and isn't fair to the people living there and it doesn't help foster a sense of community.

When I moved to a new subdivision when the houses were affordable we had at least 15 empty homes

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

When someone invests a significant amount of money into real estate, it should not be any level of government that tells them what to do with it. If the government wants to subsidize housing, then put up the money. Stop looking for new ways to tax those that have been diligent with their own AFTER TAX MONEY that they have already paid taxes on. Landlord Tenant Laws do not offer any protection to a Landlord for Tenants that do not pay the rent and cannot remove the tenant.

When you issue permits to builders, please ensure that they have a % of their building design for affordable housing and proper recreation facilities. We pay enough taxes for the diminished services.

Where does seasonal property reside? What about recreational property?

Where we live they put construction fences around trees to protect them and then destroy a perfectly livable home to build 30 story skyscrapers. Insane methodology!

While a vacant homes tax would be good, more high density housing options and reliable consistent public transit wouldn't hurt either. Maybe put the revenue towards those efforts.

While I respect the right of people to earn money from taking a risk, we live in a community and part of membership in a community is yielding to the social contract. Holding onto a home not lived in is selfish and goes against the needs of a greater community.

Why are other countries buying up streets & blocks of new houses and not paying taxes? Especially in Sharon & York Region & Simcoe County!

Why should I pay more tax after I pay my realty tax already?

Why should non occupied properties get a tax break?

Will affect business investment.

Will collecting a tax really reduce home costs?

With an affordable shortage of homes to have many homes sitting years empty is questionable to say the least.

With exceptions for a property undergoing active renovation with a Building Permit.

With other cities implementing this tax & it working, York Region must do the same.

With our nation's increasing housing crisis, I believe it's time the government steps in. The only way to offer relief quickly is to force real estate investors to offer their vacant properties as housing or pay to help offset the cost of rent for those that need it.

With so many new houses being built in giant subdivisions all the time, it seems crazy that housing and rent prices in the area are still so high. If there are not enough houses to meet demand, the houses we build should be used for housing Canadian residents. It also seems like it would be a good idea to create more high-density housing buildings (e.g., apartments/condos), which tend to be more affordable than single family homes.

With so many people looking for housing those who own vacant homes should be encouraged to find tenants or buyers. A vacant homes tax would be an incentive.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

With the increasing housing shortage and lack of affordable options something needs to be done. A Vacant House Tax is a good option.

With the number of people who fail to pay rent - whether through job loss or choice, it is risky to be forced to rent out a house. It takes over a year to get before the rent board to evict and in the meantime you don't collect rent and still have to pay the bills!

With the proposed exceptions together with others if the home is undergoing major renovations or awaiting a demolition permit. The tax proposed should be higher. Those owning these homes would not be influenced by low additional taxes.

Without something changing soon, my children that grew up in York Region may not be able to live here when they are ready to move out on their own.

Would be nice if more families could afford to own a home. Have a tiered tax system: homeowners pay 100% (\$5000), seniors pay 95% (\$4750), and investors pay 115% (\$5750) tax! Vacant homes pay 125% tax rate (\$6250).

Would harm the real estate market, especially for investors. We don't need another tax.

Yes a tax is crucial as we need more affordable housing not just speculators. Also upkeep on empty houses needs to be mandatory as so many houses have overgrown weeds and long grass.

Yes, I have a neighbour from another country. They are never in it. The weeds in the backyard are horrible.

Yes, money laundering should be discouraged, and I recommend reporting to CRA as well.

Yes, they should be taxed. with a shortage of affordable homes, it would give them an incentive to rent out.

Yes, York Region is facing a housing affordability crisis, as is any region surrounding the GTA. I view the vacant homes tax as a quick & easy political 'we did something'/'we increased our revenue' scheme which is void of any original and constructive thought process. A vacant homes tax will not deal with the root of the problem i.e. the population influx into the GTA and surrounding regions, and the lack of adequate long-term planning by all regions concerned.

Yes. Should also implement a Land Transfer tax that applies to individuals who own multiple residential properties (and all numbered corps).

York Region has to create healthy landlord - tenant relationships, where non-paying tenants are easily evicted, so LL will rent their houses with confidence.

York Region home prices are out of control due to lack of supply and lack of different types of housing. Vacant homes are often poorly maintained and bring down the neighbourhood. The city then has to become involved with ensuring maintenance which is costly since inspectors etc are required to enforce this.

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.

York Region housing is unaffordable for first time homebuyers due to inflated prices brought on by the market. Buying a home and keeping it vacant or for investment is unacceptable for people who need to purchase a home to live in and can't afford it now.

York Region is not affordable at all, hopefully this will help but there is a long way to go.

York Region needs more AFFORDABLE homes. Town homes or smaller detached homes. NO MORE condos or large estate like homes.

York Region needs to use every power that has to create a path to affordable housing. This is not a new issue but it is one that has gotten out of control. Region should look at building more co-ops and rent-to-own housing.

York Region should explore how to best support landlords and put in place programs/incentives to encourage legal basement apartment development. Currently, tenants can trash apartments and get away with not paying rent. The landlord and tenant board is a joke. Home owners prefer to keep apartments empty or sell rental properties because they don't want to deal with an unfair system. The security deposit should be legalized. You cannot get away with trashing a hotel room, but you can trash someone's home and remove smoke detectors. Renters should be liable for illegal actions.

York Region should implement a Vacant Homes Tax. Many homes have been purchased by individuals who have no intention to live in them. This is reducing the housing supply for the general population who need homes to live in.

York Region should not implement a discriminatory tax system for people who own multiple properties.

York Region should simplify and speed up development permitting to incentivise more new housing to be built faster rather than going after property owners. People should be free to have vacant property if they choose without penalty. They paid for the property with hard earned money. Municipalities are the ones that are causing housing shortages by limiting where new housing can be built.

York Region, Ontario and federal governments need to allow construction companies to build more by reducing bureaucracy. Taxes will not fix this issue. Also money from this tax will not go to create additional residential units, so tax is not a solution.

You guys will do anything to extort our money.

You have to fix LTB for timely eviction of non paying tenants. Landlords are afraid to rent it out because they might lose more in the end if they cannot evict non paying tenants. Mine was living rent free for 6 months and nobody cared for us. The premier, the housing ministry, the ombudsman, nobody helping us.

You haven't exactly explained what that is and how it would be implemented, how much tax, etc.

You should not force people to do anything with their assets. Affordability and availability of rental apartments and homes is more of a huge problem with the Landlord and Tenant Act. If you can make this act more fair and balance the act to improve the rights of both tenants and landlords, you may see more people willing to rent out their places. When tenants can

Table 1

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answer (optional)”

Optional comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their response to the introduction of a VHT.



literally destroy a person's home and walk away with no consequences, why would anyone want to take that risk? Why would you force people to pay a tax on their assets because of a systemic problem with provincial government initiative. Fix what is broken. Don't penalize people for having assets. They should be allowed to do what they wish with them. They are already being taxed for it. Come up with better solutions to the housing problem than penalizing people for owning a house!

Young people can't get into the housing market on 1 income.

Young people who are financially savvy are living with their parents well into their 30s. Because renting is a waste of money and houses are unaffordable.

Use of Revenue Generated by the Vacant Homes Tax

“If York Region were to introduce a Vacant Homes Tax, how should any revenue generated be used?”

| Response | Count | |
|---|---------------|--|
| Housing initiatives and programs (e.g., building new affordable housing, providing rent supplements, supporting emergency shelters, etc.) | 1,342 (59.6%) |  |
| General purposes (e.g., to support other municipal programs and services offered within York Region, etc.) | 593 (26.3%) |  |

Other (please specify) 318 (14.1%) 

Total 2,253

Figure 6: Bar graph indicating responses when asked “If York Region were to introduce a Vacant Homes Tax, how should any revenue generated be used?”

Table 2

Responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other uses of net revenue from the Vacant Homes Tax.

“Affordable housing” is best for Toronto.

50% and free programs for kids.

A 1:1 reduction in the existing tax base. Let not this be an opportunistic tax grab by the Region.

A combination of both but mainly for housing initiatives.

A combination of both.

A comprehensive affordable housing strategy must be approved and specific programs developed. “Special initiatives” are not a long term solution.

A dollar for dollar credit on my residential property tax bill.

A tax should not be implemented.

Affordable housing for the elder people.

All of the above **[x 2]**

All of the above, but generally towards helping stabilize the housing crisis by building more homes.

Any extra tax should go towards improving our healthcare system which apparently from all accounts is in dire need.

As our other taxes are used.

Be put into the LTB to speed up hearings.

Better town services and offset the property tax loss as house prices decline.

Better traffic on main roads.

Both **[x 9]**

Both monies to be divided in half.

Build affordable multi-unit buildings and give the apartments to people who lived in York Region for many years.

Table 2

Responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other uses of net revenue from the Vacant Homes Tax.

Build affordable rental housing in areas where employment options also exist. These shouldn't become housing projects like they have in Toronto.

Build infrastructure to support the growing community.

Build job training centres.

Building affordable accommodation for residents.

Building more houses only.

Building more housing is not solving the issue but all governments continue to push this agenda because it's easy to throw money at a problem rather than taking a hard look at the systemic issues. Monies collected should go towards enforcement and monitoring of suspect activities and perhaps to help those most affected with rent supplements and shelters.

Buy affordable homes and sell them to the market with affordable prices. Buy a block from developers and supplement new families so they can have a real home and transition to purchasing when they have the income stability to do so.

Casino.

Clearing up backlogged repairs to infrastructure as well as maintenance to existing community housing.

Compensate landlords who lose money while intending to make it vacant and use it as the single income source.

Compensate property owners who suffer from tenants not paying rent.

Construction of affordable housing communities. Not units, but whole complexes.

Contribute to emergency events such as flooding and family abuse.

Convert existing buildings into affordable housing units.

Create more high income jobs and better community service.

Create new jobs.

Cut property taxes.

Cut taxes.

Decrease property tax on principal homes in York Region.

Depends on the scope of the problem of vacant residences and the vacancy tax revenue that could be generated.

Despite my reasoning above - I think the idea of providing rent supplements for the working low-pay earners is a good idea - but not through Vacant Homes Tax (what happens when there are no Vacant Homes- you can't depend on that for this cause).

Develop a first time homeowner rebate where the homeowner gets a grant dependent on cost of home.

Table 2

Responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other uses of net revenue from the Vacant Homes Tax.

| |
|--|
| Disagree with introducing vacant homes tax. |
| Displace taxes on ratepayers dollar for dollar. |
| Do not control how homeowners use their properties. |
| Do not have a vacant homes tax. |
| Do not impose it. Fix the Landlord and Tenant Board first. |
| Doing periodic checks on the properties. |
| Don't agree with this tax. [x 15] |
| Don't implement a tax you can't constitutionally support. |
| Don't do it, it's lack of leadership, problem solving that created the problem. Don't tax others as an excuse, it won't fix the problem. |
| Don't do it... there will be no net revenue generated and it will be impossible to police. |
| Don't worry about taxing vacant homes, get rid of the EXTREMELY unfair & one-sided LTB system that means tenants only pay if they feel like it. This has made it such that for most landlords, it's cheaper to leave a house vacant than to rent it out. |
| Don't. Government generated revenue is highly inefficient. |
| East Gwillimbury needs a recreation centre with a swimming pool! |
| Emergency shelters and getting the business model of Habitat for Humanity whereby people have ownership therefore will look after their house. |
| Enforcement and further investigations. |
| Existing realty tax, income tax etc. are already paid to those who work in the government and without any concern to residents. |
| Fix the roads. |
| Food banks. |
| For general purposes and to reduce the incidence of Taxes paid. |
| Fund more senior programs and housing. |
| Funding for schools / daycares / healthcare. |
| Funding for the town to maintain the property when the landlord is absent or otherwise unresponsive. |
| Garbage collection program. |
| General purposes but not new programs; reduce tax burden overall. |
| Give grants to owners being disadvantaged by bad tenants. |

Table 2

Responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other uses of net revenue from the Vacant Homes Tax.

| |
|--|
| Give it back to York Region residents as this tax will hurt the value of their home. |
| Give politicians a raise. |
| Give the tax to non vacant homeowners. |
| Give younger generation 20+ adults a break in taxes or provide interest-free loans or down payment towards their 1st home. |
| Given right back to the residents of Richmond Hill and not to high-earning landlords or developers. |
| Good reliable public transit and good bike infrastructure. |
| Help lower the property taxes by residents, especially seniors. |
| Help the working poor, help people with mental health issues, which includes addictions. |
| Home vacant tax should also surcharge those real estate agents who are purposely withholding the house. |
| Housing & Regional Infrastructure. |
| Housing for special needs. |
| Housing for young professionals programs. |
| Housing initiative and programs should be financed with revenue generated from tax properties that homeowners pay. |
| Housing initiatives and environmental impact research and initiatives. |
| Housing initiatives but not supplementing rent as that just allows the greedy people to continue to make ridiculous money off of hard working, good people. |
| How about fund healthcare (including mental health) & education since both are in shambles? |
| I do not believe a vacant homes tax makes sense in any capacity. |
| I don't believe any new funds collected will be used any more effectively than all the taxes that we already pay. This is another tax grab. |
| I don't see anything good coming out of another tax. |
| I don't care. |
| I think it should go towards both as the cost of living and ability to support that aren't both going up. |
| I would move out of York Region. |
| I would say to build new affordable housing, but I wonder what percentage would actually result in going to people in need. Maybe give some to support community groups and even |

Table 2

Responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other uses of net revenue from the Vacant Homes Tax.

shelters so the money goes directly to those in need, not in building programs with massive waiting lists and efficient and burdensome rules.

If this penalty fund is justified to provide more affordable housing, then use it ONLY to build affordable houses! Servicing shelters, rent supplements, etc.. are the business of governments and our tax dollars and NOT directly from the pockets of private citizens. Otherwise this penalty tax is just that... penalizing citizens for the failure of government services.

If you collect more tax then you should cut the same amount in property taxes.

Improve / increase public transit for non-Hwy 7 roads like Bur Oak.

Improve infrastructure.

Improve Transit and Biking Infrastructure, and promote higher density building.

Improved transit, improved roads and sidewalks.

Improving and expanding multi-use paths and transit.

In some areas, homes are purchased and allowed to rot. Grass grows too tall, they are rented to nefarious parties, they are generally unloved. Maintenance and legal fees to charge the negligent owners could be paid for by the Vacant Homes Tax.

Increase green space and seriously combat climate change.

Initiating a programme that would insure better care of home by owner.

Invest in education, utilities, and install cameras.

Invest in resources to ease urban planning burden and build more houses (intensify) within infill areas.

Investigation and enforcement.

It should never be done.

It should support both.

It shouldn't be collected. If it is collected, then on infrastructure and parks.

It will never go to use that citizens will see.

It wouldn't. There would be so many loopholes that this wouldn't fly.

Jumpstart program: to help qualified families get into the market.

Keep it simple. Divide the additional Vacant Home Tax among the regular categories for taxes.

Keep your hands out of others' pockets.

Leading question once again.

Table 2

Responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other uses of net revenue from the Vacant Homes Tax.

| |
|---|
| Legal proceedings to expropriate homes from foreign speculators and money launderers. |
| Limit the rights of defaulting tenants who do not pay rent! Protect the interests of landlords! The basement is allowed to rent legally! |
| Lower property taxes for individuals who only have one principal residence since there will be a supplement to counter it (vacant homes tax). |
| Lower property taxes for residents who are actually living in their homes. |
| Lower property taxes which is part of the affordability process. |
| Lower property taxes. [x 2] |
| Lower residential property taxes for all. |
| Lower tax. [x 3] |
| Lower taxes for families. |
| Lower taxes for homeowners who occupy their home. |
| Lower taxes for people who do live in their homes. [x 2] |
| Lowering property taxes for the rest of the citizens of York Region. [x 2] |
| Lowering property taxes on primary residence. |
| Lowering the general realty tax to all owners. |
| Make life better for those living in York Region. |
| Mix of special purpose fund and general revenues. |
| Mixed. 70/30 split between housing initiatives and other services. |
| Money is fungible. |
| More frequent, more affordable transit for all residents. |
| More senior apartments needed. |
| Municipal taxes should be reduced. |
| Municipality needs to readdress its Master Plan, urban planning and deal with developers to make communities bikeable/walkable. |
| Neighbourhood improvement. |
| New apartments for low income people. |
| New market. |
| No condos, just houses. |
| No new tax. [x 9] |

Table 2

Responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other uses of net revenue from the Vacant Homes Tax.

| |
|---|
| No vacant house tax. [x 2] |
| NO, this is not right. If I don't use my car, are you going to rent it out to others? |
| None. [x 2] |
| Not in favour of taxing vacant homes...period. |
| Not such foolish action should be taken... How many vacant properties are there? If any, they are waiting to be flipped or rezoned. |
| Not sure - but too many homes are unaffordable for Cdn residents and are held as second or third residents by foreigners. |
| Nothing - don't try to find more ways to tax residents. |
| Nothing, this program probably costs more than what we get back. |
| Obligate current builders to sell to Canadians at an affordable price. Their greed is out of control. |
| Only for affordable housing projects. Nothing else. No related programs. |
| Pay down the Regional debt. [x 2] |
| Pay nurses more. Hire more nurses. Stop paving the greenbelt. Preserve local farmland. |
| People need to hire paid jobs---then they can afford housing. |
| Policing illicit uses like Airbnb and enforcement. Also encouraging further rental supply in s.f. Homes and others. |
| Policing the tax. |
| Programs that aim to make York residents have their own houses at affordable prices. Rent supplements may not help to correct the house prices to an affordable level. |
| Property tax decrease. |
| Property tax rebate since no services are being used. |
| Property tax reduction for those owning only one property in York Region. |
| Provide and encourage more Co-op housing. Many tenants will never own but need a stable place to live in that they have a say in how it is run. |
| Provide developers with a 5 year supplemental payment after occupancy or a reimbursement of development charges paid. |
| Provide maintenance services to the homeowners! Lawn cutting, weed control, snow removal... general repairs. Since you're taxing the homeowners, it's only fair and equitable you provide these services. |
| Providing assistance to 1st time homebuyers. |

Table 2

Responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other uses of net revenue from the Vacant Homes Tax.

| |
|---|
| Public Transportation. |
| Put a cap on rent prices. |
| Put money back into the community through subsidised child care and recreational programs. |
| Put towards decreasing car-dependency in our communities with protected bike lanes and re-examining existing zoning bylaws to allow for greater gentle density. We have to look at ways to stop building low density housing which is not keeping up with housing demand. |
| Rebate current property owners property taxes. |
| Reduce bureaucracy with new building permits. |
| Reduce income tax. |
| Reduce our taxes. [x 2] |
| Reduce overall property taxes. |
| Reduce property tax. [x 10] |
| Reduce property taxes. They've gone up based on the value of homes over which owners have no control. |
| Reduce tax on renters. |
| Reduce the taxes for permanent residents. |
| Reducing other taxes. |
| Reducing the cost of inflation, taxes and house ownership, prices are inflated. |
| Reduction in property taxes for the homeowners. [x 2] |
| Reduction of property taxes for resident owners. |
| Reduction to property tax bills. |
| Rent supplements, emergency shelters, access to legal services for tenants, support to investigate illegal rent increases and N11 forms issued under false pretenses. |
| Rental subsidies in good areas so 'poor ghettos' are discouraged. |
| Revenue from a vacant homes tax should be used towards both. |
| Revenue should stay with addressing housing issues, however need to fix the root cause. |
| Roadway and Transport improvement. |
| Same other way tax money is used: to pay the salaries of many useless government employees. |
| Sheltering the homeless and supporting food banks. |

Table 2

Responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other uses of net revenue from the Vacant Homes Tax.

| |
|---|
| Should go to general funds of the Region. |
| Should not have this tax. [x 4] |
| Split between the first two bullet points. |
| Stay out of it. |
| Stop adding taxes! [x 2] |
| Stop taking people's hard earned income to put in your pockets! |
| Strictly to help with housing affordability. |
| Strongly oppose. |
| Subway. |
| Supplement for those whose home value will be impacted. The value of my home will be negatively impacted and a supplement for existing homeowners should be provided, or perhaps as a reduction in property taxes for those with only a single residence. |
| Support new first time home buyers. |
| Support rent to own programs. Most people can't afford a down payment on a home, but can afford a monthly payment that could go towards owning that home. |
| Supporting homeless shelters, women's shelters, food banks, etc. |
| Tax revenue should be used towards rent subsidies, or should come back directly to decrease taxes for the neighbourhoods they are impacting. |
| Taxation is theft. |
| That is double taxation and a penalty to a homeowner that through that home purchase pays Tax to the Region. |
| The emphasis should be on assisting small landlords that are being subject to exploitation by bad tenants. Small landlords pay municipal property taxes. Tenants do not. |
| The money will be misused. Should be no additional tax. Need to find other ways for problem resolution. |
| The Region has no right to levy another tax on properties already paying property tax on! |
| The tax collected is expected not much. But it would affect the whole market and cause recession in the area. |
| There should be no more tax! [x 2] |
| There should be no taxation on vacant homes. |
| There should be no vacant homes tax. |
| There shouldn't be a tax. |

Table 2

Responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other uses of net revenue from the Vacant Homes Tax.

There won't be any revenue.

They absolutely should not implement this ridiculous policy.

They shouldn't be taxing them period! Many of the town council members have basements, they should be converting that space for affordable rental housing instead of hoarding that space for their personal use!

This shouldn't happen.

This tax should not apply to reasonable vacancies.

This tax should not be implemented. **[x 2]**

To be put in a reserve that will be returned to owners when they sell their properties. The interest made in the reserve could be spent by the city for general purposes.

To compensate landlords out of pocket costs from bad tenants.

To create a subsidy to reduce property taxes for senior and struggling homeowners.

To decrease property taxes for primary home owners.

To hire smart people to come up with other ways to increase housing supply.

To lower property taxes since we pay the highest around and what do we really get for our money?

To pay for community services and road maintenance.

To pay for the cost of enforcing it.

To protect the landlord.

to reduce the owner's property tax.

To support first time home buyers.

To support housing designed for people with disabilities, people who are elderly so everyone has an opportunity to belong.

To support landlords and put in place programs/incentives to encourage legal basement apartment development.

To support people who live in the community or senior people.

To support the election of other politicians!

Tourism.

Towards protecting Lake Simcoe.

Traffic grid lock.

Traffic light improvement. police enforcement. public securities.

Table 2

Responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other uses of net revenue from the Vacant Homes Tax.

| |
|--|
| Transit, parks, recreation, beautifying Markham, library. |
| Trouble you’re trying to solve is a supply issue -- not a taxation issue. |
| Unless it is 100% being used to build affordable housing, not to fund any special programs or general purposes as listed above. |
| Unsure as the answer is a complicated one. |
| Unsure. But none of the above answers. |
| Use it to improve infrastructure. |
| Use it to keep these home exteriors kept up at a cost that is below the tax amount. |
| Use the money to reduce property taxes. |
| Vacant homes should not be taxed. |
| We need better community development. |
| Wherever the greatest need is. |
| Work on tax reduction elsewhere. |
| York is not Vancouver. The number of vacant units is likely negligible. |
| York Region has no business in the properties of its residences. People who cannot afford to live in York Region, should move away from York Region. |

Defining Vacancy

“If York Region were to introduce a Vacant Homes Tax, how long should a property be vacant in a calendar year before it is subject to a Vacant Homes Tax?”

| Response | Count | |
|--|--------------|--|
| 12 months | 172 (7.6%) | |
| 9 months | 216 (9.6%) | |
| 6 months | 761 (33.8%) | |
| 3 months | 638 (28.3%) | |
| I don’t think vacant homes should be taxed | 319 (14.2%) | |
| Other (please specify) | 147 (6.5%) | |

Total 2,253

Figure 7

Exemptions to the Vacant Homes Tax

“Some governments have granted exemptions from a Vacant Homes Tax for properties left vacant due to certain circumstances. Select all exemptions from the vacant homes tax that you would support. (multiple selections allowed)”

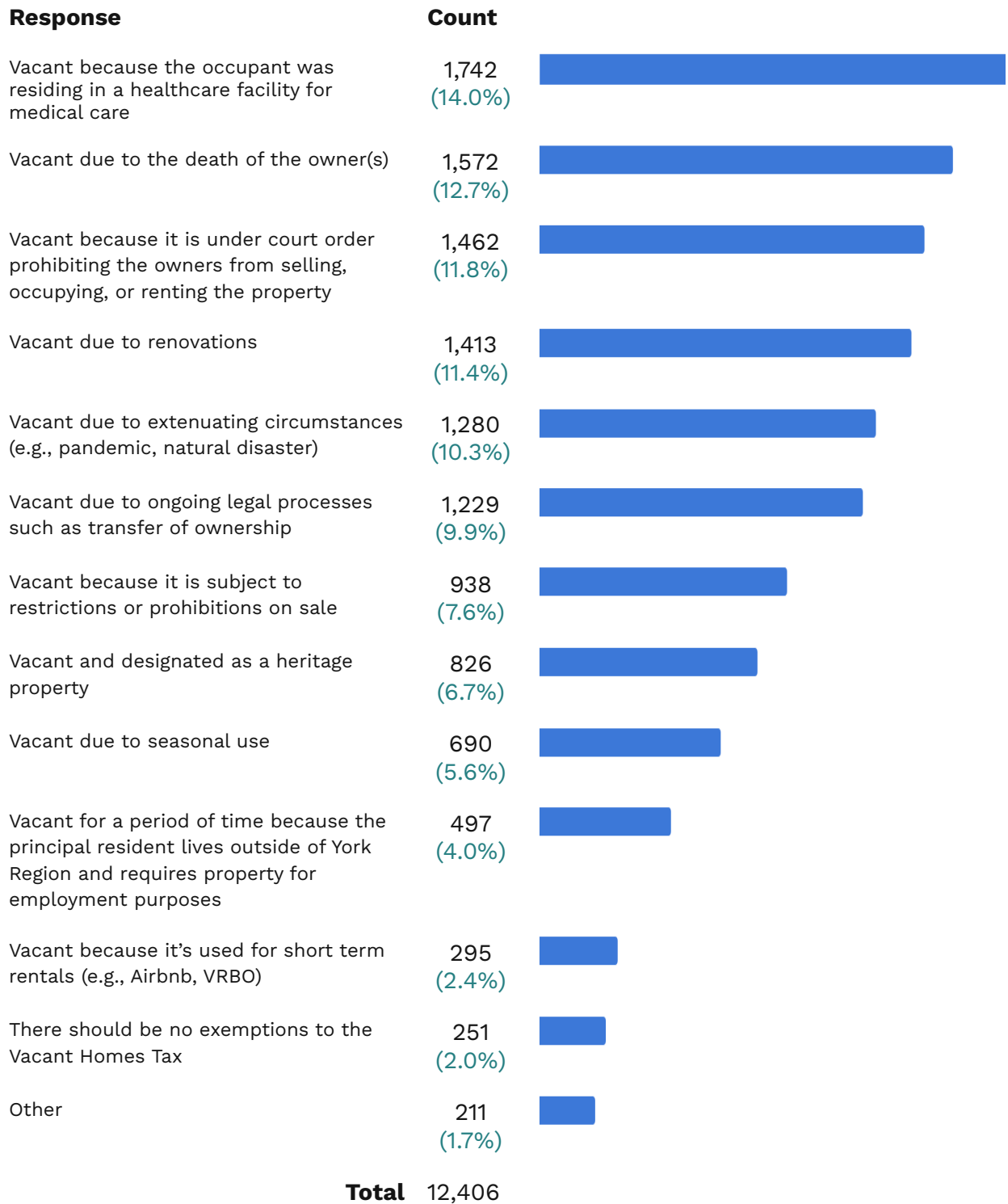


Figure 8

Table 3

Survey responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other exemptions to the Vacant Homes Tax.

A house in legal lala land may sit empty for years, a heritage property likewise. Look at Newmarket’s Bogart House, a real eyesore, and the Northeast corner of Davis Drive and Main St.

A maximum of 6 months should apply to the exemptions noted.

A tax will not help people.

Absolutely no exemptions.

After reading the reasons, I came to the conclusion that there should be no exemptions except the ones I checked.

Airbnb cannot ease housing issues locally. It should be taxed like businesses.

Airbnb is considered vacant.

Airbnb is not a bona fide exemption.

Airbnb, VRBO vacant tax rate should be 3-5x times higher than others.

All concerns can be addressed by employing the permit method... Create a surveillance system that can monitor owner behaviour and allow other residents to care for their community environment.

All of the above and any other points.

All other purposes.

All reasons above can be dealt with in reasonable time. Death, renovations, sale. The problem is, if you add exemptions, people will find ways to work around them. As a tenant, I am well versed in the RTA and owners/landlords will find any way to do things their way. And how do you prove it’s vacant/occupied? Mail can be delivered and retrieved. Cars can be parked.

All the reasons I checked should have extra rules attached to it as there might be people exploiting it.

Any issues that are not in owner control should be exempt.

Any other reason.

Any reason. All possible exemptions will just increase the paperwork burden on owners.

Any vacancy, period. There are many other valid reasons which makes this whole idea impossible to track unless self-disclosed.

Any valid reason as determined by the property owner.

Ban Airbnb.

Being required to work in another area.

Table 3

Survey responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other exemptions to the Vacant Homes Tax.

| |
|---|
| Beyond 3 - 6 months should be no exception. |
| Bylaw officers should issue the order and then the offenders lawyers can beg for an exemption. |
| Caregiver moving into a family home to look after someone. |
| Change DC by-law to permit houses to be demolished. |
| Cottages should not be considered vacant during the off-season. |
| Define vacant- can someone house sit? |
| Depends on the criteria for "vacant". Also any exemptions will be abused, e.g. someone can always or simply claim their house is under renovations; or sign up as Airbnb property and never rent it out. |
| Detailed documentation, with proofs are necessary to avoid taxes in the first 12 months, after, a vacant home should receive strict tax. |
| Disagree with introducing home tax. |
| Do not know. |
| Do not tax. [x 3] |
| Doesn't matter. |
| Don't implement it at all. |
| Don't think houses vacant yet used for Airbnb should be exempt. |
| Don't try to start a new tax. [x 2] |
| Don't have loopholes. If people can afford a second residence (for any reason) they can afford the tax. |
| Essentially, if it is vacant for reasons beyond the owners control then fine. But Airbnb rentals, holiday homes etc. are not beyond anyone's control and should be taxed accordingly. And then, maybe in cases such as the death of the owner there should be a grace period rather than full exemption as that could be used as an excuse for a long time. |
| Everything above cannot be optional. It must be covered and I can't even believe you are asking IF these should be covered. |
| Exceptions should be very limited. |
| Exempt all homes! |
| Exemptions make it more complicated and more expensive to manage, but if you pass such a tax I vote for all possible exemptions because the tax is wrong. |
| Exemptions only for circumstances that would legally prevent the sale of the home. |
| Fire or other major damage leaving it unliveable. |

Table 3

Survey responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other exemptions to the Vacant Homes Tax.

For educational purposes.

Forget this idea.

Generally, the fewer exemptions the better. Paying the tax should become a factor in how people behave (e.g. delaying estate sales, finding loopholes to avoid paying the tax, etc.).

Get short term rentals like Airbnb and VRBO regulated asap.

Government does not need to do this tax.

Here is my problem. Most exemptions can be skirted. Let's say it's due to renovations. Well a person could SLOWLY renovate a house. Just to take up time. Like condos who "Renovate" just to raise rent. Sadly there will always be people who get around the rules. Certainly we need more inspectors to investigate these circumstances. But can there ever be enough?

Home for sale but cannot be sold due to market conditions.

Home is uninhabitable due to incidents (e.g. house fire).

I agree with the vacant homes tax.

I am not familiar with some of these like "court order" " legal processes" etc, so cannot make an informed decision.

I do not support this tax. **[x 3]**

I don't feel sufficiently informed to answer this - the priority should be on exceptions that don't invite abuse (e.g., "renovations" lasting for 4 years).

I don't know what is the reasonable response. I feel that short term rentals are a significant problem, not only driving investors to make a quick buck, but also changing the completion of neighbourhoods. And the empty homes that are short term rentals should be treated differently for a situation, for example, where an owner is sick, or other circumstances beyond an owner's control.

I personally think that Airbnb properties should be banned. They have massively contributed to the rental shortage.

I think we should be open to hearing why it is vacant.

I would support an exemption for a property being vacant due to seasonal use if and only if the property itself is seasonal - i.e. not suitable for being lived in year-round.

I would use similar rules to what Vancouver is using.

If I can't find a good tenant.

If it is vacant due to renovations, there should be a time limit in place especially if outside maintenance is not performed regularly.

If someone is sick I feel like they should get an exemption.

Table 3

Survey responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other exemptions to the Vacant Homes Tax.

If you provide too many loopholes, people will find ways to get around the system and take advantage.

Illness of owner (eg: in hospital or being cared for elsewhere).

Impose restrictions on developers to build only small apartment-sized new homes with 1½ bathrooms, and 1 or 2 bedrooms. These fit in the "TINY HOMES" category, especially if 600 to 800 sq. ft.

Include vacant due to death - 1 year exemption (not indefinite).

Increase from 4 months to 8 months max.

Inhabitable home.

Is being listed for rental.

It should not be a crime to own two properties.

It won't help. Need to build more affordable apartment buildings. Lots of them.

It's the owners right to do what they want with their property.

Model homes.

Must be enforced and no loopholes.

Must specify term limits. Should not be able to “renovate” for years on end.

My answers are based on being allowed to be vacant for up to one year.

No

No Exceptions - with exceptions there will be abuse.

No exceptions for secondary homes.

No exceptions, because it only waters down the effect and provides loopholes. This is for non-principal residences.

No exemptions - otherwise they become loopholes to be exploited.

No more taxes! Vacancy is NOT YOUR BUSINESS!

No more taxes.

No new taxes.

No tax to vacant homes.

No tax. **[x 10]**

No taxation please

No vacant homes tax please.

Table 3

Survey responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other exemptions to the Vacant Homes Tax.

No vacant homes tax! **[x 2]**

No vacant penalty taxes so exemption do not apply. Exemptions by their nature create classes of people.

Non resident owner / speculator / flipper - would make more sense to have either broader exemptions and owners could appeal.

None of the above. **[x 2]**

None of your business. It's my property.

None.

None. These are just loopholes.

Not conceding the premise.

Not sure if there will be loopholes but if an individual only owns one property and uses it as primary residence I don't think it should be taxed. If people own more than one property then it should be taxed.

Obsolete as I do not support such a tax.

Only a short amount due to renovation...not more than 3 months.

Only extenuating circumstances should warrant exemption.

Others beyond the landlord's control.

Our so-called vacant residences live permanently elsewhere! This should not be allowed with such hard to find senior housing spots!

Owner is a resident of Canada and another country, and only visits sometimes.

Owners would have to specify. Just because it is empty does not mean it will not become the owner's principal residence. They could be renovating.

Primary owner lives some place else all winter.

Regardless of reason there should be a maximum length of time. Otherwise advantage will be taken.

Renovations cannot go on forever, so that has to be qualified. If a homeowner still owns the home, then he is paying taxes. If it is empty simply for turnover and profit, that is the situation to tax.

Renovations must be confirmed as legitimate and not just to dodge this exemption. If the owner dies and the executor can't commence sale within 9 months then tax should kick in.

Seasonal use is for senior citizens, but perhaps a smaller tax can be paid since this is definitely a luxury to leave a home unoccupied for 6 months when working poor families have nowhere to live in York Region. It is sad that seniors who go away for 6 months are scared to rent out their homes to poor families.

Table 3

Survey responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other exemptions to the Vacant Homes Tax.

Short term rental is only exempt if the owner obtains a licence, keeps it in good standing and shows a rental rate of at least 60% of the year. Otherwise they will only claim it's a STR to avoid the tax.

Short term rental should be prohibited.

Should not tax vacant homes.

Should only apply to foreign investors.

Silly question that muddies the waters. If an investor buys a property and the property is vacant it is obvious.

Some of these might be reasonable to be exempted, but make sure there is a means to prevent investors from exploiting them.

Start licensing or taxing Airbnb/VRBO!

Stick to the policy objectives — reducing investment speculation and increasing full time usage.

Tax rate should match the rental increase rate. E.g., 1.2% currently, 2.5% next year. Question 12 didn't have an "other" section.

Taxes need to be paid.

The above scenarios may apply to a principal residence, however if it's a secondary residence, the applicant should provide substantial proof to be eligible for the exception and that proof should be resubmitted every 6 months.

The home is willed while the owner is under care outside the home.

The list above demonstrates the bureaucracy that York Region will create to administer the program. A ton of staff, legal battles over status. A ton of the revenues going to administration. The criteria should be vacant because of foreign ownership only.

The reason for the vacancy should not matter.

The short term rentals example does not meet the standards of vacant.

There could be various exemptions each with their own time limit. For example, vacant for renovations might have a one year exemption, whereas seasonal use might have a six month exemption.

There is some nuance with most of these answers. A home could be left vacant for more than three months in the case of death, but it shouldn't be left vacant for more than a year. In general, this tax should be progressive in that it should apply whenever the home owner is leaving a house vacant due to their financial ability to do so, and not apply the tax when the reason the house is vacant for reasons outside of the owners control then the tax would not apply.

There should always be consideration of reasonableness.

Table 3

Survey responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other exemptions to the Vacant Homes Tax.

There should be a tribunal process to apply for a vacancy exception as it is hard to identify all the “good faith” reasons for leaving a home vacant.

There should be absolutely no exemption for short term rentals.

There should be almost no exemptions to this tax.

There should be ALMOST no exemptions. It will encourage filling the space.

There should be extremely limited exemptions.

There should be no new taxes.

There should be no tax money for politicians.

There should be no tax on vacant homes for any reason.

There should be no tax. **[x 2]**

There should be no tax. It's ineffectual.

There should be no vacant homes tax: this list of exemptions strongly hints at an abundance of loopholes and tax avoidance schemes.

THERE SHOULD BE NO VACANT HOMES TAX! PERIOD.

There should be no vacant homes tax. **[x 2]**

There should be no vacant homes tax. It requires too much surveillance of the government over citizenry.

There shouldn't be a tax. **[x 2]**

There shouldn't be a vacant homes tax. **[x 2]**

There will always be a "story" and enforcement will be few and far between.

These are all very good reasons-- it goes without saying that folks will try very hard to find loopholes in this system, but it's important that you folks ensure that the right people are being targeted for Vacant Homes Tax and that it doesn't harm people who are already vulnerable i.e. occupant in a healthcare facility.

They should be able to find one of these as excuses to be exempt though.

This is impossible / not practical to administer.

This is just asking for loop holes to be identified, and exemptions will not be very likely to have the outcome it's designed for.

This is the thin edge of the wedge...next will be a tax on homeowners equity built up over the years.

This is tough, because you can always come up with an excuse. If the property at any time has been used for income, then no exemptions whatsoever.

Table 3

Survey responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other exemptions to the Vacant Homes Tax.

This tax should not exist.

Those who simply buy to invest and do not rent it out of country buyers.

Too clumsy, just introduce more admin work but can't control the house price.

Too many exemptions simply provide opportunities for unscrupulous owners to work the system to their own advantage.

too many of the exemptions are only excuses. If someone is ill or dies and has to settle the estate there should be a limit as to the vacancy period. If the properties are kept up and all of the legal things are moving forward then a short term extension of time should be allowed before starting to charge the property.

Two months to get things in order then taxed.

unable to find appropriate tenant

Under no circumstances is it acceptable to exempt short term rental homes, or seasonal or occasional use of a residentially zoned property.

Uniform tax collection, conditional return corresponding tax.

Vacant as a result of having to leave to take care of a relative in either the same or another town. Example: an adult child moves back to their parents house because a night time presence is needed. They just move in for all intents and purposes.

Vacant because a company has bought the land for an investment and shuttered the existing home.

Vacant because it is under court order prohibiting the owners from *occupying* or *renting* the property (does not include court order preventing sale of the property; can still be rented out even if not allowed to sell!).

Vacant because it's a vacation home.

Vacant because of short term rentals is a TERRIBLE idea, that puts even more of a strain on the housing crisis because owners can charge astronomical rates for short term rentals, which artificially increases the rate owners think they can get for long term rentals.

Vacant because preparing for future use? Perhaps family reunions from overseas?

Vacant because the owner needs to take care of their dependents (seniors, kids) in other places.

Vacant because the owner wants to try another place as permanent residence before committing to selling the original place e.g. a potential retiree moves from a house to a condo as a trial.

Vacant but up for sale for market value.

Vacant due to a slow rental market such as winter.

Vacant due to accidental damages.

Table 3

Survey responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding other exemptions to the Vacant Homes Tax.

Vacant due to death of owners-until next of kin located, new owner(s) take possession.

Vacant due to employer assignment abroad.

Vacant due to renovations actually underway - max interval for completed to occupancy within less than 5 months.

Vacant due to undergoing development approval.

Vacant for any period of time and foreign owned.

Vacant for elderly transitioning to LTC home or retirement home.

Vacant for taking time to consider a life change.

Vacant home tax should not be introduced.

Vacant homes should not be taxed.

We need to minimize the exemptions because they will just become loopholes for those trying to get around paying the tax. This combines with "Time Vacant". If a house becomes vacant you have X months to sort it out before taxes start.

What if a person lives and works downtown and uses York Region property as a vacation home for a family and wants it to be available at any time during the year? What if a person doesn't want or is not able to deal with tenants, tenants-related issues, reporting rent income, etc.? Renters can damage things, or stop paying, or refuse to leave when asked. In general, why discourage people from buying secondary property? As long as it was bought by a Canadian, why punish someone for investing in the Region's properties?

Tax Rate for the Vacant Homes Tax

“If York Region were to implement an annual Vacant Homes Tax, what tax rate should be applied?”

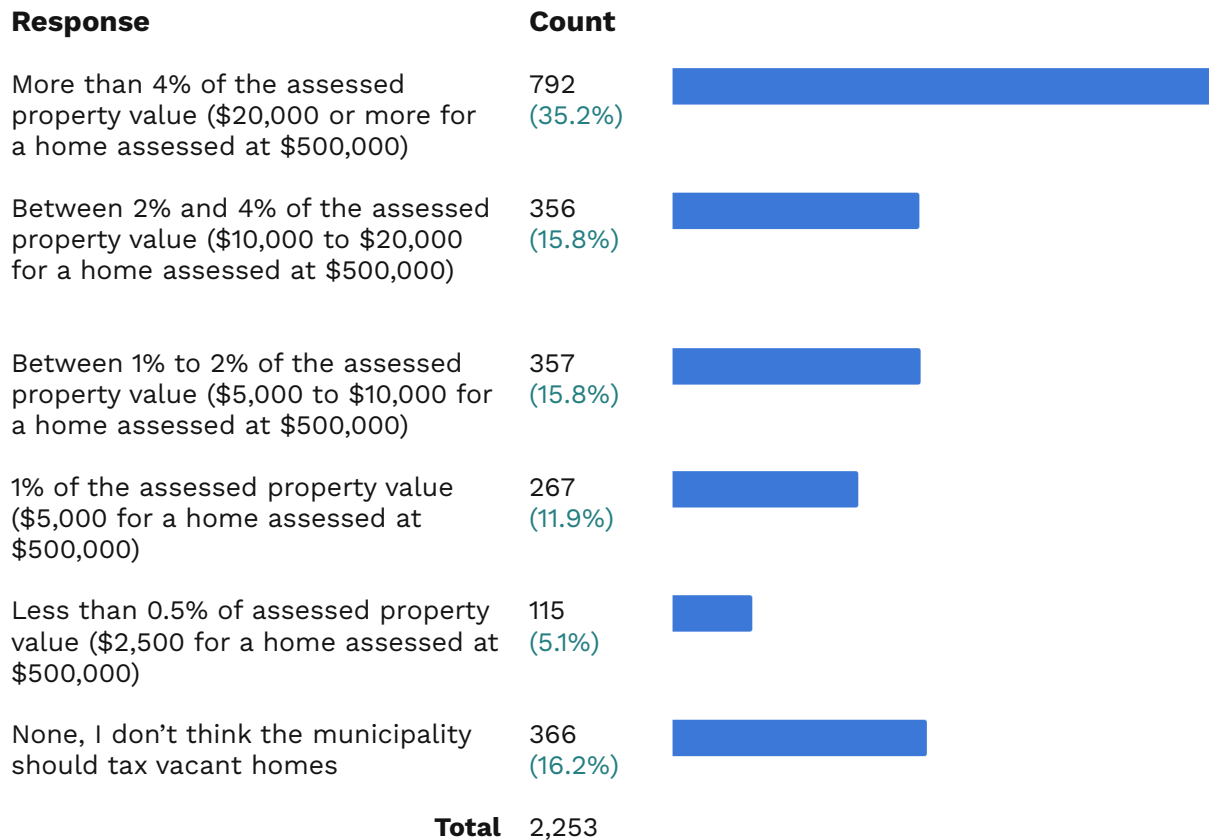
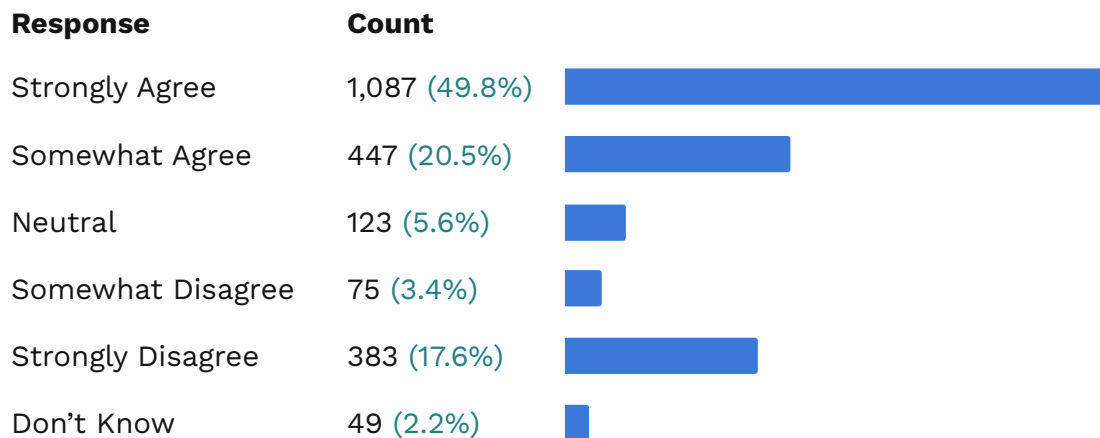


Figure 9

Identification Methods for the Vacant Homes Tax

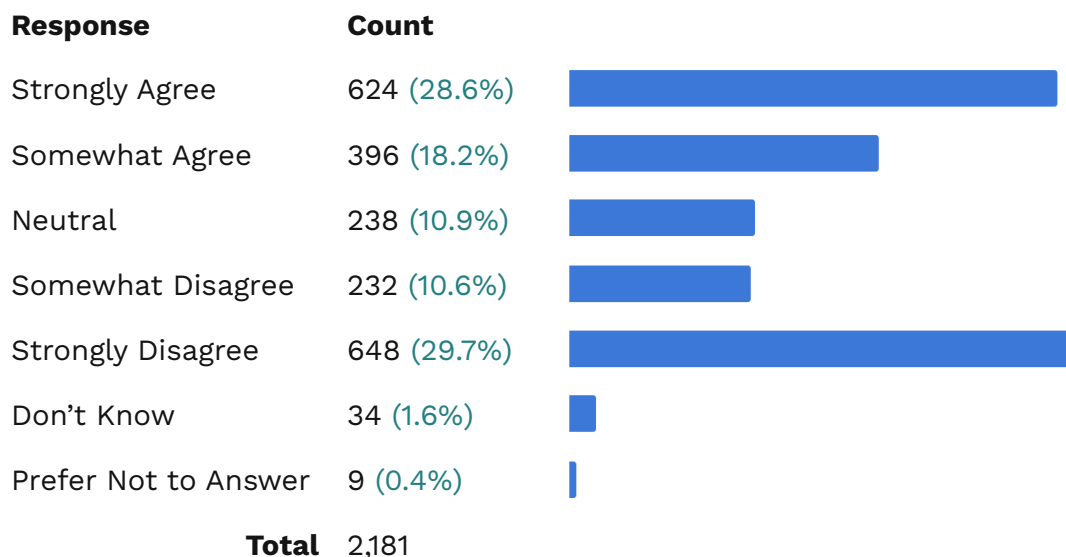
Survey responses to Mandatory Universal Declaration.



Prefer Not to Answer 17 (0.8%) |

Total 2,181

Survey responses to Complaint Identification.



Survey responses to Voluntary Self-Identification.

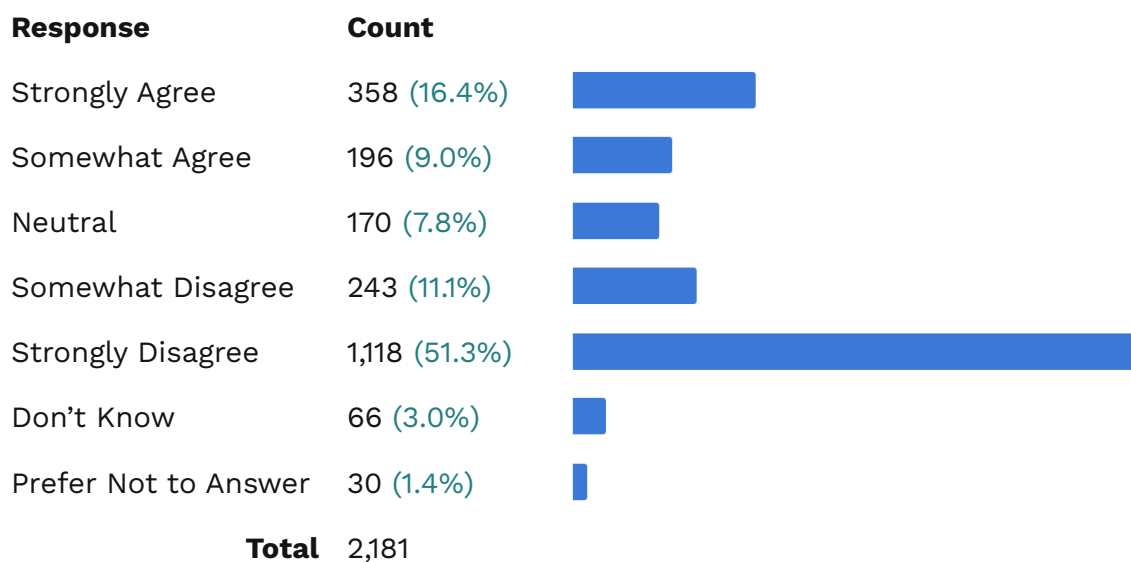


Figure 10

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

"Voluntary tax"? This will need to be enforced...

#1 would require all residents to declare status which seems onerous for the city and personal reasons may prevent declaration e.g. in hospital etc. However this option would provide a form of contract with the city. #2 tips and complaints are a valuable way to determine whether person declaration in #1 is valid. Hence remove ‘only way’ to determine vacancy. #3 Extenuating circumstances would need to be allowed e.g. not able to be in the country at time of declaration.

#14 - would love to know whom to report vacant homes to #15 - how would this be verified that the owner is reporting valid information?

#15 are you serious? Come on, everyone would just claim ocupado compadre...

#3 assumes honesty, at a great cost. A terrible assumption.

3rd option would have very limited effect so basically unenforceable.

A census would get a true count of vacant homes in York Region and would ensure equity across all properties and homeowners. It would be less onerous to administer and cheaper than following up on one off complaints... complaint relies on having to have individuals snitch on their neighbours.

A combination of #1 and #3 would be the best. #2 is, to me, punitive. Someone could complain about a property with no knowledge of why it is vacant. This knowledge is critical.

A combination of 1 and 2 sounds good. People would be less willing to actively declare a lie under option 1 vs omit the truth under option 3.

A complaint system could add to the registry, but should not be the only way of generating a list of vacant properties. Self-identification would be done through the registry, but should not be voluntary as people will not sign up to pay more taxes.

A law is useless without enforcement.

A lot of liars around. I'd suggest some random checks/enforcement for any option

A neighbour knows when no one is living there. If you leave it up to the homeowner, they will do what it takes to evade the tax.

A sufficient punishment must be enacted if the owner provides any false information given.

Acting on neighbour complaints is common practice for bylaw officers. I don't think having property owners file annual statements of occupancy is an efficient use of clerical staff or in need of an entire bureaucracy to administer. Just get on with notifying owners (tax payers) of the presumed offence and see what happens.

Agree

All 3 options have pros and cons. Option 3 would not be very useful.

All 3 should be used

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

All of the above. People exploit or dodge taxes to gain more monetary advantage.

All of these options sound unprovable/unenforceable? Could it somehow be linked to tax residency?

All of those methods are open to fraudulent reporting.

All options don't have the capability of identifying the true circumstances. This is a faulty plan, not well thought out.

All options will be difficult to administer. What is the objective of the vacant tax?

All require the owner to be truthful... no property owner is going to be truthful if they will get a fine in response

All responsibility should fall to the owner of the property. Deciding to go into business as a "property manager/landlord" is not a decision that should be taken lightly or treated as a way to generate so-called "passive" income. If I fail to file my taxes, I am assessed a fine automatically. It doesn't require the CRA to be tipped off, nor does it require me admitting I have not filed them. Likewise, it is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that the status of their unit is known to the province. A system that relies on tips/complaints or self-reporting would be utterly ineffective.

All three options are immoral, unjust, and inequitable to various degrees.

Also do case by case based on utility usage rates.

Although I am not a big fan of government controls to solve all problems I do think if the less controlled options are chosen there should be a significant penalty for non-disclosure.

an extra system needs to be created for more cost of taxpayers' money to keep in track of vacant homes. Another reason to spend 8 to get 10.

An opt-out rather than opt-in system makes more sense, so it would be better to go with the mandatory reporting of residency. Otherwise, people will just not bother to report since they obviously wouldn't want to pay the tax.

And reporting from neighbours.

Annual declaration with complaint as an adjunct makes the most sense.

Any kind of self-declaration will be open to abuse and untruths. Utility usage is the only accurate way to know if a home is vacant. Perhaps the city could establish a minimum consumption for an occupied home. Anything below that level should be investigated. City runs utilities - that shouldn't be an invasion of privacy.

Any method used to identify vacant homes should be verifiable and enforced. For example, with option 1, what would stop a property owner from declaring one of their properties to be occupied, even if it's not? One possible suggestion could be to perform automated checks on occupied houses' utilities usage (e.g. electricity, water, gas) to see if the usage patterns match up with homes that are actually occupied by people. While this one suggestion isn't a bulletproof solution, adding multiple "hoops" that people have to jump through to make it

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

appear as though their property is occupied would disincentivize falsely declaring properties as occupied.

Any property owner should be aware of the rules of the vacant homes tax. Therefore it is the onus on them to declare them as vacant. More penalties are required for false declarations. Declarations should be consistent with what is declared on CRA submissions.

Anything that you can send by mail would be good. If they don't pick the mandatory papers and submit, you know there is no one home.

Anything voluntary or depending on 'snitch lines' would have inconsistent results. Municipal staff also have a role to play in identifying vacant housing stock.

As long as property is maintained well and there are no illegal activities, there should be no concerns about its status.

as long as they are aware of the tax and given adequate notice, property owners should be able to remember to declare their status

As stated previously, verifying a house is vacant or occupied will be difficult. Other ways will be needed. As for taxes, as far as I am concerned, you must provide a hefty reason to make sure houses are occupied. People WITH vacant homes are going to vote no tax (of course). But if you can afford to sit on an empty house worth \$600k plus and not gather the rental income, you can afford the tax.

As we learned, people turn them into Airbnb.

As you mentioned you can identify vacant homes by the water consumption so that is reliable information.

Assumption of vacant - puts the onus on the property owner to prove otherwise.

Be active and stringent and create an atmosphere that has teeth and enforcement protocols .. Too many times in today's world, there is no supervision of bylaws, and offenders act defiantly, knowing full well that they are not at risk of retaliatory / monetary reactions.

Believe this should be required to submit.

Best is by water consumption data from city water.

Both option 1 & 2 should be used. The Region should also conduct a check up after receiving the complaints to avoid fake reporting.

Can't rely on people to be proactive or tell the truth.

Can't rely totally on self-identification, otherwise people could declare they are resident when they are not.

Can't use self reporting for it being vacant - what's the incentive/disincentive to report?

Cannot rely on the public alone. Must also coincide with municipal investigation for compliance. complaints have to be followed up upon, investigated, documented.

Change the law so that you CAN use hydro or water to determine vacancy status.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

Change the privacy laws! Using empirical data such as utility use is the only viable way to evaluate real vacancy. People will lie to avoid the tax.

Choose the option that can be enforced most consistently.

Close the vacant tax loopholes!

Combination of #1 and #2. Number two should be followed up by regional employees/construction workers/ volunteers in short order to verify vacancy and implement taxation.

combination of 1 and 2. Essential to have 2.

Combo of mandatory declaration, but also investigate if a complaint is made because a declaration is easy to lie about.

Complaint and Voluntary declarations of vacant homes is simply a smoke and mirror show. Without a full blown process please don't waste your time and our money.

Complaint driven will target some areas more than others just down to how much a neighbourhood complains - not equitable. Relying on self-identification will only impact the honest owners and less-honest will get away with it, not a great message to send.

Complaint driven wouldn't be as effective as the other 2 listed.

Complaint ID isn't a perfect solution as the reporter may not have all the information. Homeowners must be responsible for reporting vacancies and be fined if they do not.

Complaints are intrusive. Voluntary disclosure will be intrusive.

Complaints may be useful but shouldn't be the primary method of identification. Property owners must need to declare their property occupied, otherwise given the benefit of the doubt a lot will be hidden or slip through the cracks.

Compliant and Voluntary solutions leave too much wiggle room. There should be a system in place to ensure property owners who forget to declare properties as occupied can do so if they miss a deadline as long as they provide proper proof.

Concerned some would overlook the request to state their home was their prime residence.

Could you use all 3...self identify AND based on complaints.

Crack down on foreign owned homes, where nobody lives. Tax more than 4% in order to gain more money for affordable housing foreign owners need to start paying. At least 10%-30% of them are able to afford it since most foreign owners are rich. Domestic /local York residents should get more priority. Build more buildings, use the Singapore concept: start building at least 25 buildings with 150 units asap (2-3 bedroom concept). Any investor or builder must have 10 units at an affordable rental or purchasing price like 150-200k (affordable units) or don't approve any of their property building permits. Builders need to add rent to own features with proper good pricing for normal Canadians and York Region residents. A single mother cannot buy a 500k condo. It's too much (price should be 150-200k).

Declaration required but also complaint based.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

Declarations do not work. No one will willingly admit their house is vacant and offer to pay the Municipality money. A universal declaration will be administratively expensive when inevitably homeowners do not follow instructions and you end up issuing a tax levy notice to an occupied home simply because they complete their form and then there's the need to retroactively adjust their file. If complaint based is the only option this would be fairly effective, but you will need to have human resource capacity to investigate and follow up. It's too bad there is no way to check on hydro and water usage.

Disagree with a tax.

Disagree with the idea of vacant property taxation of any sort therefore forced identification is unacceptable.

Do all 3.

Do not allow people to choose whether or not something is vacant or wait for complaints. Mandatory declaration, lying is a penalty of 10 years in prison and \$2 million dollar fine plus all assets ever accumulated being distributed to homeless shelters. This will deter anyone from lying.

DO NOT IMPLEMENT THIS TAX.

Do not tax.

Don't ask for spies. Some people will do it anyway but not know about exemptions etc. Don't do that.

Don't ask neighbours to squeal on each bylaw officers Can identify possible vacant dwellings.

Don't bother with this policy.

Don't introduce a complaint system - should be verified by the owner.

Don't know how much income is coming in.

Don't rely on people being honest about this.

Don't think it is practical. Ex: how about if an adult child lives in the second home sometimes, will this be declared as vacant or occupied?

Don't use the voluntary method for tax related initiatives, people never declare their tax voluntary way.

Encourage voluntary submission, allow tips / complaint identification if tipped, follow-up and demand clarification (exemption or vacant) if ignored, assume vacant and apply taxation.

Encouraging neighbours to complain is never a good idea. It also isn't often accurate info. This is about generating more tax \$\$, not possible to make it 'sensible', although others have done it certainly it did not fix the problem and only increases the cost of living/owning in that region. Plan out housing and home availability NOT tax.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

Everyone knows people will 'slip through the cracks' where possible. Make a simple and easy declaration online and penalize anyone who has deliberately misled the Region according to their own declaration. Anonymous tips should be listened to and investigated.

Everyone will just say their extra properties are occupied, or not answer to avoid paying tax. The whole point of this is to actually tax them so less homes are vacant.

Everyone will lie.

Figure out a way to tax them.

Fines for not declaring property vacant. Neighbours and by-law would fine with no 30/60 day to fix the problem.

Folks may take the risk of not declaring to avoid a penalty.

For any of these options enforcement would need to be ramped up to ensure accuracy and fairness.

For option #3, who's going to voluntarily admit to having a vacant home? That seems pointless. You should get privacy laws changed so that heat and hydro bills can help you. This is a crisis. It demands crisis type thinking.

For option 1 if individuals are away, say snowbirds, they might not see the notice to report within the timeframe to respond. For option 2, it is fairly obvious to neighbours if a home is unoccupied and unattended. For option 3, unfortunately people are not honest and will lie to avoid paying additional property tax.

For Option 1, I would like to strongly agree but this sudden change might affect people who struggle with english. Depends on how it is implemented. Whereas for Option 3, I feel as if it does nothing.

For option 3, no one will willingly subject themselves to the Tax, unless there were harsh punishments for not doing so.

For options 1 or 3 people would simply lie and say the house is occupied. For option 2 you cannot only rely on the word of nosy neighbours. They may not notice if a neighbour is home for a short period of time then gone forever weeks at a time. They may think they weren't home when they were. Independent verification needs to be done, not only taking the word of a neighbour. Is there any other way to gather this information? What do other jurisdictions do?

For the last question, people will lie about the property being vacant.

Force speculators out of the market with strong, enforceable legislation and heavy taxes.

Forcing a tax on people because they own two properties is wrong.

Forcing extra work on every owner every year as BC has done is not reasonable. Voluntary simply won't work. I strongly oppose this whole idea.

Get information from Water and hydro get the privacy law changed. It matters!

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

Give owners the ability to report their vacancy status but also accept "tips" from owners/tenants of neighbouring properties.

Government is becoming too invasive into people's lives.

Government policing and tattletale laws? This is all you got?

Having a snitch line divides communities and is an outlet for people to get back at neighbours they may not like for whatever reason.

Homeowners must declare if a home is vacant and complainants should be allowed to anonymously report any vacant homes.

Honest people would self identify. Declarations should be required but telling on others should not be the only way to identify.

Honest system has no longer been effective unlike years and years ago. There are already many loopholes to avoid whatever expenses, taxes etc.

How about: Utility usage.

How can there be an option to address such a PROMINENT issue our country, province, and Region faces with absolutely zero enforcement? Self declaring and assumed occupied? Relying on tips? The only option is the first option where they need to declare they are occupied and prove primary residence. I don't understand how the others are options if this tax is a serious consideration.

How would self declaration not be worked around by lying?

Human nature not to advise should have legal ramifications if not complied.

I agree most with mandatory declaration if there's a way to make sure owners know when they must declare and if there's an easy method to do so.

I am ashamed to walk or drive around Keswick or Sutton and see the vacant homes and we have a housing crisis. Lower rents for people.

I am currently renting. The landlord/owner jumps through hoops not to have to claim the income. I never get a receipt, and they want payments made to someone else. Everyone needs to pay their fair share. We currently are in the billions for lost tax revenue...let's not add to that. Clearly the honour system does not work.

I am in favour of stiff penalties to discourage profiteering. The wording in # 3 is a bit confusing, but assuming a property is occupied because the property owner says nothing, allows deception to flourish unchecked. Not very smart. They should provide proof of occupancy. Similarly for #2, relying only on tips and complaints leaves lots of room for tax evasion. Tips along with proof of occupancy will be more effective . I would not trust anyone who places personal profit over the needs of human beings to afford basic housing.

I believe a legal line is being crossed.

I believe complaint-driven can be one of the methods. Option 1 & 3 seem the same to me. It may be mandatory to declare but people's self identification is also voluntary. What is the

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Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

penalty for lying or not self-identification? Double the fine and make it retroactive for up to 10 years. Penalties must be a great financial deterrent so people are truthful!

I believe given the opportunity owners would neglect to self identify. Owners should be given an opportunity to declare however complaint based should also be used and investigated.

I believe it should be a combination of option 1 and option 2. Option 1 should be used as the first line, however people should be able to complain as a backup, in case a false declaration is made. Option 3 would simply not work, given the financial incentive to not declare one's property status.

I believe it would be best to combine 1 and 2. These identifying factors however, should only apply to people with more than one property. People should not have to make vacancy claims on their primary residency. You will be taxed if you don't make the vacancy claim, but you can also receive tips if someone has falsely claimed a property to be occupied, but it isn't. I strongly advise against option 3, as it would have little presence and it would be as if the Vacant Homes Tax doesn't exist at all.

I believe property owners have the responsibility to declare if the home will be used as a vacant property. If they report inaccurate information or a complaint is made and is found true, there should be a fine imposed on the owner and retroactive payment of the vacant tax.

I believe that option number one will be the most viable, especially with offshore investment. I do not believe that self-reporting will adhere.

I believe that residents who have vacant property may not report as they don't want to pay.

I believe the amount of tax levied should be the same as the property tax. In other words the property tax should be doubled.

I believe we should be thorough in finding vacant homes and taxing them as needed.

I dislike snitching but really dislike mandatory reporting even more; voluntary disclosure would be a joke that would probably rarely/never be done.

I do not believe that people would self evaluate and declare. Calling for anonymous tips is also dangerous as well. It should just be mandatory for all property owners.

I do not like either of the last two options. The first is a complaints process which asks a neighbour to snitch on another neighbour and the second is self disclosure where a person can not tell the truth. The first option is the best in my opinion although still vulnerable to the owner not telling the truth.

I don't agree with the vacant homes tax.

I don't believe people, if given the choice, would voluntarily say they have occupancy or not. I think standardization is required so that people who may deny knowing this voluntary regulation, would become aware of it through the vacant homes tax the following year.

I don't think any of these will work, especially 2 & 3.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

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I don't think anyone would voluntarily choose to declare vacancy if there was no penalty attached.

I don't want more work because vacant homes are a problem but you can't figure it out and apply your tax fairly to every vacant house.

I don't actually like any of the suggestions although I can't offer an alternative. There must be a more definitive approach.

I don't believe it is the government's business. They already collect taxes on the property/ies.

I don't think property owners will be truthful.

I don't think that number one is fair. If I forget to announce that I live in my house year round, I have to pay the tax? No way. Snitching is a bad idea too. Can they not have to sign up in order to rent out their home, or for Airbnb? That way it's known to be a rental home and not primary?

I don't want to tell anyone what I am doing with my property!

I doubt little would be done if left up to the citizens to notify the Region of a vacant property. Option 1 would be the best. I doubt homeowners also would not self declare a vacancy and not sure how long it would take the Region to change the status of a home?

I doubt people, especially investors will want to declare vacancy because then they will be taxed. It should be mandatory, perhaps with some sort of registration system that keeps track of how many properties people own, which one is primary residence, and make sure real people are registered for every non-vacant dwelling. Complaint system is okay if investigations will be fair with evidence.

I feel as if all three of these issues have loopholes people would exploit. Some jurisdictions monitor utility usage or use other indicators to determine occupancy. If we were uncomfortable using a strictly metrics based approach, this could include inspection to confirm.

I feel options 2 and 3 are not strong enough and will not be effective ways to monitor and enforce the law.

I feel that any way of identifying these property owners should be used. This is a very real problem that needs to be dealt with.

I highly doubt property owners would voluntarily self-identify their homes as vacant.

I just don't know how this could be policed.

I simply do not believe foreign investors will voluntarily declare vacancy.

I sincerely doubt this public survey will be part of your evaluation. This was concocted years ago. Housing marking is an outrage, as though you actually care.

I strongly believe in using a combination of both options 1 and 2. Making option 1 easily accessible, straightforward and with multiple options of self declaring, with the ability to list future set in stone plans makes for an easy system when and if the homeowner plans to sell

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Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

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the property, has a sudden death in the family, or other unforeseen circumstances. Also having others be able to tip into the government that a home is vacant allows for the community to bring notice to these homes that the city may not have the time for identifying one by one.

I supposedly "own" my home. I should not have to answer to you at any time whether or how I use it as long as I am not infringing on the ability of my neighbours to happily live in their homes.

I think a combination of 1 & 2, plus auditing by the Region to check for signs of vacant homes (e.g. if the property is not using hydro/water as would be expected).

I think a combo of voluntary self identification and complaints should be used.

I think a mix of self-identification and government involvement to declare a vacant home. There will always be people sitting at each end willing to cooperate and trying to avoid paying for it.

I think a voluntary system would likely miss a lot of properties. I think a combination of mandatory self reporting (in a way that is easy and straightforward for homeowners with occupied homes to report - eg tick box as part of annual taxes) and following up on complaints by third parties, in addition to spot checks prompted by eg water use or utilities, where a significant under-use over a period of months could automatically generate a red flag to be followed up by authorities.

I think Complaint Identification is important but should NOT be the only way to identify these homes. I also think there should be fines for misidentifying the use of the home.

I think if people suspect they can contact York Region tip line but not have to identify themselves, it makes it awkward. First option worries me because what if I forget to declare and get tax for being vacant when I live in my home full time?

I think if the program is voluntary, a lot of people would choose to not state if their property is vacant. Using both mandatory and complaint identification would be best for actual implementation.

I think it should be mandatory for owners to declare vacant property or face more penalties.

I think mandatory identification is important. I also think that the Region should be able to monitor water usage to see if the home is occupied IE no water usage over the period of time defined leads to an investigation as to whether the home is empty

I think mandatory is a must, otherwise, I don't think any owner will report it voluntarily as tax involved.

I think that identified vacant homes should be progressively taxed: the longer they are vacant, the more they are taxed to a maximum of 1% value. However, I cannot stress this enough, the effort to find these homes and process over time would not on its own have a big impact on total hole inventory. This would be a small part of a much larger strategy.

I think that multiple processes must be implemented. We should have the declaration; but if anyone wishes to complain about vacant homes (these should be investigated). If you learn

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that someone has lied - extra fine. Also declaration updates need to be required annually with a preface that people are told. They must disclose changes as soon as they happen.

I think the complaint method would be the most effective. I don't trust people will be honest on declarations.

I think there should be various methods.

I think we saw enough telling on neighbours in the pandemic. It certainly doesn't bring forth a sense of community.

I would like the home owners to tell the government that the home is occupied or not but I would like the government to check if they are bluffing or not.

I would not trust greedy speculators to honestly declare a vacant property.

I would not trust owners to self identify and declare themselves as vacant

I would prefer a combination of methods 13 and 14. There should be a mandatory declaration but residents should be able to report vacant homes in case property owners mislead in their disclosure.

I would prefer mandatory disclosure, however, I think there should be an appeal process that is very quick and forgiving. I think this because I think it would be the most likely way to get the most information about people's housing, while reducing enforcement costs and fixing oversights from homeowners quickly.

I wouldn't rely on owners to declare as chances are they wouldn't and if they did declare then fines should be doubled.

I'm afraid I don't trust that all homeowners would truthfully declare whether or not their home is vacant...

I'm concerned about people lying about their declarations.

Ideally a combination of options 1 and 2 should be used. Put the responsibility on property owners to self report, and if they try to hide their unoccupied status, have a tip line for complainants to report them.

If a home is obviously vacant, it should be up to the owner to prove otherwise.

If a home is vacant, they need to pay the tax. If they don't want to pay the tax, sell the home to people who need one.

If a person does not identify their property is vacant they should be fined.

If a person doesn't respond to whether a home is vacant or not should automatically apply a vacant homes tax due to the unwilling nature of not responding to the question at hand. After that a home should be inspected by both the community and municipal authority to ensure that the party at hand was truthful and honest. Housing is a major issue in Canada and it will take the effort of everyone to ensure that this growing issue doesn't become a larger problem.

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Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

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If all property Tax is paid there is no legal recourse to complain by the Region on whether or not the house is vacant. Abandonment is different.

If an owner lies on the annual declaration there can be legal consequences. The other options don't address the vacancy issue.

If it is left to voluntary or by responsibility of others in the community, it would leave the tax effectively useless as people can circumvent these reporting processes.

If it is visible that the property is not maintained as expected, abandoned or may present some danger, and someone complains - it might make sense to have it checked by the town/Region. If the home is reasonably maintained, there should be no issue with it being vacant.

If it is voluntary, devious owners will not comply.

If it's an issue then the Region must make identification mandatory. Real estate speculators need to be dealt with.

If one is in the sale of a home , or if a lot is under construction, or even if a lot is not being used and it's owned by whomever after a period of time is when all taxes should happen.

If people are going to be taxed a fee, they are not going to voluntarily offer you that information! They would rather fly under the radar & pay nothing!

If people want to volunteer their accommodation status, so be it. If not, I think it's not any of the Region's business if I have a home and am not using it full time.

If someone fails to declare it should be treated as vacant. Anyone living in a home would not have an issue saying that they live there.

If someone falsely declares on option #1, you may have more legal remedies than the other options. You will likely have to rely on option #2 because neighbours care about property upkeep or suspicious behaviour. #3 you may as well not have any tax system in place because people will claim ignorance.

If someone had a vacant property - why would they report it voluntarily?

If someone knows there's a penalty, why would they self declare?

If the property owner does NOT declare the status AND there are complaints.

If the property owner does not declare their occupancy status each year, they should be assumed it is NOT occupied and should be investigated.

If they don't respond, how long do they have to do so? What about people who say it's not vacant, how will the city confirm that and how often will they re-check?

If this is the case then the initiative is useless.

If vacant properties are going to be taxed, I don't think you can rely on owners to self-identify. Not many would, unless they were applying for an exemption. Option #1 seems to be the best solution. However, it may need to be phased, so that those who missed the

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notice/got lost in the mail/forgot don't get taxed needlessly, especially for the first few years as people get used to it.

If we have to register our car every year it feels justifiable to register where our permanent residence is as well.

If we really want to have success putting a lid on speculation and demolition by decay the identification must be mandatory and the tax significant. Many speculative properties are not in a good location for affordable housing, so it is best if proceeds be directed to affordable housing initiatives that are properly located.

If we understand and agree on the purpose of the tax, ie. increase supply and affordability of housing, then we must identify loopholes that allow owners to cheat the tax and ensure compliance with the tax laws.

If we're going to use an honourable way to solve this issue! Forget about it.

If you ask the owner to declare their property taxable, they would not declare it.

if you don't declare we should assume it's vacant. It makes it too easy to evade the tax if you simply don't answer.

If you give the owner the option then they won't be honest. We all pay taxes to cover emergency services, road and town maintenance, etc.

If you let owners voluntarily declare their status, they would lie.

If you let people self declare, they will just lie.

If you rely on people's honesty, this program will be a failure. No one will voluntarily admit their home is vacant if they know it will be taxed.

If you're going to do it, do it right. Needs audit and rules and penalties.

Implementing this tax will create a 'snitch' culture. Take a positive approach and strengthen the Landlord Tenant Act and provide incentives to rent out properties that include more protection for landlords. We rented a property years ago and it was a nightmare (unpaid rent, tens of thousands in damage, etc) and no help from LTA.

In my experience, most vacant homes are owned by absent/foreign owners who would not self-identify their vacant properties. Some of these owners use vacant properties as a tax write-off i.e. the Tremont Hotel on Main Street Markham.

In no way should York Region use Voluntary Self-Identification to identify vacant homes. As well, using a complaint/tip notification system isn't enough. It would be quite easy to work around either of these. There is no point in creating this vacant homes tax if it is this easy to circumvent the system but perhaps this is the point; make it "look" like something is being done.

In order to make this tax work, there could be a compulsory declaration for EVERYONE for the first year, then if the vacancy changes homeowners would change the status, and vacancy tax would be levied accordingly.

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Insanity. Cost to administer the proposals is prohibited. We all know this will be laid on the general tax bill.... and thus unto my property tax bill.

investor only will not willingly advise the house is empty please charge me the vacant land tax. most will hide it. so there needs to be some proof of living as a regular cottage or residence.

Is there a way to monitor utility usage as a way to identify houses requiring more investigation? Your methods rely on resistance reporting their neighbours, or people telling the truth. It feels like there should also be a way to identify homes requiring more information.

It can not be voluntary to declare, people will lie.

It cannot be up to the owner only to declare vacancy because too many are currently hiding this in order to have 4,000 vacant homes in York Region.

It defeats the point if the people are using an honour system, they should have to tell you if the home is empty.

It is a privilege to own an extra house, and it is fair for the process of declaring vacancy to be mandatory. It is important for community members to be able to provide tips or complaints about vacant homes.

It is easy to check electricity, water and heat usage to identify vacant homes. A home without heat usage during winter time is obviously vacant.

It is easy to see vacant properties - in summer grass is not cut - in winter the snow is not shovelled. Most neighbours don't want the houses next to them looking like this.

It is more efficient to force a mandatory declaration.

It is none of the Region's business when or for how long my property is left vacant. Stay out of our affairs! The only thing the Region has power to do is to enforce the management of said vacant properties...ie. grass cutting, weeding etc.

It is pointless to have the tax if the vacancy must be self declared unless there are stiff penalties for not declaring. Perhaps all non-principal homes should be taxed and those that can prove they are not vacant can get a rebate.

It is very frustrating to see vacant homes..especially when the grounds are not properly maintained. I see weeds, newspapers etc.I feel this diminishes the value of surrounding properties, makes for a more unsafe neighbourhood. Many of us take pride in home ownership and the overall care of the area... I feel these absentee owners really don't care about our community...

It needs to be all or nothing, it should be the responsibility of the owner and it should be a simple process. I would also urge you to have a report line to help mitigate dishonesty.

It seems unfair to tax only the honest people who declare vacancy! If it's my property, I should be able to leave it vacant if I want to.

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Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

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It should be a combination of action 1 and 2 to prevent individuals from taking advantage of the system.

It should be a combination of both self declaration and also managed via tips. Some people will self declare where as others will not (will be dishonest). You should plan and anticipate both honest and dishonest people and mitigate the dishonesty with the tips line. There are 3 houses within 200 ft of my home that are vacant. That's scary.

It should be mandatory declaration, there should be no exemptions or people will find loopholes.

It should be mandatory for lawyers involved in closing said properties to report all foreign investors.

It should be mandatory. The third option makes it too easy for things to slip under the radar.

It should be of no concern as to whether the home is vacant or occupied. It is the Owners concern only.

It should not be left to the neighbourhood to rat on their own. Many of these are developers that have been known to be intimidating.

It will be a challenge to identify the best possible way to know what property is vacant. If Toronto is successful then I feel York Region should use the same protocols as Toronto as it's the closest major city and many people will think it's the same because York Region is in the "GTA."

It would be too easy for an owner to say the house is occupied when it is not.

It's always better to be proactive than reactive.

Just fix the issue so that I don't need to make over 150k to afford a home and can move out of my parents place.

Just scope the power and water usage, when my house was unoccupied while I was moving, it said everyone used more than me.

Knowing a tax will be imposed, people will not voluntarily provide the information.

Landlords should have to provide proof of either a piece of mail or a lease agreement to prove that the property is occupied. If they cannot provide proof, they should immediately be taxed.

Leave no loopholes. Vacant homes must be compulsory declared.

Legal enforcement of this tax is probably the hardest part of how it should be implemented.

Let's be honest, there will be a lot of homeowners who simply won't voluntarily comply with notifying that their secondary homes are vacant and nosey neighbours and those with an axe to grind will report homeowners sometimes out of spite.

Look at gas, electricity and water use. If utilities used = a certain threshold, then it's not vacant.

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Look at how the government taxes working classes. Every penny income would be fully taxed without explicit deduction. So it's fair to apply the same rules on this new tax.

Look at tax returns for rental revenue. If none, the homeowner needs to provide an explanation.

Making tax laws based on prejudice claims are fundamentally flawed. Optional #1 will be nearly impossible to enforce/verify, without having to spend a ridiculous amount of budget to stand up a program just for validating claims. If the vacant homes tax ever becomes obsolete, the money spent on the validation program will become a York Region municipality budget write off, which will be transferred to its citizens through means of higher tax or reduced services.

Mandatory declaration in combination with complaints would lead to the best outcome.

Mandatory declaration is the only way to go. Otherwise no one will declare.

Mandatory declaration is the way to go, with an option for folks to report vacant homes. Leaving an option for voluntary self-identification will only lead to people using the system to their advantage.

Mandatory declaration might be a barrier for older homeowners or those unable to meet deadlines for a variety of reasons.

Mandatory declaration should be used. A voluntary self-identification and complaints procedure can be used in addition to that.

Mandatory reporting would increase compliance if there were to be substantial fines for noncompliance.

Mandatory Self-identification with fines for lying, as well as complaints from other residents should be used.

Mandatory Universal Declaration and also complaints from people who know the house is vacant are terrific ideas.

Mandatory universal declaration is fine until such time as someone gets lost in the shuffle (and they WILL!), there MUST be a back up available in this instance. Voluntary self-identification can and will be abused. Complaint identification is subject to abuse.

Many are money laundering already committing crime/fraud they won't voluntarily commit to this program.

Many people won't report it; it is optional.

Many people would lie in order to avoid the tax.

Mortgage rate is so high, not many people will leave home vacant. Government should refocus effort to build more affordable housing with amenities nearby. Why is everything in Markham on the west end and nothing on the east? I have to drive everywhere, putting east end Markham residents at risk of poorer health due to lack of opportunity to be physically active. Please build more healthier communities with more shops and small integrated into residential communities. One or two shops under a condo (hwy 48) or townhouse (Copper

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

Creek Drive) is not well integrated. We need more mid-rise affordable housing so they can support the local business with more parking aside from the big box store. All of this community planning should be done by the local government and not outsourcing it to the developers. In conclusion, don't waste time on vacancy tax, focus on local community development with more mid rise government housing. Also think outside the box. Instead of providing people with a rental supplement with no other means for them to improve themselves, why not also introduce them to better paying jobs, better work experience, and educational upgrades so they can be more self-sustained?

Most people who are trying to take advantage of others or make money (ie by buying up homes just for investment purposes etc) are not likely to be honest about the vacancy status. Homes are not for making money off of (other than fair value increase to the occupying owner) - people need homes.

Most people won't declare it. There should be a fine for not declaring it. Non Canadian owners should be taxed higher.

Municipality has no right to tax any vacant home differently- any homeowner has to pay realty taxes - if there are then no extra taxes on it. I do believe though if the Municipality has to keep lawns cut, etc., then they can charge the vacant owner for that work.

Must be mandatory but it's a shame that MPAC and hydro data can't be used to identify vacant homes.

Must receive statements from the owner for rent being paid, identify the persons staying. Contact person to confirm they are staying there/have them fill out 2 times a year to show they are staying by sending them mail and require signature/proof of residing there.

My concern would be that an elderly, disabled or ill person may not be able to communicate status.

My home. Don't touch.

My only concern with the first option is that what if you forget to self declare? It would have to be a mechanism where you would not forget to do so.

Need to enforce through complaints and self declaration with fine for false statements.

Need to monitor such as via hydro, gas and water would provide such info. As well as the tax registered occupancy such as voter list, CRA etc.

Need to use a more structured mechanism, water billing rates / consumption.

Neighbourhood residents are your best resources.

Neighbours would know best and would be able to back off when there are extenuating circumstances.

Next door owners work hard to convince them to live there and the child goes to school based on that address. House is not even complete / built inside with no furniture or appliances and drywall and flooring not even complete. I'm sure others are also less than truthful.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

No home tax. Neighbours shouldn't spy on each other. That creates bad relations and hostility. And the Region or Municipality shouldn't spy on residents either.

No new tax on homes... however occupied!

No new tax. **[x 2]**

No new taxes. Build more.

No one is going to voluntarily declare their home vacant. **[x 2]**

No one is going to voluntarily offer to pay a tax.

No one is going to voluntarily pay a tax. Option 3 is ridiculous.

No one is going to volunteer to pay tax. A system needs to be in place to identify the vacant homes, and that could/should be done by utility monitoring as a first step. Next step should be municipal assessment, if utilities show to be low for 3 months, then the municipality should conduct a door inspection by checking the property to see if anyone is home. If no one answers, then the tax is implemented and it's up to the owner to prove someone is living there. This can be done by government mail being delivered, drivers licence, health card. Vehicle should not be proof.

No one is going to volunteer to pay the additional tax. Make it mandatory and even the playing field.

No one will do a voluntary self-declaration to paying more taxes on a property. It should 100% be mandatory.

No one will self report to pay more taxes. **[x 2]**

No one will self-identify vacant units.

No one will voluntarily declare just to be taxed if there is nothing enforced. Why would they? Everyone will create a fake tenant on paper if it avoids the tax. Why wouldn't they?

No one will volunteer if they know they have to pay.

No one would voluntarily identify and pay money upfront.

No one's business what I do with my home other than the insurance company. You tax a vacant home that I have and I will sell it.

No reason to implement a policy if it will not be enforced.

No tax for vacant homes. **[x 7]**

No taxation at all.

No vacancy tax, but increase property tax to 5% for the owners who are not Canadian, permanent resident or not owned by a Canadian company.

Nobody is going to be honest.

Nobody is going to volunteer that their home is vacant unless they can get an exemption.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

Nobody is going to volunteer to pay more taxes! The Region would have to have people specifically working to identify vacant properties, and do the follow-up.

Nobody will declare it is unoccupied.

Nobody will volunteer to pay that tax and tips will only get a small percentage.

Nobody would volunteer to tell York Region about the properties.

None of them would create a peaceful society.

None of these are going to lead to fulsome disclosure. They don't have enough "teeth."

None of these options are good. If you have to use a self-reporting method, the penalties for lying have to be substantially greater than self-reporting. Otherwise, why would anyone say they have a vacant house?

None of these options are ideal. How do you know the Region has vacant properties if utility bills aren't being used?

None of these options are ideal. People will lie if given the chance to self declare, and expecting neighbours to act as police is wrong. It's pretty obvious in some cases that a house is vacant.

None of these options will catch people who want to evade the tax.

none of those would ensure accurate determination.

None of your business if our home is vacant or not.

Not a viable concept. Will not help with housing prices or supply, but result in a costly program to manage.

Not everyone is honest but I don't like the idea of people being encouraged to snitch.

Not knowledgeable but the first one sounds nice.

Note: rating is relative to each option (e.g., strongly disagree with option 3 in favour of option 1 or 2). Would have evaluated differently if each option was independent and the "only" choice.

Nothing should be optional. Declaration of vacancy needs to be mandatory.

Number 13 and 14 gives more information on vacant homes and both implemented would have a higher knowledge of vacant homes. Number 15 will only work if the person is honest. If all three were implemented together it would be perfect but not to assume the house is occupied.

Number 2 is looking for trouble... There are so many not nice people who would call other people out of spite... don't do this one at all. Keep York Region out of this garbage... focus on the crime of not taxing a home for the many reasons you listed before.

Offenders will always find ways to avoid paying the vacancy tax. Let the neighbours tell the city what the condition of the property is.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

Opt out declaration based taxation would catch a lot of innocent people who would forget / not know about the requirement and generate paperwork through disputes Few people would self declare.

Option 1 - only where the property is identified as a rental or investment property. Option 2 has the highest likelihood to be misused and end up being more of a nuisance. Option 3 - why bother having a tax.

Option 1 - Unless the criteria is very precise (and therefore no exemptions allowed), this option is problematic. It has to start with an initial determination of "vacant" - who/what makes this initial decision? Also logistically, it will be a nightmare that property owners including seniors would have to remember to make this annual declaration or else hit with the tax. Option 2 - How would a neighbour know for certain? They would have to be watching the property 24/7. Option 3 - Will not work; Who would voluntarily pay tax?

Option 1 and 2 are more viable individually and together. Option 3 is not trustworthy.

Option 1 and 2 to be used in combination. It will bring in the most tax revenue dollars.

Option 1 for sure. Option 2 should be modified to be in addition to option 1.

Option 1 is most viable, the only weakness I can foresee is that communicating this out and providing strong customer service support for inquiries and assistance in making that declaration and correcting the declaration if the homeowner did not make it in time, there was a language or accessibility or other barrier that prevented them from making the declaration.

Option 1 is preferred - with penalties for untruthful declarations.

Option 1 is the most reasonable and effective, but some provision must be made for people with limited English.

Option 1 only works if there is an automated process to record, monitor and follow up, e.g. as part of paying property taxes. Must have manual reporting options also for elderly, those whose language is not English and those who do not have access to a computer. Must have fines for those that lie. Option 2 leads to misuse and option 3 will mean no one reports vacant housing.

Option 1 requires too much administration. Option 3 just doesn't work. Optimally, York Region should choose the method that has proven to work best in other regions in Canada or elsewhere.

Option 1 will result in a huge bureaucracy of overpaid staff staying at home to work. Option 2 also would result in the bureaucracy and penalize someone for not filling in a declaration every year. Option 3, nobody would voluntarily declare to pay more tax. Surprised this is even an option.

Option 1 would likely be the most effective. Option 2 should also be implemented with either option chosen. Option 3, Voluntary disclosure, is not going to work.

Option 1 would result in the highest accuracy of reported vacant homes. Option 3 should only be used alongside Option 2 otherwise no one would self declare vacancy.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

Option 13 sounds like a massive headache. 14 should not say "only". Reporting empty units should be encouraged in addition to the self identification system. Real question is how do you verify claims?

Option 2 and 3 are completely useless. Why would you self report? You'd only be penalized by chance.

Option 2 and 3 are useless. Option 1 is the only option that would actually result in the tax being imposed.

Option 2 can be used as a supplement to Option 1.

Option 2 is terrible and will build distrust in our communities, option 3 just won't work.

Option 2 needs to be anonymous but can't be standalone since a neighbour wouldn't know the whole story nor keep an eye constantly for extended periods. Option 2 is a strong deterrence to keep owners honest though.

Option 2 will be an administrative nightmare! Who will investigate?

Option 2 would require people to be aware of the rule and to take the time/effort to report. This will be unlikely to happen and the minority of vacant properties would actually get reported. Option 3 seems easy to circumvent, the owners of vacant properties will just not report anything. Then they technically did not lie, or do any wrong doing. Option 1 is the best and would get the best results. This will be beneficial for the municipality (tax revenue) and residents looking to buy or rent (more properties on the market).

Option 2: it should be one of the methods, not the "only" method.

Option 3 is not an option, no one will volunteer to report.

Option 3 leaves room for investors who purchase houses and leave them vacant to mislead the government into thinking their properties are occupied. More thorough verification is required to ensure that there is no lying occurring.

Option 3 means you lie or don't respond and you don't have to pay tax. Why on earth would you do that?

Option 3 seems ripe for abuse.

Option 3 will never work. Who is going to basically volunteer to pay an additional tax?

option 3 would be difficult if contact information is not kept up to day. out of country or corporate ownership should be mandatory reporting requirements.

Option 3 would be useless. No one would report. Option 1 would require a government request fo4 status, probably online.

Option 4- Get the facts. Check the water, sewer, hydro, gas usage, especially water and sewer usage which should be next to zero. Hydro needs to be on so the pipes do not freeze. Those parameters should give an indication of occupancy. Do a 6 month baseline. Then do a site visit at the door a few times to check. Option 1- Some people who occupy a house will forget to check the box and that will become a nightmare for staff to reconcile. Those who

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

do not have a computer will only be able to check a box on a piece of paper. This option will become a staff nightmare. Option 2 Most people do not want to snitch on their neighbours so this is not a viable option. Option 3 – Realistically, how many people will check yes, please tax my vacant home?

Option one would create a lot of administrative time and reputational damage for those getting taxes and then needing to be reversed.

Option seems least likely to be abused but would need an option where anyone who accidentally missed the deadline could prove they had been living there and get their tax waived. Voluntary declaration seems too open to abuse.

Options 1 & 2 should be implemented at the same time.

Options 2 and 3 make it far too easy for the tax to be avoided, especially in low density areas where it would be less noticeable to others that the property is vacant. The penalty for falsely claiming a home is occupied should be severe.

Options 2 and 3 use passive approaches and will likely be ineffective and/or require more Regional resources to implement.

Other than zoning compliance and illegal activity, I don't think it's anybody's business what a person does with their property.

Owner should not be able to assume occupation, should have to prove occupied if second property.

Owners are unlikely to voluntarily declare vacancy if it is going to cost them tax money.

Owners must declare it occupied. It's really that simple.

Owners of non-residential properties are highly unlikely to volunteer their true status unless there are severe consequences for not being truthful.

Owners of vacant houses will not report if it costs them money. If using the honour system- it will not work.

Owners should always have a legal obligation to report any and all situations concerning their income property. If you wait for a tip, you might never know. Just like taxes, you should have to voluntarily report it. If it is your property, then you have a great interest in it, and should do so in showing your community support, and that you belong to the betterment of the future.

Owners should be required to say if their property is vacant. Again, this would be an incentive to owners to get tenants or buyers.

Owners will lie about their status. How can this possibly be enforced?

People are going to lie and try to cheat the system. I believe if they can afford to leave their house empty - then they afford a hefty tax and a good accountant.

People are going to lie to save their money.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

People are not going to disclose they have a vacant home if they know they're going to pay a tax.

People cannot be trusted to self declare when they know that they will be taxed.

People don't often do the right thing!

People have investments they work hard for, leave them alone.

People lie when they have to....ask CRA. This program will cost more to administer than it will generate in penalties and won't make a meaningful impact.

People lie.

People lie. They will do and say anything so they don't have to pay extra. They will tell you their cat lives there just so they don't need to pay up.

People pay enough tax without you grabbing more.

People will always find ways around the vacant home designation. It will cost money to implement any of the above which makes no sense to me.

People will lie and do everything in their power to not pay the tax.

People will lie to serve their own interests; we cannot rely strictly on their word. There must be accountability. Self-regulated industries are teeming with fraud.

People will lie, obviously. Self reporting should not be allowed.

People will not declare. York Region should ban Airbnb as well as rooming houses. Affordable housing that is appropriate is needed not a 1 bed condo for 700k or rent it for \$2200???

People won't be honest if they can avoid paying the tax. I think it will be difficult to monitor and you can't rely on people being honest. Also how will you monitor the vacancy status declaration for accuracy?

People won't come forward to be taxed. There must be some way for the Region to identify such homes.

People won't voluntarily register to be taxed. It can't be voluntary reporting.

Perform random audits and have people submit utility bills to show whether or not the house is in use.

Perhaps make it a mix of all 3 options.

Personally I prefer voluntary self identification because if my home is occupied it's less work for me to tell the government that. But this method is less likely to capture actually vacant homes that would be subject to tax. Residents would have less incentive to self identify their vacant homes because they want to avoid tax.

Pitting neighbours against each other is not really a good idea. Volunteering is even worse because it only penalizes honest people.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

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Please people in the government consider the residents are human beings not animals to be played around because they have saved up some money.

Please, please, please do not turn neighbours against each other!

Policy based on complaint cases or voluntary basis is useless.

Policy must prevent abuse which WILL RESULT if there are any voluntary declarations.

Prefer both option 1 and 2 together, rather than either/or.

Private property is like any other personal assets, and should be least targeted by municipal policies.

Properties kept vacant by corporations or non Ontario residents, after the first initial 6 months, should get taxed at twice the rate.

Property owners can lie during self identification of vacancy status. This needs to be verified somehow by the city.

REALLY! In our experience, the owners of these vacant homes have no problem lying about the status of new homes they are building to replace homes they have torn down. We were told that the new owners of one of these homes was going to live in it with her husband and daughter. So now that the house is finished, it sits empty.

Receive notice with tax assessment to say that home is occupied. log in and check "yes" for occupancy.

Relying on people to be honest and upfront is not going to work.

Residents should be free to identify vacant homes. Not only should the vacant tax be paid, but if the property is not being maintained (grass cut etc,) and becomes an eyesore lowering the pricing potential for homes in the area, the Town can charge the owner for the maintenance. Non-payment of the services by the owner will allow the Town to put a lien on the property. All non-payment to the Town to be paid upon sale of the property.

Residents should only have to declare for 2nd + homes not their primary residence.

Rich homeowners keep middle and lower class citizens out of the housing market.

Self declaration won't work since they'll all just say they live in all of their homes at all times.

Self identification is a farce. People will lie through their teeth. There should be severe financial penalties for those owners. 6% or higher.

Self identification option is invalid. There would be a disincentive to self-clarify voluntarily.

Self reporting creates chances to cheat. Look at the Airbnbs that flout rules in other cities.

Self reporting would be prone to abuse.

Self selection seldom works when it's the people in question impacted.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

Self-identification won't work because no one will willingly pay the tax. Even with mandatory declaration, people will still lie to avoid the tax.

Self-identification would not be effective.

Set up a tip line for community members to call. They know what is going on in their neighbourhood. And hefty penalties for people not following the guidelines - it is a blatant disrespect for our Region.

Setting up a "resident snitch line" will create division within the community rather than promoting community.

Should be a public notice or a database.

Should be left to experts but I suggest to put a system in place that does not allow for any loopholes. (exceptions ticked above).

Should be part of the sale of property. Many of us hate to complain about neighbours. Region should be proactive.

Should be some sort of mix to ensure compliance. The tax implied must be steep enough to actually deter the behaviour and not just be the cost of doing business. Vancouver increased theirs.

Should be voluntary but also if a complaint is made to follow up. I don't agree with automatically taxing with no response.

Should not be a voluntary identification as it would be easy to lie and say it is not vacant when it really is.

Should use both self identification and complaint identification.

Shouldn't it be if they do not declare that it should be presumed vacant on question 15.

So the rich “investors” will merely short term rent to slobs while they await their permit to demolish approvals\$\$\$. Nice for the property owners living next door...don't ask me how I know.

Some people are not truthful when it benefits them.

Some people who have vacant units will not admit their ownership to avoid paying the tax.

Some people will lie, so there needs to be a system that addresses that.

Something more concrete; using a tax roll to identify owners of properties and verifying if they have more than 1 property; if more than 1, there's likely to be vacancies. If couples each claim 1 as their primary residence (husband = house # 1 as primary, wife as house # 2), then there's not much that can be done about that (I assume, even though it's suspicious you can't really investigate every instance where a couple claims to be living apart, can you?), but it would reduce the number of properties that could be owned by the same person and vacant.

Speculators won't declare vacancy if it's optional.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

Stay out of the owner’s business. Are you going to tax yachts at marinas that are not principal residences since they could be used as such for more than half the year?

Stop government intervention.

Such a tax militates against the concept of private property.

Supportive of an opt-out scheme (i.e. confirming property is occupied) - lack of response would be an indicator that property is vacant.

Sure, ppl can self declare but it won’t happen if they are paying additional tax. Have a self declaration then a large fine for those who are lying. Having audits will help.

Taxing not only vacant property but all second houses if rented above a threshold.

Taxing will not help with affordability if the owners sell.

That’s happening now. There are many vacant homes that the owners are not reporting.

The complaint based system downloads the responsibility to residents. Voluntary reporting no one will report.

The default should be to assume the homes are occupied until someone complains. More paperwork for every resident is a huge burden in them and the city.

The first option is the best as it will most likely be most effective. Option 2/3 will let many people get away with it.

The government should stay out of people's private homes. I own my home, no mortgage and it's MY business what I want to do with the home. I don't need to give more money to York Region to waste.

The honour system doesn’t work. Mandatory with follow-up on complaint basis. Especially in the cases of foreign owners.

The honour system works for honourable people. Canadian real estate speculation and money laundering has rendered it less honorable than drug dealing and prostitution.

The housing should be for people living/working/retiring in this community!

The only objective way to identify vacant homes has been ruled against because of privacy concerns? The use of "privacy" to not do what needs to be done is a flimsy excuse to avoid accountability.

The owners of vacant homes do not take care of the home and mostly may not even be in the country. Voluntary disclosure would not work and would be a joke.

The problem with 2 of these options is they rely on the honesty of the owner and there is no mention of penalty for deceit; the remaining option relies on another citizen reporting the vacancy which can lead to animosity from the owner especially if there is an error.

The process should not assume occupancy.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

The rate of vacant homes is very low. All of the above methods increase the burden on residents in the Region. If you have to levy this tax, option 3 is the way to go.

The Region needs to consider that this is a temporary phenomenon. The idea of taxing a vacant home is a little ridiculous given that the so-called housing crisis is not actually a crisis. If the global economy stabilizes, this whole thing will probably be forgotten.

The Region would need to send a declaration to owners every year, if the home is empty, the owners will probably not get the mail and therefore would not answer. Then it could be declared vacant but at the same time the reasons above should also be on the form. The document should be legal if they do not answer honestly then a fine will incur.

The statements for the 3 options are all LUDICROUS! The suggestion that people rat on neighbours who own vacant homes is an infringement of any person's right to own property. The solution is to pass laws to restrict the size of what builders are building....affordable housing could have 2 small bedrooms, an eat-in kitchen, bathroom, living room, and utility room (for laundry, and circuit breaker). Most new homes are unaffordable because they are ENORMOUS, especially the size of master bedrooms and ensuites, main floor laundry and 10 foot ceilings. HAVE DEVELOPERS BUILD SMALL HOMES LIKE DUPLEXES AND QUADS, WITH GARDEN SPACE AND COMMON AREA LIKE A PLAYGROUND, instead of building a 4500 sq. ft. home with 2 kitchens, 6 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, an indoor pool, 2 double garages, and a 300 x 1500+ ft. lot.

The system needs to rely on independent checks and not just voluntary self disclosure.

The system should be mandatory, with a complaint / reporting mechanism to catch dishonest homeowners.

The tax rate should be high because usually those who leave homes vacant are not short of money. I don't see owners voluntarily telling York Region that they are absent particularly if they are not in the country to begin with.

The third option can just be ignored. It's just asking people to submit their I do for additional tax. The second option can be abused and has loopholes. The first is reasonable.

There are many elderly people and those who don't have good English who will not have the ability to fill out whatever reporting type there is. It would also eventually end up being done online & not everyone has a computer or is computer savvy. Unfairly penalizes a segment of the population in a tax grab.

There are many other options to make housing more affordable: like permitting garden and lane houses, tiny houses, etc. I should not be forced to subsidize someone else's housing.

There is a lot of benefit for someone not to declare their home vacant. It is not the neighbour's job to monitor the home next door.

There is always a neighbour willing to let an investigating person know if it is empty. Alternatively, use census information for unoccupied houses, then assume they continue to be unoccupied unless the owner can prove otherwise.

There is no good option for collecting evidence for the "unoccupied" status that is reasonable and within the laws protecting privacy. Mandatory and Voluntary Declarations will

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

lead to owners lying (which they will get away with without strict enforcement, which is prohibitively expensive on a large scale). Complaint Identification will reinforce snitch culture within the neighbourhoods, and I fail to see how this is a good thing. Collecting vast amounts of data across the Region to identify "vacant" properties leads us in the direction of the surveillance state, which I don't think any of us want. I don't see a good enforcement option here, so I think that this tax shouldn't exist.

There must be a better way to identify/confirm vacant properties than self-reporting or complaining. How will you enforce it? Snitching is not working with suspected rooming houses because too much onus is on the person making the complaint.

There need to be strict regulations in place so that vacant homeowners can't get around the rules.

There needs to be a required response or vacant properties will face no repercussions.

There needs to be a strict mechanism in place to prevent speculators and investors from circumventing these decorations.

There needs to be a way to check if homes are occupied or not. You cannot rely on the truthfulness of others. They would rather not pay the tax so they will just say that the home is occupied when it's not. If you cannot confirm it, the whole point of a vacant homes tax is lost, because literally no one will be paying it. Frankly it's ridiculous that anyone involved in municipal government thinks any of these options are viable on their own without oversight. For God's sake just take a more hands on approach to the issues in this municipality.

There needs to be additional tax penalties if the property is not occupied and not declared by the owner. This needs to be monitored through a task force which can also be guided by tips and complaints. The most effective tool would be excessive tax penalties if an owner doesn't claim their property as vacant.

There needs to be aggressive enforcement. Leaving it as an honour system will not encourage compliance.

There needs to be different rules for corporate property owners and individual property owners. Blanket punitive measures disadvantage and discourage individuals from investing in property, thereby allowing corporations to grab a larger share of the market.

There should be an audit as well to see if people are lying on the declaration.

There should be proactive verification and enforcement of declarations.

There should be ways to identify if occupied...not everyone will complain and a trip to see the outside tells you nothing....hydro and usage should be used...if very low usage amounts, it should be flagged... (under normal amounts).

There should not be a complaint system because the people complaining do not know the details of what is happening with the house and could be completely wrong.

There will be people who will lie to get away with having a vacant homes tax. The honour system will not work unfortunately.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

There's no point in having the law at all if you go with option 3. Nobody's going to volunteer to tell you they owe you more taxes.

There's no point in having a tax if people can find loopholes or renters are being forced to speak out against landlords.

These are all persecutory methods of obtaining information.

These are all terrible options. #1 places a burden on someone with only one residence who may miss a piece of Mail and end up charged with a tax they can't afford. #2 is snitching. #3 is going to be taken advantage of. Only truthful people would be taxed.

These are not effective ways, just introduce more cheating, admin overhead, but not achieve the purpose.

These are unreasonable options and burdens. If I knew it, I would not have purchased an investment home.

These options are bull, who in their right mind is going to self declare that they have/own a vacant property? What a waste of time. If you can't use hydro/water bills, scrap the dang thing. Great use of taxpayer money.

They shouldn't be just self voluntarily.

Third party complaints? Really that's an option?

This is a good move but does not pave the way for people to work the system. Make it mandatory for all owners to explain how their home is being utilized and failure to do so means they accept the tax.

This is a hidden tax program design. Shame.

This is a major difficulty. How do you identify a vacant property?

This isn't an individual issue. This is a business or people who own multiple buildings. This is out of country investors. This is people trying to make a quick buck on Airbnb. These are not snowbirds. This is not the average resident going on vacation or dying or moving or renovating or in hospital. Take a closer look at why the houses are vacant and who owns them. Leave the individuals just living their lives alone.

This question should have been a ranked answer question. Since it is not, I strongly agree with all possible methods of identifications, but for the record, mandatory universal declaration is my top preference. Even then, people would still lie, so complaint based also has to trigger investigation. Voluntary is a joke.

This should 100% have mandatory reporting annually with proof of rental/occupation such as monthly utility bill as proof in order to avoid lying to not pay the tax.

This should be regulated.

This should only apply to non-primary residences. Is there a way to only request declaration for those? I.e., if property is your primary residence, you would not need to declare annually.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

This tax assumes that people who have a second property have money left to finance the housing of others and aren't also stretched by current economic circumstances. If you are going to tax vacant homes, tax wealthy foreign investors who are buying properties they have no intention to live in rather than York Region residents who have a second property in the same Region.

This whole proposal is absurd.

Those whose houses are vacant are likely not going to identify themselves if there is a tax, this it should be something York seeks.

Those with vacant homes would never give up that information if it meant getting taxed...it must be mandatory.

Tighten the loopholes.

Tip system would not catch enough, unless there was an incentive for the tip generation. Stiff penalties for those found to be lying on declarations.

To be effective, it needs to have a positive identification process.

Too much control, this is Canada.

Town council needs to stop spending taxpayers funds frivolously and dramatically increase the cost for new development permits and fees.

Unbelievable.

Unclear to me why you couldn't use both. Option 2 precludes ALSO using Option 1.

Unfortunately it seems these days people don't follow laws and just do what they want. The municipality should be more aware of what goes on within it, rather than always wanting snitches to do their job for them.

Unfortunately you need a process that will force people to comply or you're simply wasting time implementing this. And it should be done fairly (all people should pay if subject to the tax), not just the honest ones! You likely need a system of both possible penalties for non-reporting and where people can advise you of a vacant property.

Unfortunately, in this situation the government needs to play hardball, otherwise there will be no change.

Universal declaration, but property owners should be provided notice of the requirement annually. Complaint identification should be used as a tool for enforcement with additional penalties applied.

Unlikely someone would voluntarily declare a vacant home.

Use a combination of “complaint identification” and “mandatory universal declaration.”

Use a combination of 1 and 2 to ease implementation and increase success of the program.

Use all of the above options to self-declare.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

| |
|--|
| Use CRA services. |
| Use the water bill, the privacy issue is a cop out. |
| Use utility usage to determine vacancy. [x 2] |
| Utility and water usage is a great indicator of occupancy. |
| Vacancy declarations must carry valid reasoning. |
| Vacant homes should not be taxed. |
| Vacant homes shouldn't be taxed. |
| Very few people will voluntarily admit a home is unoccupied if it will cost them additional fees. |
| Voluntary and complaint driven won't yield the result needed to deter this behaviour. Suggest tying in to the town property tax system in some way. But make it simple for people to comply. |
| Voluntary declaration but of course you should investigate complaints. |
| Voluntary declarations do not work when there is no incentive to self report. |
| Voluntary disclosure is a waste of time. Why would some voluntarily disclose that? |
| Voluntary Disclosure might be done once per year and accompany a municipal property tax bill. I am undecided about the complaints procedure because it is my experience that individuals might misuse this process - I am cautious around the efficacy of the complaint process. If an individual misuses the complaint process it must be clear they could face a substantial fine. |
| Voluntary self identification as above won't work as no answer means it's occupied so the owner just won't respond. |
| Voluntary Self Identification is a joke. |
| Voluntary self identification is not a good idea. You would be assuming that all owners are honest and they are not. |
| Voluntary self-identification ? - unfortunately the 'honest system' does not exist any more! |
| Voluntary Self-Identification will not work, no person would volunteer to pay more tax. There needs to be a process for complaints and investigations. Consider using utility use data (ie. water, electricity and gas consumption) , homes with significantly less use then the neighbourhood average certainly should be subject to investigation. |
| Voluntary self-identification with penalty should there be a complaint that identifies a vacant home. |
| Voluntary will not always work. |
| Waste of time and my tax dollars. Unless you plan to tax them \$1M each, what's the use? |

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

We don't trust people's honesty.

We must use decisive methods to make sure reporting is accurate. I am in favour of using option 1 with a hefty penalty, tied home value like property taxes and backtrack taxes owed plus interest, for false reporting.

We need to make sure people don't find loopholes.

What incentive is there for someone to self-identify a vacant home? It's like asking someone to voluntarily pay thousands of dollars just for fun. I don't see this being a successful approach. Making everyone declare would better guarantee, but mechanisms would need to be in place to ensure it isn't easy for people to lie. Perhaps they would need to declare their principal residence and cross reference to all properties they own?

What penalties would a non-declaring property owner face? I suggest double vacant tax rate if not declared.

What's the point of making it voluntary? That's like the pandemic vaccines and mask mandates all over again.

What's the point of voluntary disclosure? Nobody will.

Whatever is the most effective. Complaints in combination with both of the others although self declaration is open to misrepresentation and fraud.

Whatever option is selected, it should be associated with fines at least twice that of vacancy tax to facilitate compliance.

When paying yearly tax the owner should be responsible to show proof of residence.

Who is going to manage all of this and what are the resources that will be required. A complaint based system? Has thought been given as to how these would be assessed?

Why are you relying on self reporting or tips? I think people will just lie. Also it's not the community's job to police other people's residence. Can't you look into hydro/water activity which is a much more reasonable and accurate estimate of if people live there?

Why should people self declare just so they can pay \$5,000 a year or more as very few homes are less than a million now. Complaint based gets people pitted against each other - a no win situation.

Why would anyone willingly say their home is vacant?

Why would you even suggest Voluntary?

Will need staff to verify vacancy status of properties, no matter what process is used. Too many people would lie on a voluntary identification if the tax level is sufficient to deter vacancy but a low tax bracket would not incur significant enough penalty to discourage speculators for whom a few thousand dollars a year means nothing, and complaints driven process is going to miss a lot of properties (e.g. condo/apartment buildings or places that appear to be rented but are actually short-term rentals). There needs to be an additional penalty for misrepresentation of the vacancy status of a property.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

Would the Region follow up on whether people are reporting or not, and honestly or not? I believe people notice when homes are vacant in their own neighbourhood and given the option would most likely report vacant homes.

York Region should explore how to best support landlords and put in place programs/incentives to encourage legal basement apartment development. Currently, tenants can trash apartments and get away with not paying rent. The landlord and tenant board is a joke. Home owners prefer to keep apartments empty or sell rental properties because they don't want to deal with an unfair system. The security deposit should be legalized. You cannot get away with trashing a hotel room, but you can trash someone's home and remove smoke detectors. Renters should be liable for illegal actions.

York Region should use 2 options - Options 1 & 2.

York Region should use a combination of option 1 and 2. Option 2 should not be the only way to identify vacant property.

York Region should use the water and hydro stats to identify empty residential units not just homes to get the initial number. Then have a voluntary declaration of empty homes within a specific time period made by the owner. See if the numbers jive and go after the non-compliance with the annual vacant tax. Have an incentive for declaring to begin with for 2 years.

You are already showing the issue with this idea. Either a mandatory form that costs money to administer, or having local residents report on each other. Use council's time for useful things like addressing zoning concerns.

You asked if tax should be 1 to 2 percent... or 2 to 4 percent. I think 2% is fair, but did not know which one to select! I think if you can afford to leave a house vacant, then you have far too much money and / or have no regard for those who are struggling to find an affordable home, and you should be penalized, even if only to make you aware of the problem! Should also be forced to join the Facebook group "Landlords & Tenants of Ontario" to witness the daily plight of people who are in tears as they are on the verge of homelessness & will likely lose their children because of it 😞

You can't count on people self-declaring. You need to respond to complaints, but be prepared to chase false leads.

You can't rely on self selection. Airbnbs also completely counter the goal of increased housing affordability & should not be allowed at all let alone as an exemption on a vacancy tax. Neither should renovations - that just makes renovations more desirable.

You can't trust people to tell the truth, especially when it will cost them money.

You cannot rely on people to self report and it will never work, nor wait for complaints. The owner should have to sign a declaration every 6 months with taxes.

You should figure it out with your legal team how to do it. That is why we pay tax... Don't ask me how to do your job.

You want to trust a person to declare themselves lol. Everyone will declare occupied to avoid taxes.

Table 4

Survey responses to “Please elaborate on your answers (optional)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding identification methods for the Vacant Homes Tax.

You're creating a police state, adding more rules to the common people and putting them against one another. Meanwhile, the real speculators will find exemptions through their expensive lawyers. By the way, the more you plan on taxing, it makes sense for them to hire even more expensive lawyers.

You'll probably find more vacant homes with a tip line unfortunately.

Your law must have teeth.

Your options are all poor, indicating you do not have a simple reliable way of knowing. That in itself shows that this is all a bad idea.

Declaration Methods for the Vacant Homes Tax

“If York Region were to implement an annual Vacant Home Tax, what would be the preferred method to submit the occupancy status declaration for your residential property to the Region?”





| Response | Count | |
|------------------------|--------------|--|
| Online | 192 (68.1%) |  |
| In person | 24 (8.5%) |  |
| Via post/mail | 17 (6.0%) |  |
| Other (please specify) | 49 (17.4%) |  |
| Total | 282 | |

Figure 11

Table 5

Survey responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their preferred method to declare occupancy status.

All of the above. **[x 2]**

All options should be allowed.

ALL options should be given to people. Seniors or the disable or the sick may not do it online.

Do not collect this information- it's none of your business.

Table 5

Survey responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their preferred method to declare occupancy status.

| |
|--|
| Do not even consider. |
| Do not implant vacancies tax. |
| Don't do it! |
| Don't tax vacant homes, big brother. |
| Don't implement this tax. It's just punitive. It doesn't solve the housing crisis. |
| How will you prevent nasty people from causing problems by Fall's reports? |
| I could tell you where it should be delivered but that would be rude. |
| I do not support vacancy tax. |
| I don't see how this applies to anyone who only has one home. Find a way to only make businesses and renters have to declare. |
| Make people come to City hall and meet with staff administering the program who can fill out the questionnaire with the homeowner. |
| Multiple options all of the above. |
| Never. |
| Nil. |
| No method. If you can't track it, don't do it. Stop making people work for you. Stop tracking people. |
| No tax for vacant homes. |
| No tax. [x 2] |
| No vacant homes tax. [x 4] |
| No way. |
| None of the above. |
| None of the government's business. |
| None. [x 5] |
| Not in favour of this tax. |
| Not required. |
| Option of in-person or online. |
| Registered mail... |
| Should not be implemented. |
| Should not be such a declaration or tax, just a money grab for general revenue. |

Table 5

Survey responses to “Other (please specify)”

Comments and qualifiers submitted by the public regarding their preferred method to declare occupancy status.

Similar to Property tax.

Smoke signal.

Strongly disagree with all of the above.

Strongly disagree with the vacant homes tax.

This is archaic, not progressive.

Use any and all methods to get answers in a timely manner. If people do not comply, tax them and put a lien on the properties if they refuse.

You would need to allow mail as well for those that do not have a computer.

APPENDIX C: Survey Results by Respondent Segments

Survey respondents were grouped into several segments. These segments are not mutually exclusive. Some segments represent a small proportion of respondents but they provide nuance, perspectives and experiences that the project team were particularly interested in, informing important considerations of the potential implementation of a VHT.

Following overall survey responses, responses from the following segments are found in the section below:

- **York Region Homeowners**
- **York Region Renters**
- **York Region Single Investment Property Owners**
- **York Region Multiple Investment Property Owners**
- **York Region Renters with a Single Investment Property**
- **York Region Homeowners Who Reside for Less Than 6 Months of the Year**
- **York Region Renters Who Reside for Less Than 6 Months of the Year**

NOTE TO READER: Survey participants were provided an option to self-identity for some demographic questions as they see fit or omit a response altogether.

York Region Homeowners

This segment represents York Region residents who own their home (64.9% of respondents).

- **About these Homeowners**
 - The majority of these respondents (59%) live in Markham (25.6%), Vaughan (17.3%) and Richmond Hill (16.1%).
 - The age of most homeowners were 35 to 64 (56.9%).
 - The majority of homeowners were strongly in favour of the implementation of a vacant homes tax (68.6% strongly agree and 8.9% somewhat agree).
- **Tax Rates:**

- Nearly half of homeowners think the Vacant Homes Tax should be 2% or more of a vacant home's assessed value (47.0%).
- 17.2% think the VHT should be between 1% to 2% of the home's assessed value.
- 17.4% of homeowners don't think vacant homes should be taxed

Homeowners' Responses to the Introduction of a Vacant Homes Tax in York Region

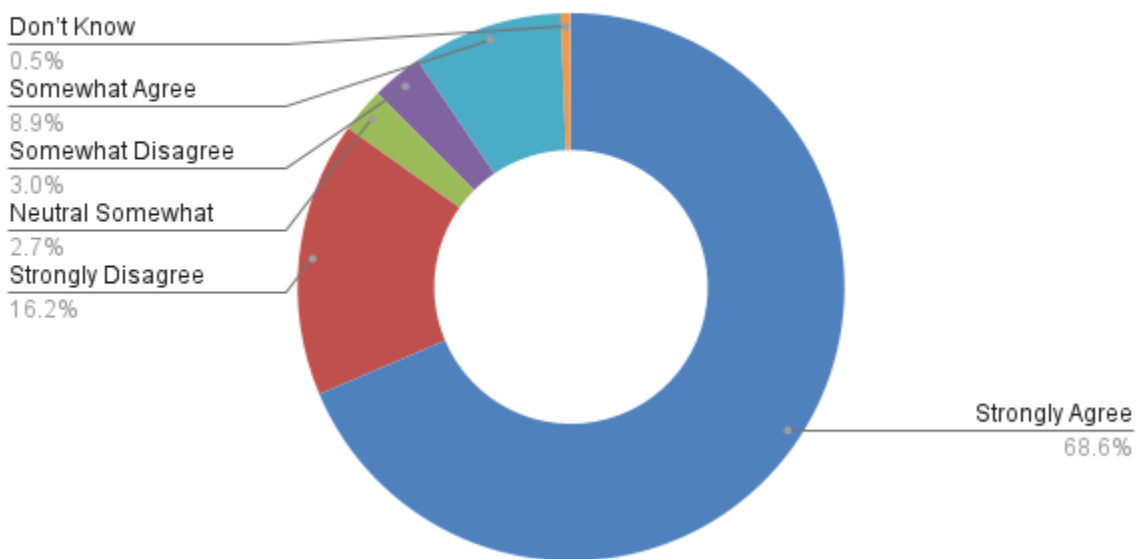


Figure 12

Homeowners' Response to VHT rate

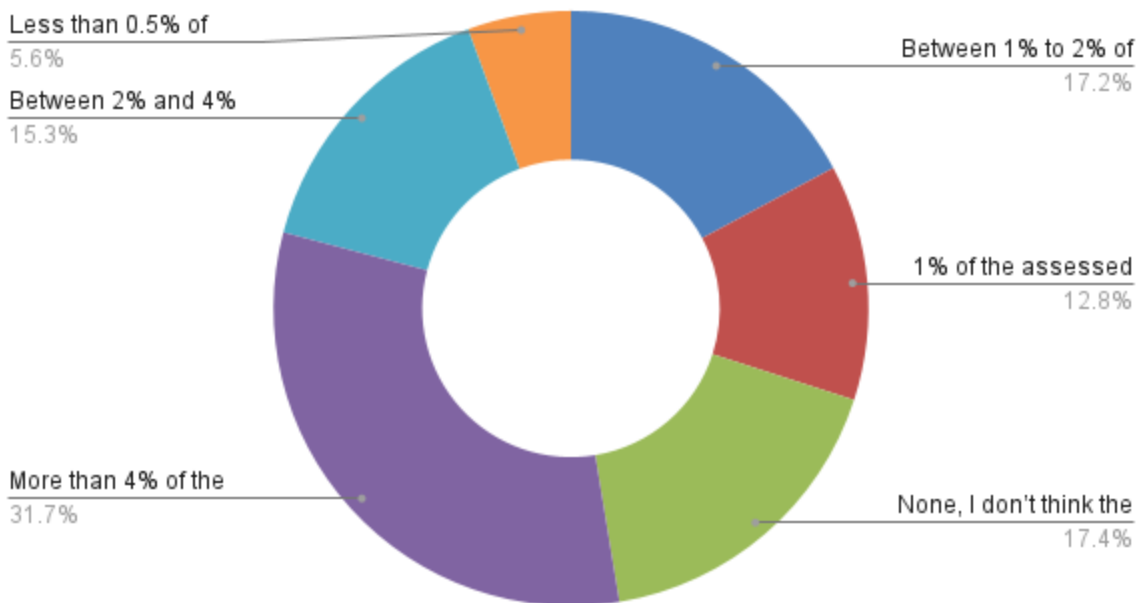


Figure 13

Location of Primary Residence of Homeowners

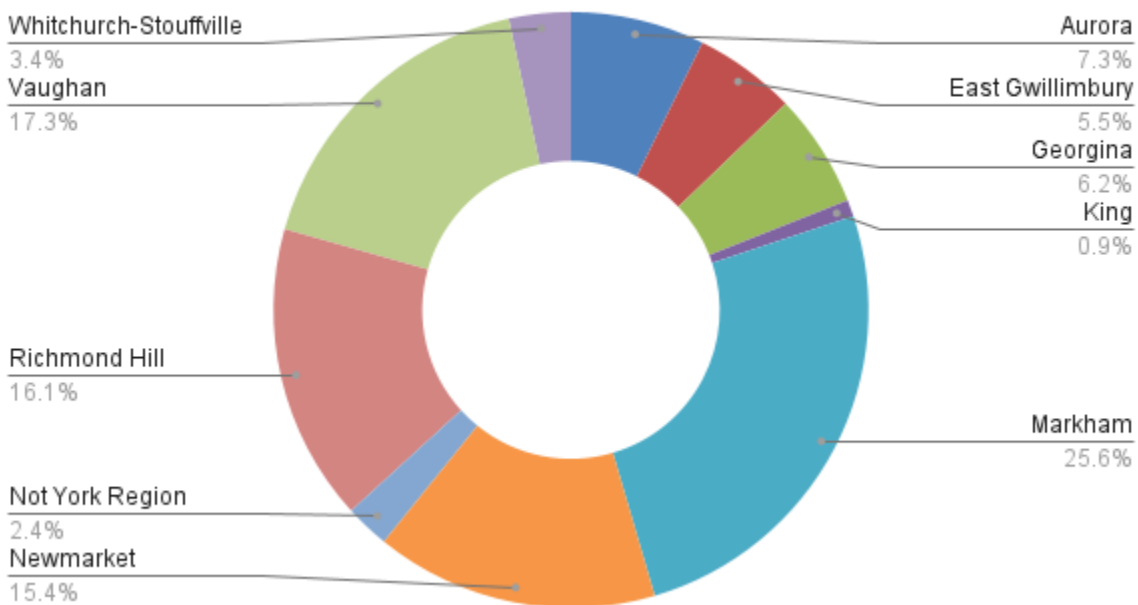


Figure 14

Gross Household Income of Homeowners

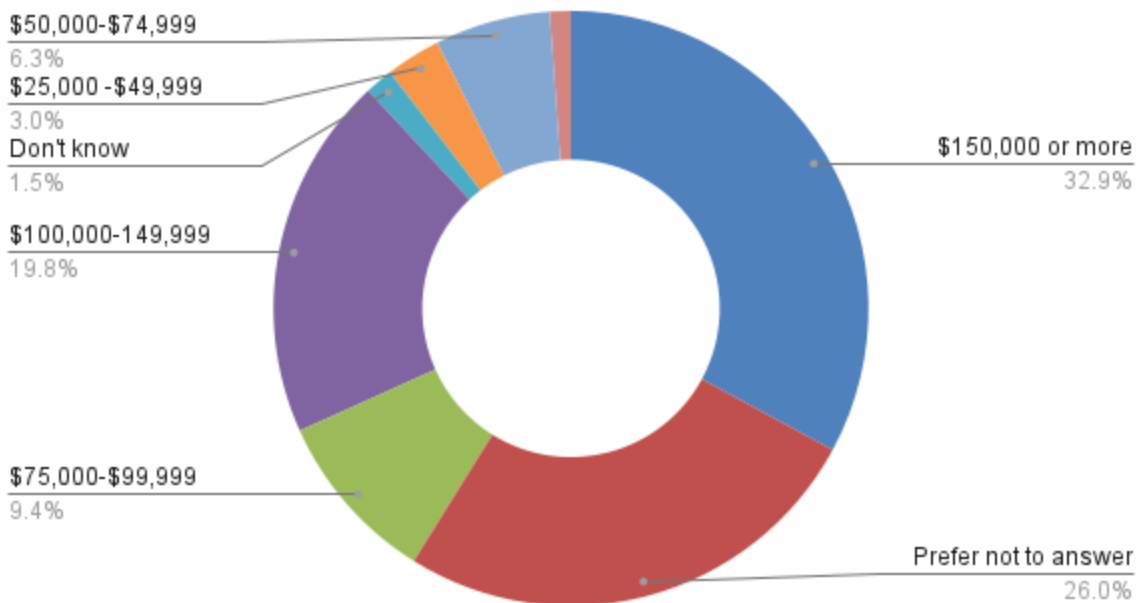


Figure 15

Age of Homeowners

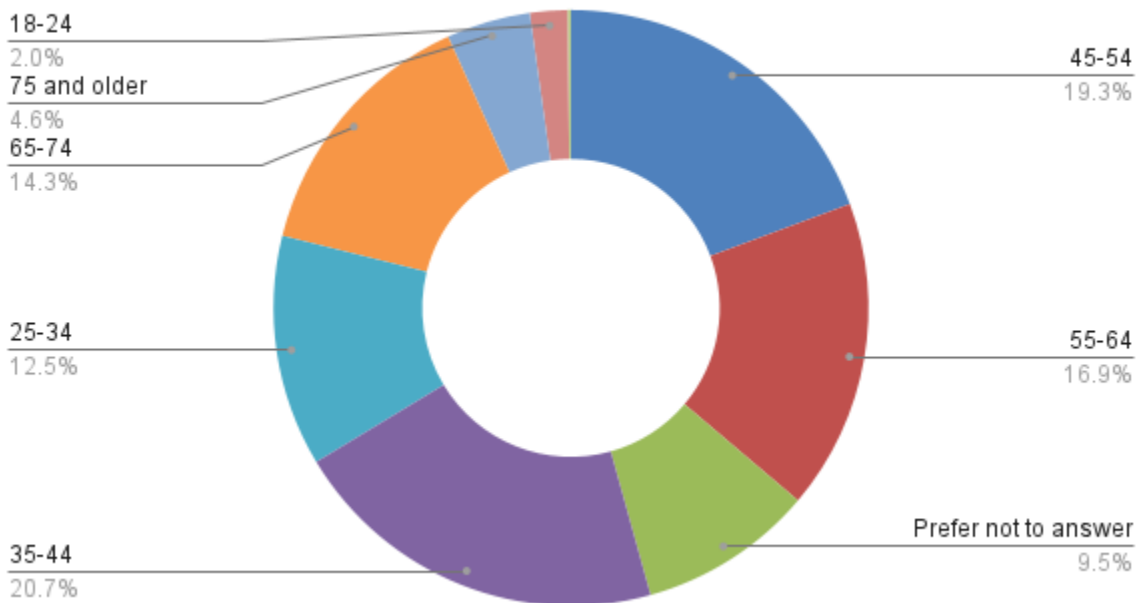


Figure 16

Homeowners Who Immigrated to Canada Within the Last 5 Years

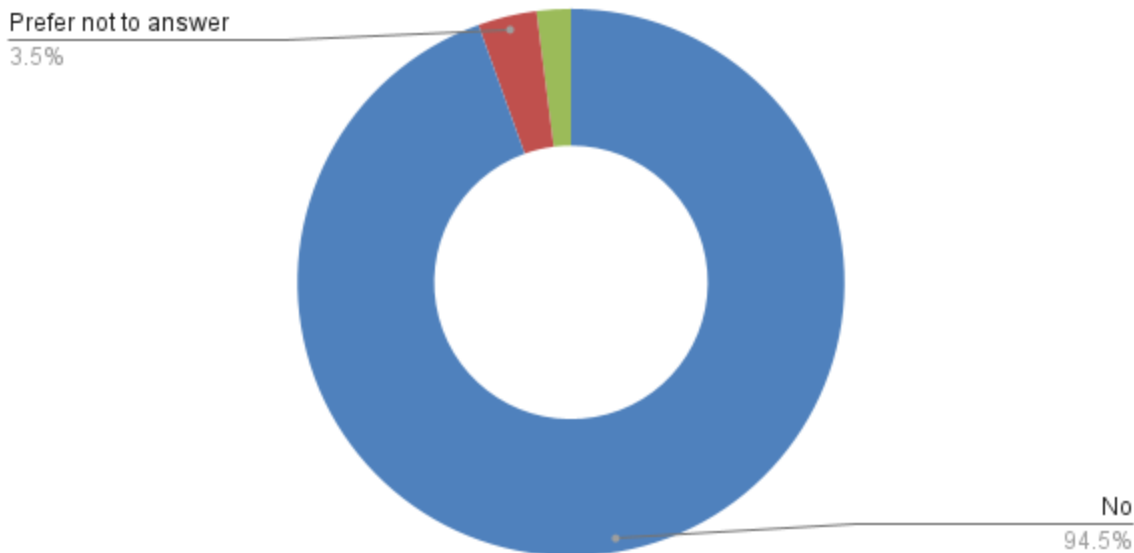


Figure 17

York Region Renters

This segment is for York Region residents who rent their home (13.3% of respondents).

- The majority of renters (93.5%) strongly agreed with the implementation of a vacant homes tax.
- The majority of renters live in Markham (21.8%), Newmarket (20.9%) and Richmond Hill (16.8%).
- Of the survey respondents that were renters, 35.7% self-identified as being 25-34 years old, 24.7% were ages 35 to 44 and 16.5% were 45 to 54 years old.
- 81.8% of renters would prefer that the revenue generated from the VHT is used to support housing initiatives and programs (e.g., building new affordable housing, providing rent supplements, supporting emergency shelters, etc.), while 9.7% of renters would like revenue to be used for general purposes, such as to support other municipal programs and services offered within York Region.

Renters' Responses to the Introduction of a Vacant Homes Tax in York Region

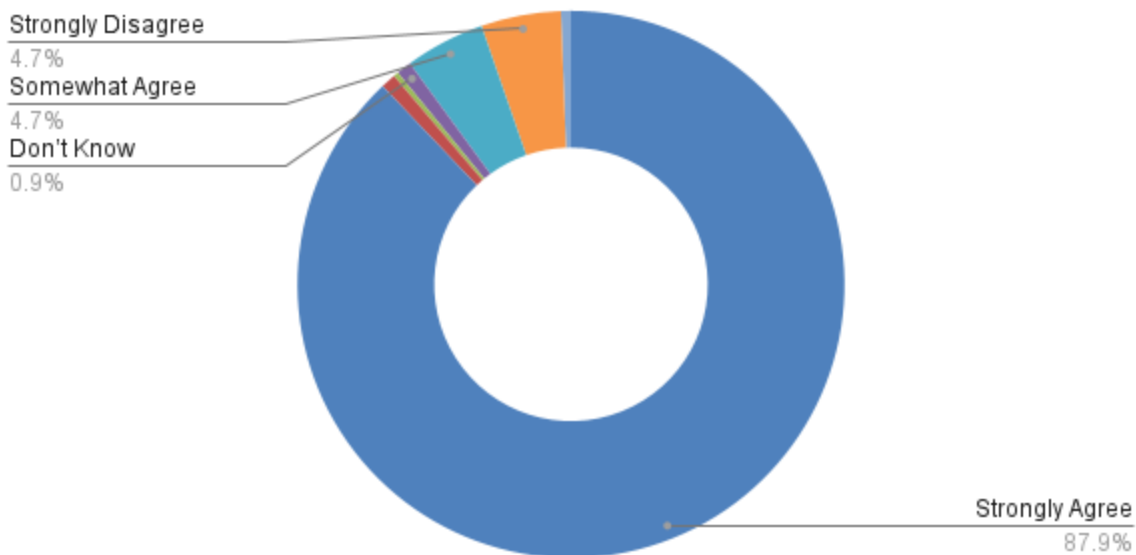


Figure 18

Renters' Responses to the Use of Revenue Generated from a Vacant Homes Tax

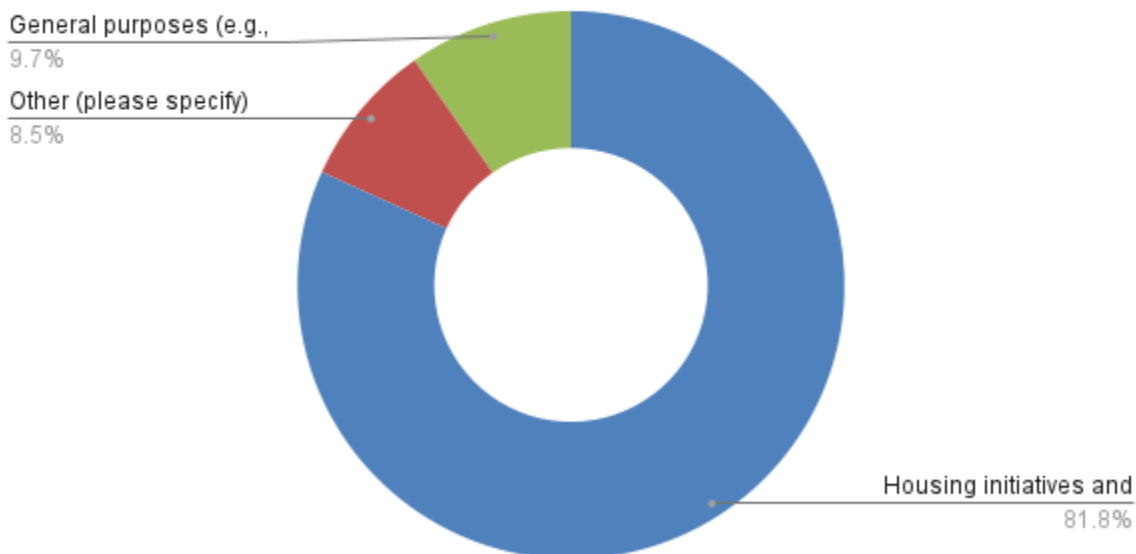


Figure 19

Location of Renters' Primary Residence

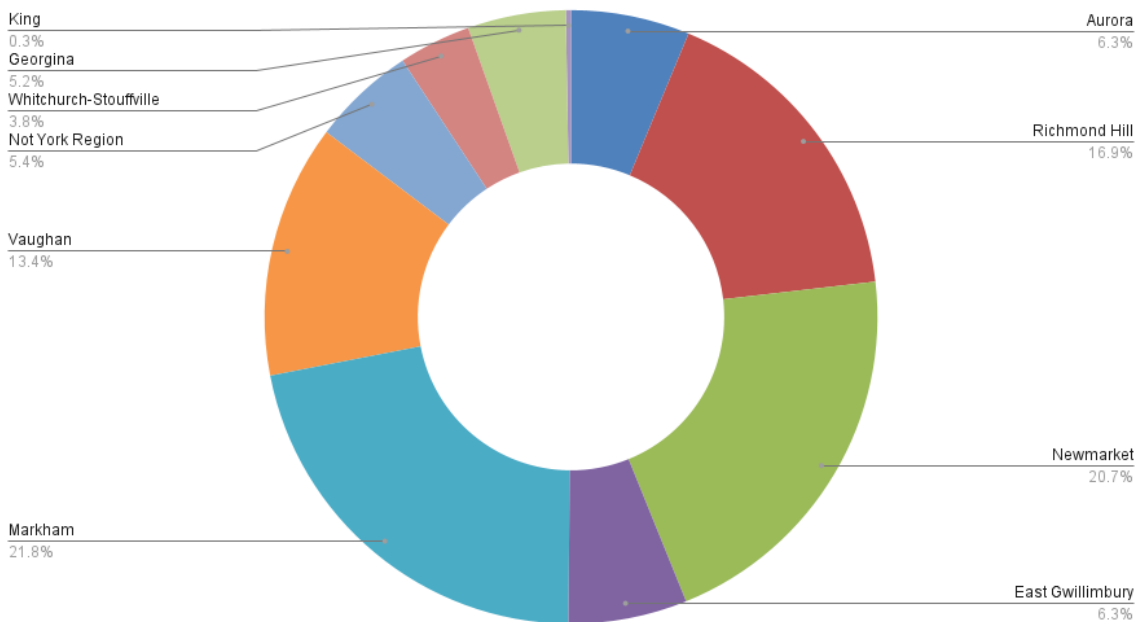


Figure 20

Gross Household Income of Renters

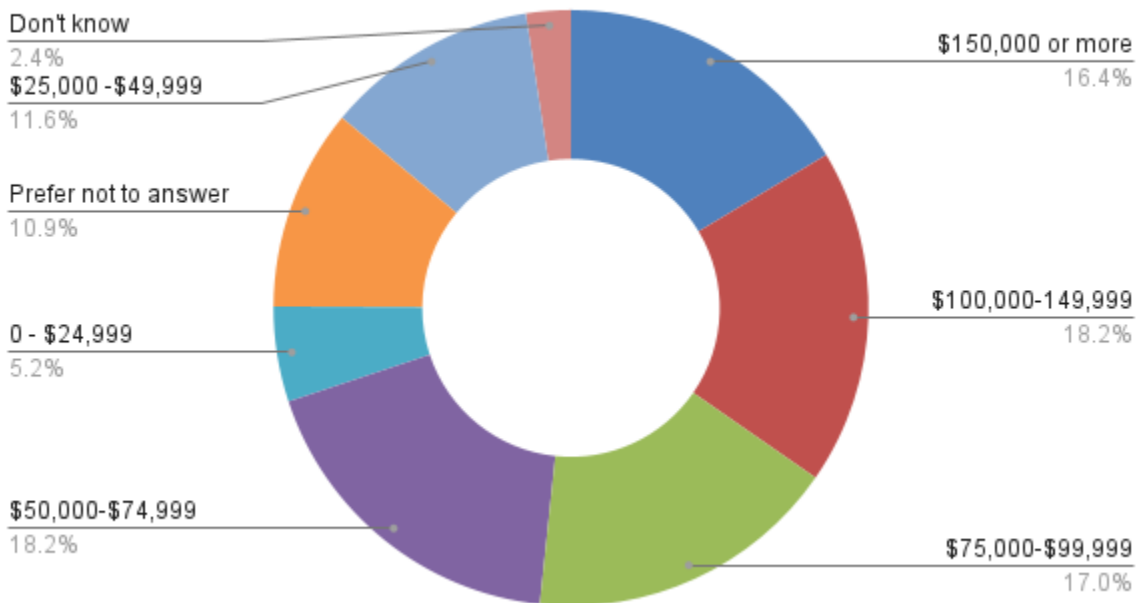


Figure 21

Age of Renters

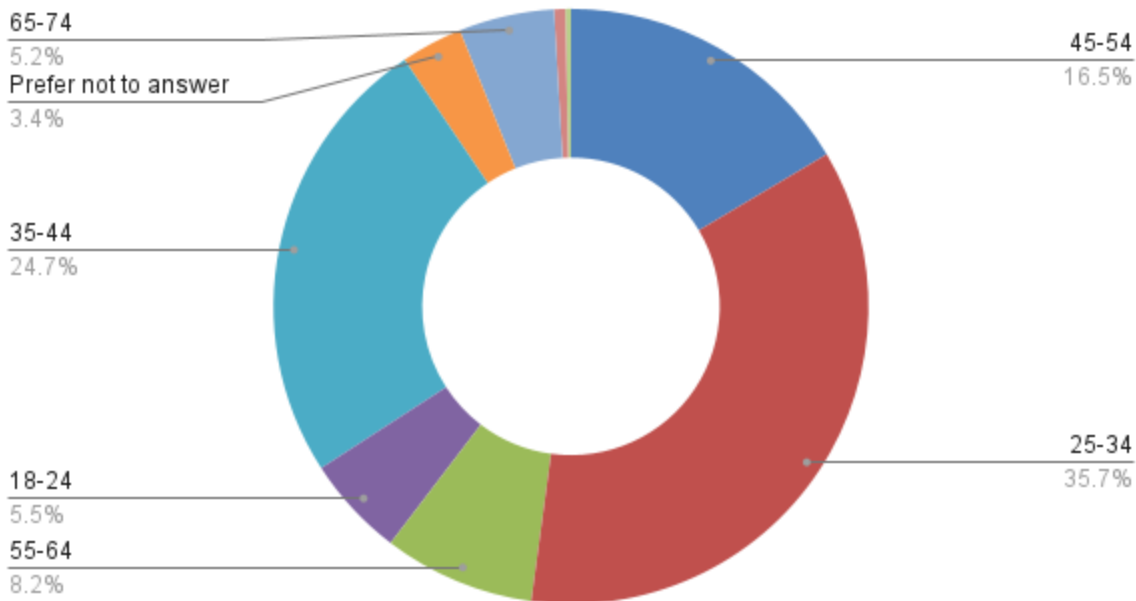


Figure 22

Renters Who Immigrated to Canada Within the Last 5 Years

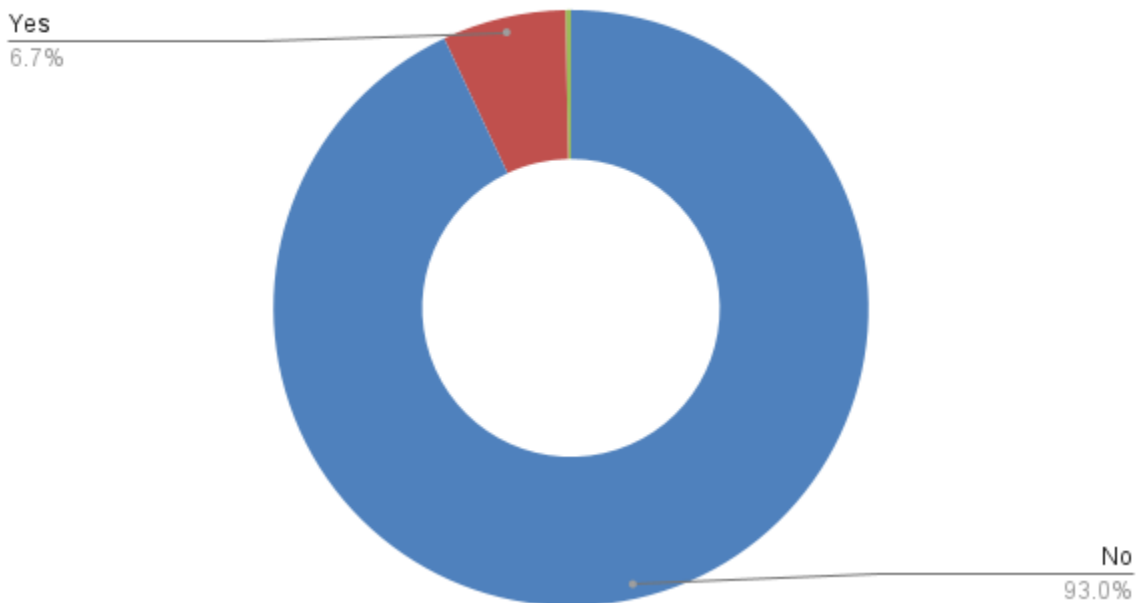


Figure 23

York Region Single Investment Property Owners

This segment represents York Region residents who own a single residential property that is not their primary residence (8.7% of respondents).

- Most single property investment owners agree with the implementation of a vacant homes tax, either strongly (45.1%) or somewhat (20.9%).
- Of those who provided details, the majority of these homeowners have a non-primary residential unit in Markham (29.7%), Richmond Hill (17.4%) and Vaughan (14.5%).
- The majority of these non-primary residences were long-term rental homes (43%), apartments or condominium units for long-term rental (23.8%) and other types of properties including cottages and homes inhabited by family members (16.9%).
- 3.5% self-identified as having immigrated to Canada within the last 5 years, 89.6% do not identify as such.
- 57.6% of single investment property owners have a gross household income of \$100,000 or more.

Single Investment Property Owners' Responses to the Introduction of a Vacant Homes Tax in York Region

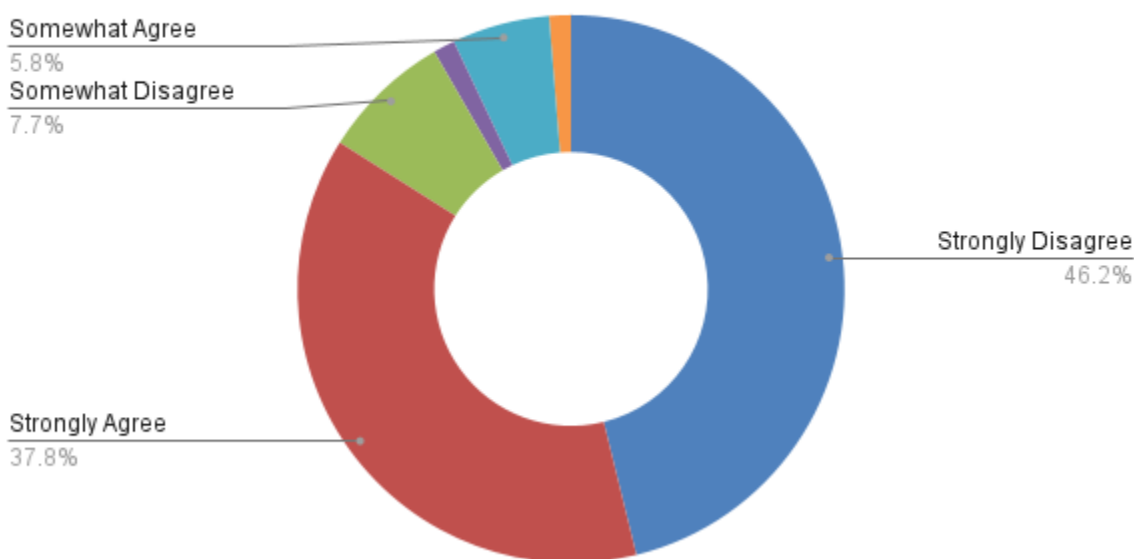


Figure 24

Types of Non-Primary Residential Property (From Single Investment Property Owners)

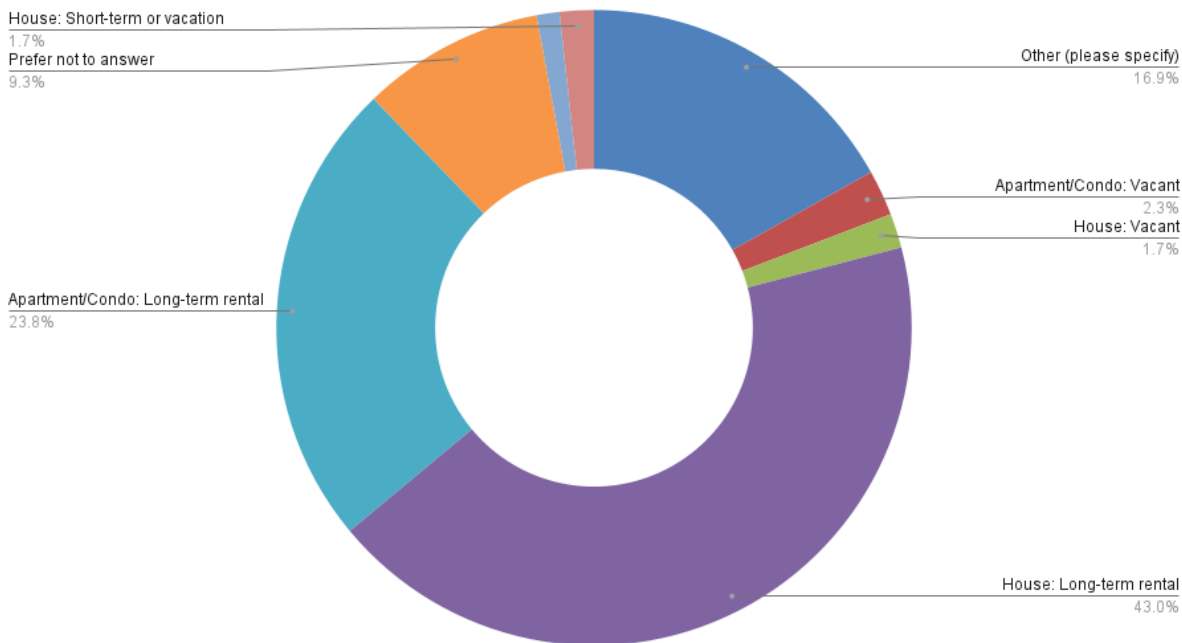


Figure 25

Location of Non-Primary Residential Property (From Single Investment Property Owners)

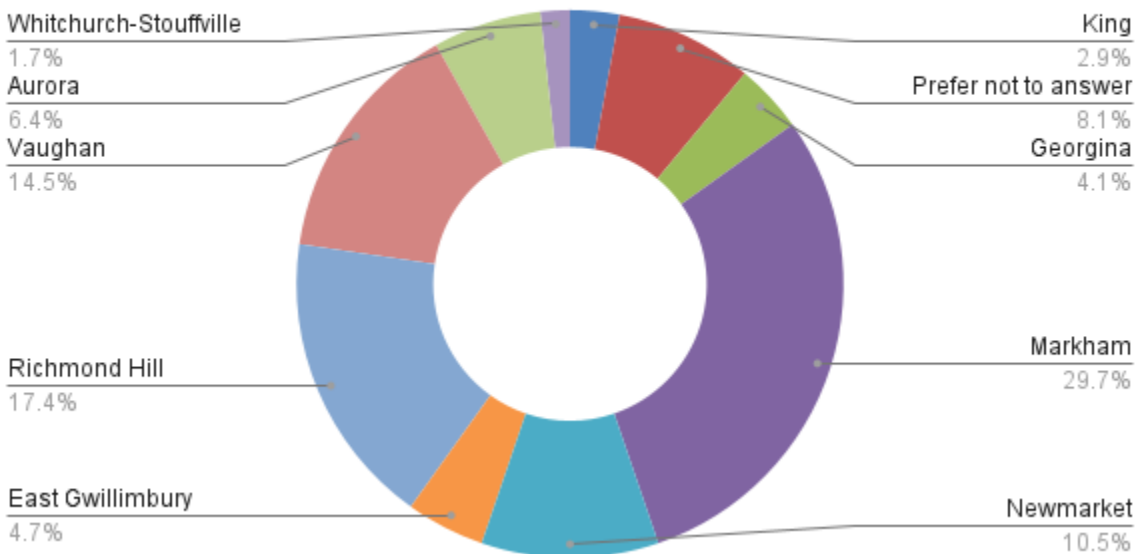


Figure 26

Gross Household Income of Single Investment Property Owners

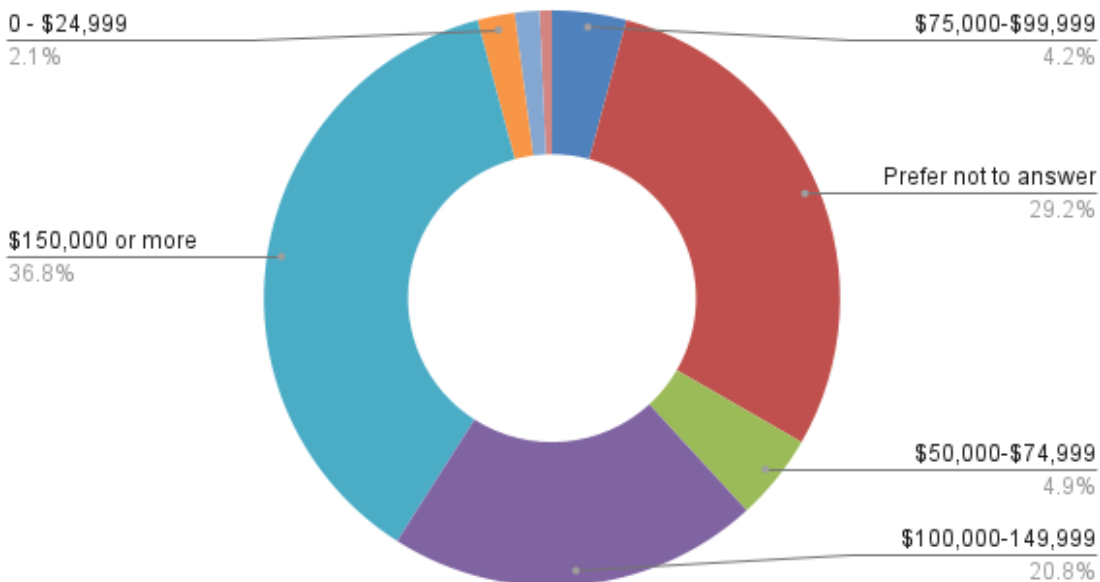


Figure 27

Age of Single Investment Property Owners

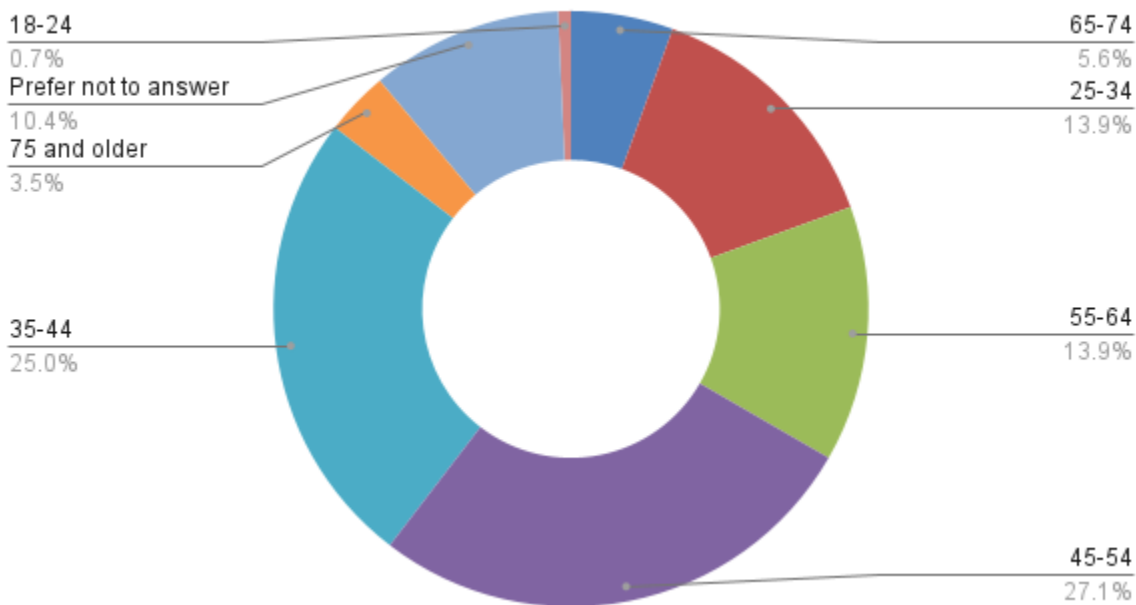


Figure 28

Single Investment Property Owners Who Immigrated to Canada Within the Last 5 Years

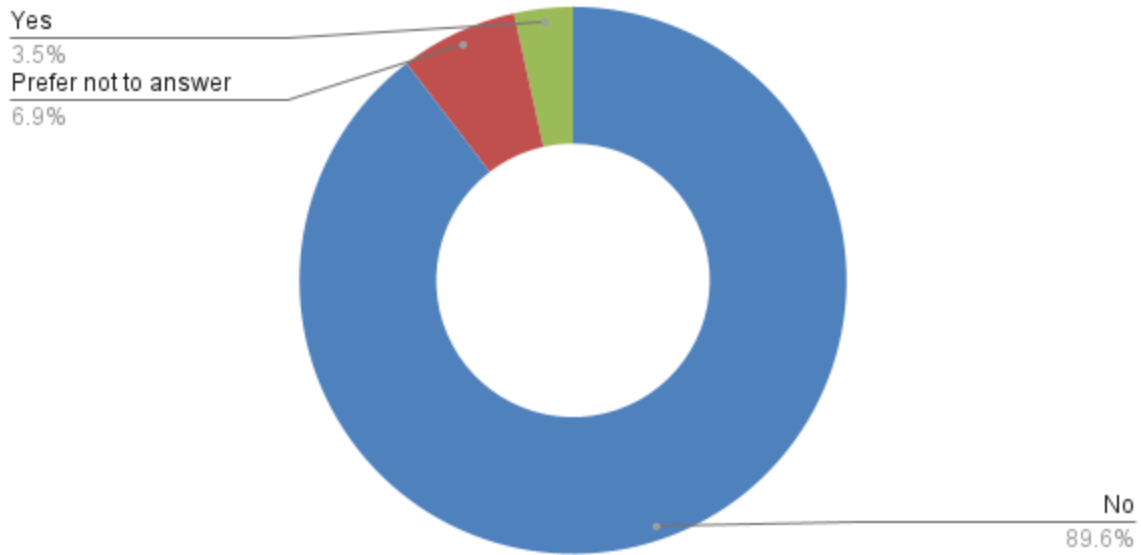


Figure 29

York Region Multiple Investment Property Owners

This segment represents York Region residents who own multiple residential properties that are not their primary residence (0.3% of respondents).

- Half of multiple property investment owners strongly disagreed with the vacant homes tax, while the other half agreed.
- Of those owned by multiple investment properties owners, 52.9% non-primary residences are located in Aurora, 17.6% are in Vaughan and 11.8% are in East Gwillimbury.
- The most popular investment property types are long-term rental houses, long-term apartment or condominium rental units and short-term or vacation rental houses.
- 1 in 9 multiple residential property owners has immigrated to Canada within the last 5 years.
- 3 in 4 multiple investment properties owners have a gross household income of \$100,000 or more.

Multiple Invest Property Owners' Responses to the Introduction of a Vacant Homes Tax in York Region

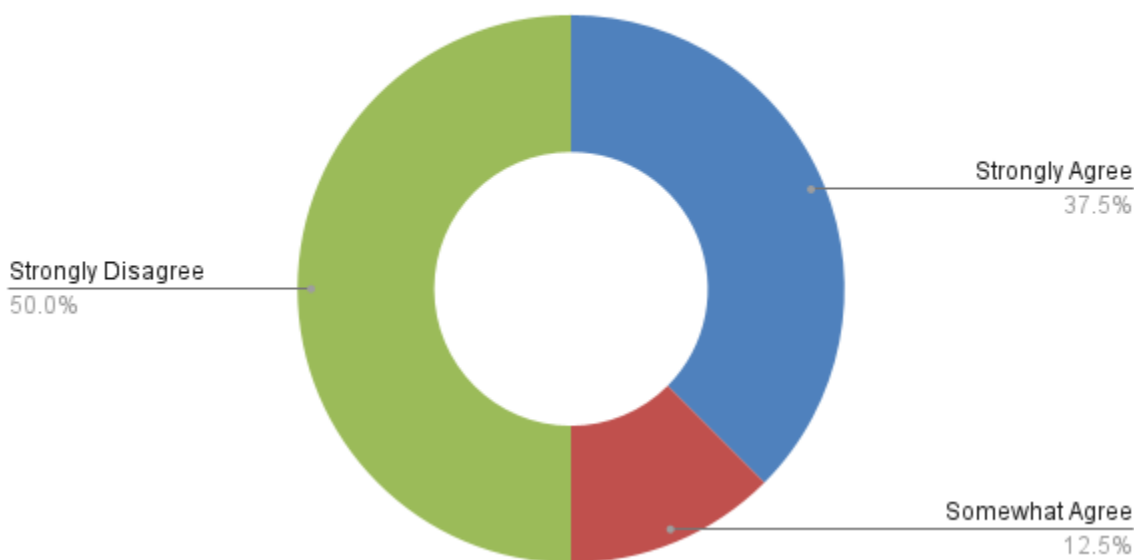


Figure 30

Location of Non-Primary Residential Property (From Multiple Investment Property Owners)

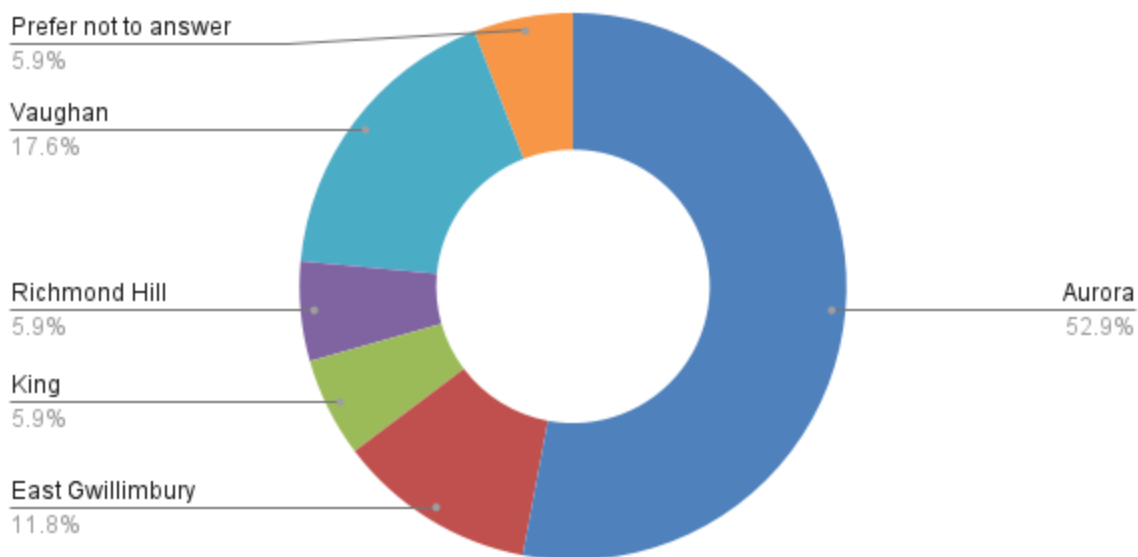


Figure 31

Types of Non-Primary Residential Property (From Multiple Investment Property Owners)

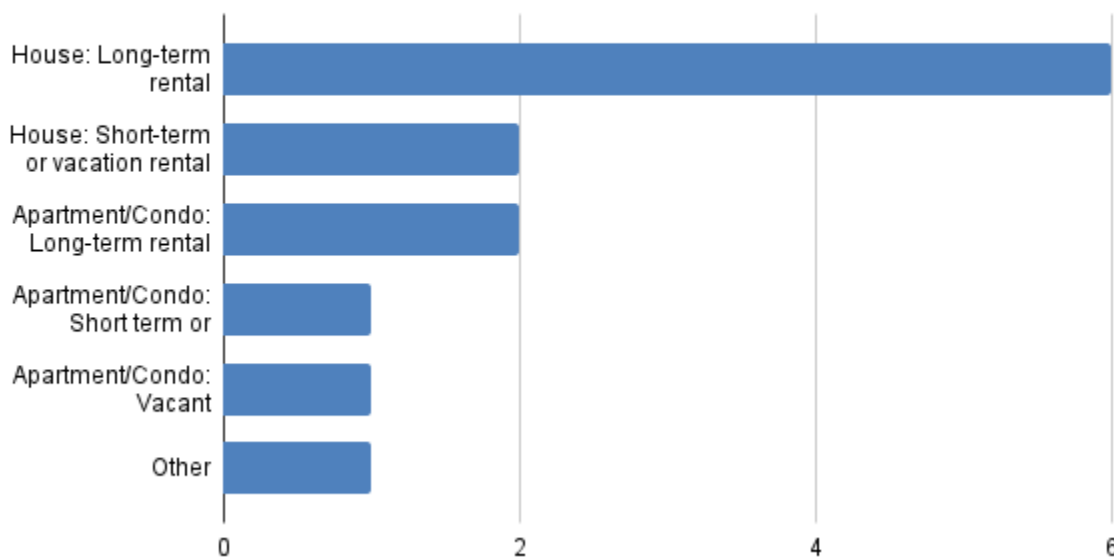


Figure 32

Gross Household Income of Multiple Investment Property Owners

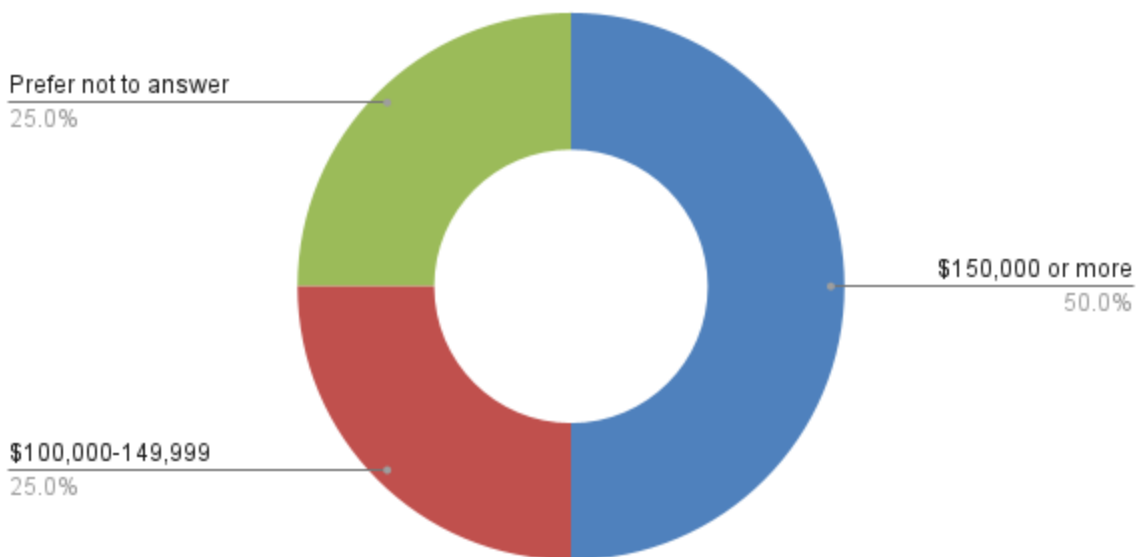


Figure 33

Age of Multiple Investment Property Owners

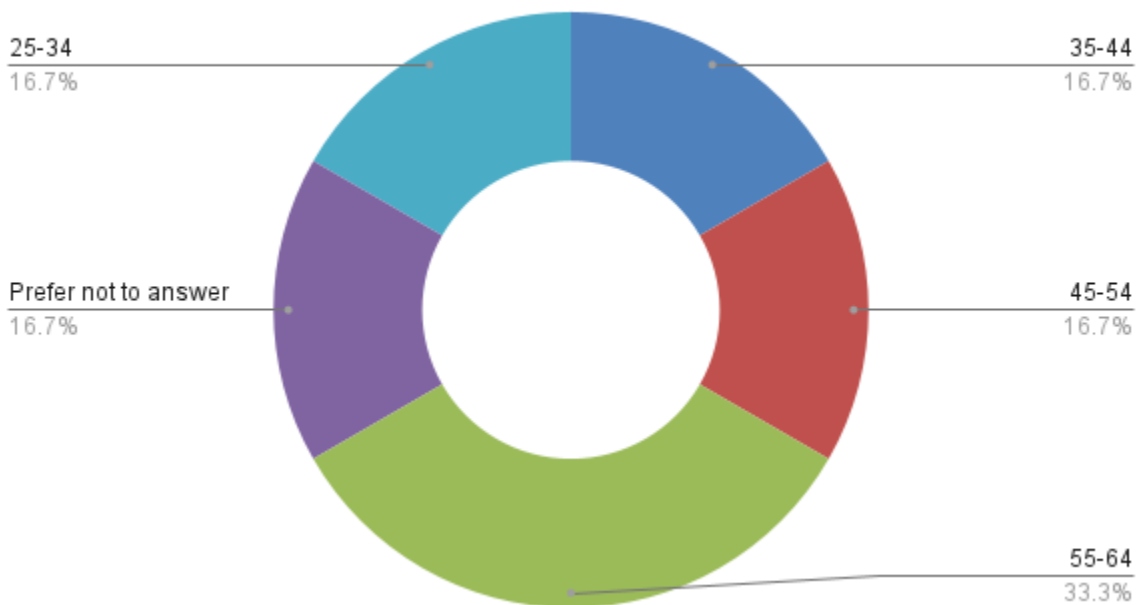


Figure 34

Multiple Investment Property Owners Who Immigrated to Canada Within the Last 5 Years

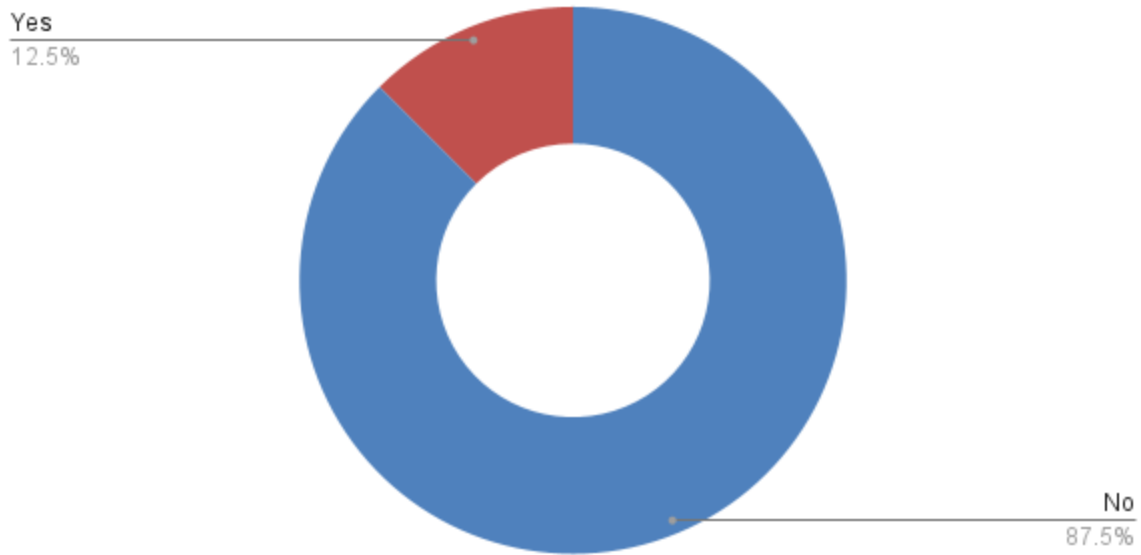


Figure 35

York Region Renters with a Single Investment Property

This segment represents York Region residents who are renters and own additional residential property (0.1% of respondents).

- York Region residents who are renters and own additional residential property have strong opinions about the vacant homes tax; 66.7% strongly disagree while 33.3% strongly agree.
- The single non-primary residential property of renters are located evenly in East Gwillimbury, Georgina, Markham and Vaughan (25% in each municipality).
- The most popular investment property types are long-term rental houses, long-term apartment or condominium rental units and short-term or vacation rental houses.
- 1 in 2 renters who own a single investment property have a gross household income of \$150,000 or more.
- York Region residents who are renters and own additional residential property have strong opinions about the vacant homes tax; two-thirds strongly disagree while one-third strongly agree.

The Responses to the Introduction of a Vacant Homes Tax in York Region from Renters Who Own a Single Investment Property

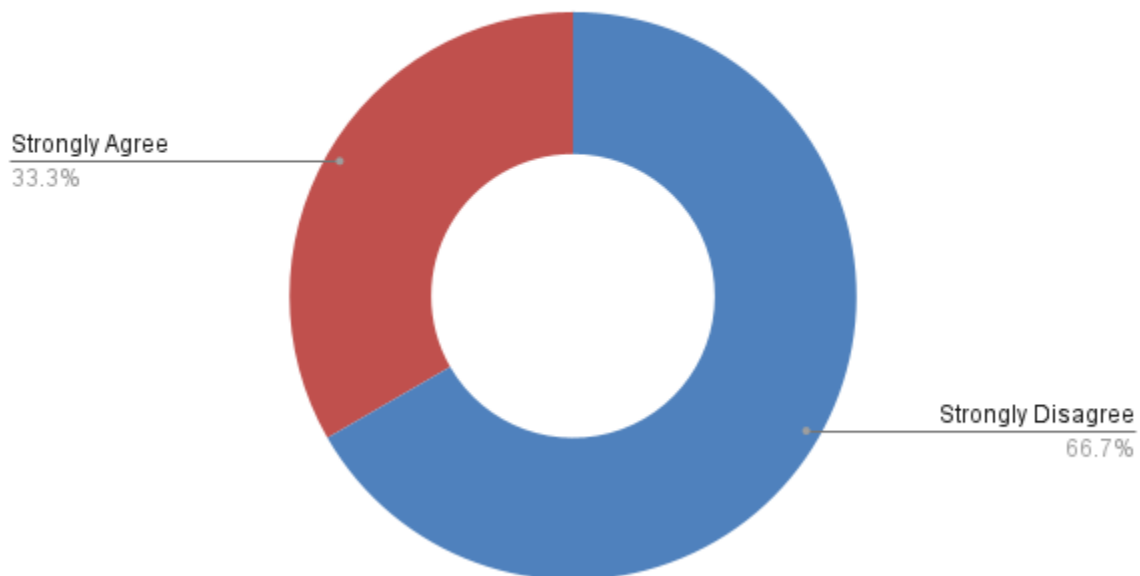


Figure 36

Location of Non-Primary Residential Property (From Renters Who Own a Single Investment Property)



Figure 37

Type of Non-Primary Residential Property (From Renters Who Own a Single Investment Property)

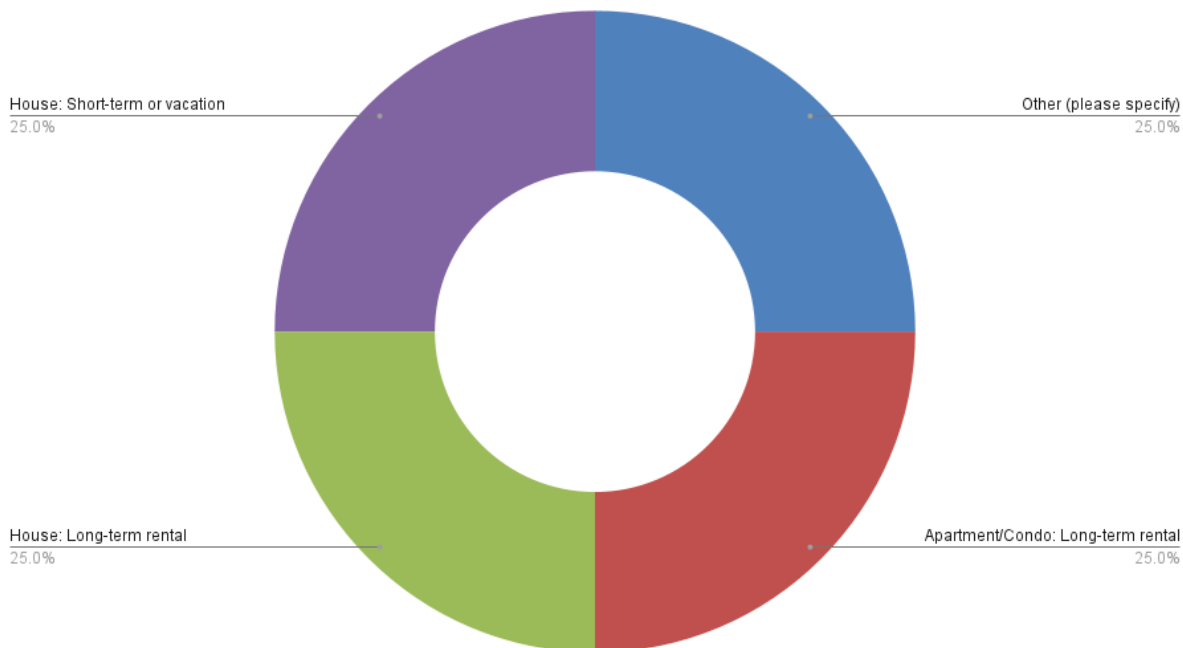


Figure 38

Gross Household Income of Renters with a Single Investment Property

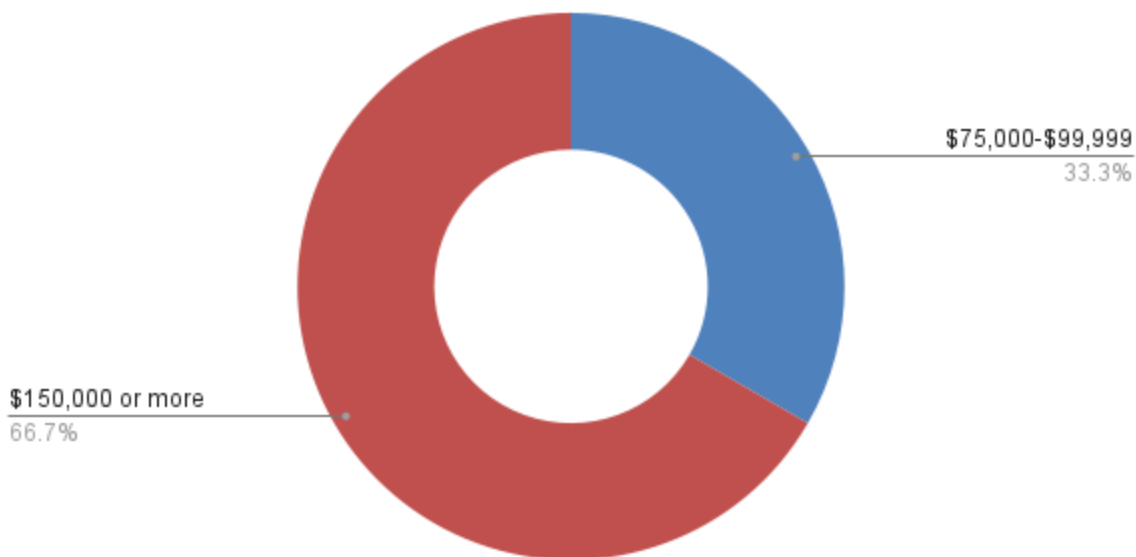


Figure 39

Age of Renters with a Single Investment Property

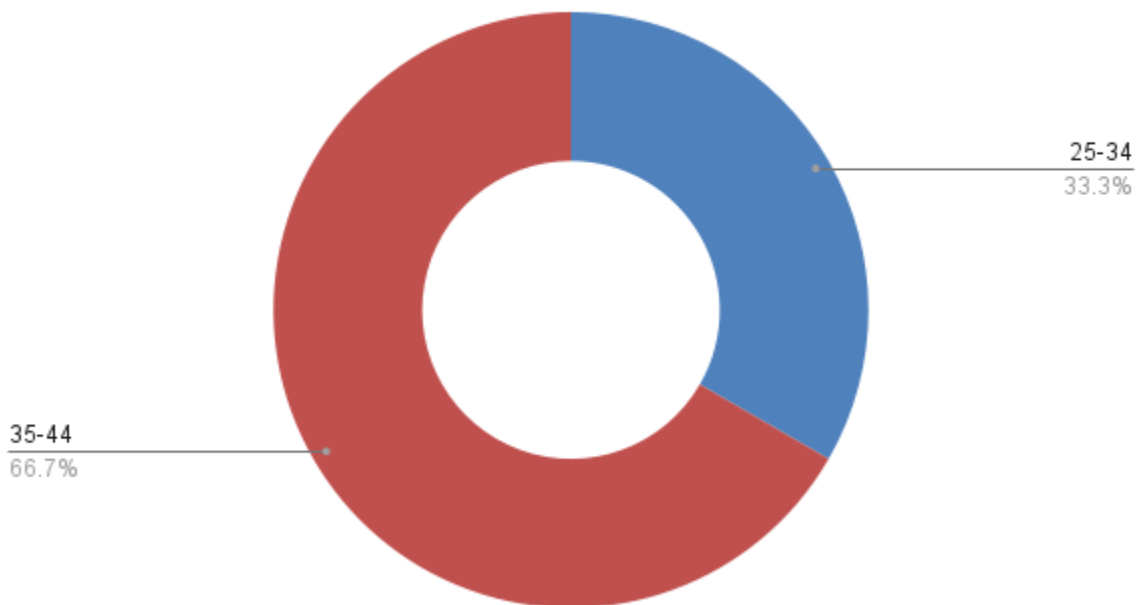


Figure 40

Renters with a Single Investment Property Who Immigrated to Canada Within the Last 5 Years

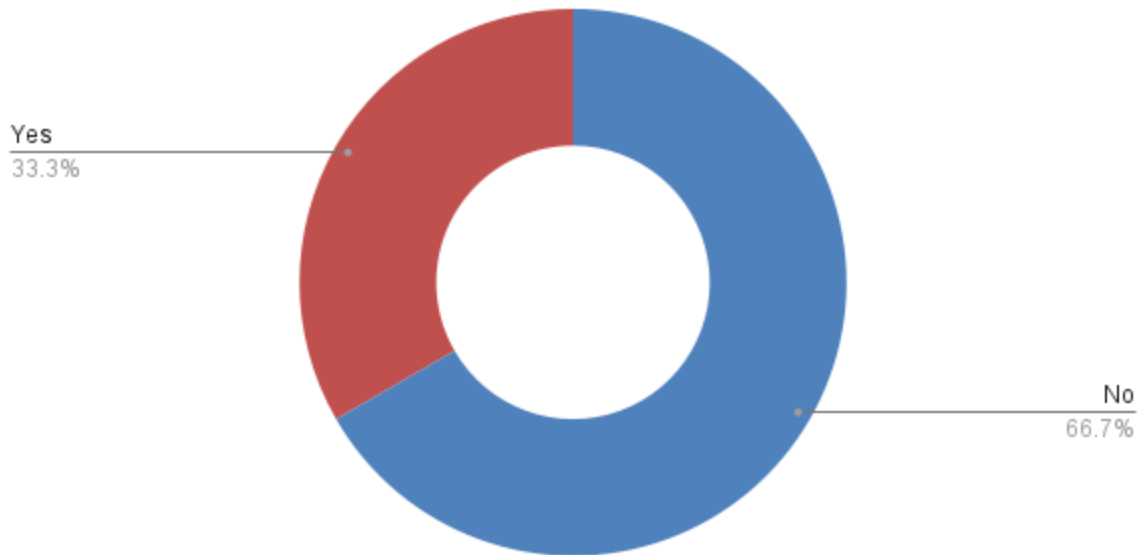


Figure 41

Homeowners Who Reside in York Region for Less Than 6 Months of the Year

This segment represents York Region residents who reside in a home they own for less than 6 months of the year (0.4% of respondents). Their primary residence is in York Region.

- The majority of homeowners who live in York Region for less than 6 months of the year strongly disagree with the implementation of a vacant homes tax (63.6%).
 - 27.3% agree with the implementation of a VHT, to some degree.
 - 9.1% don't know how they feel about the implementation of a VHT.
- The age of these homeowners were mainly 65 to 74 (50%), 55 to 64 (30%), and 45 to 54 (10%).
 - 10% preferred not to disclose their age.
- The gross household income of renters who live in York Region for less than 6 months of the year ranges from 0 to \$24,000 (20%), and \$150,000 or more (30%).
 - 10% have a gross household income of \$25,000 to \$49,999.
 - 10% have a gross household income of \$75,000 to \$99,999.
 - 30% preferred not to answer.
- 10% of homeowners who live in York Region for less than 6 months of the year had immigrated to Canada within the last 5 years.
- 58.3% report that their residential property is vacant when they aren't occupying while others, while 8.3% rent it out.
 - 33.3% report other usages for their residence, such as is occupied by relatives, used by family members who work and visit the GTA, and used as a cottage property.

Renters Who Reside in York Region for Less Than 6 Months of the Year

This segment represents York Region residents who rent their home where they live for less than 6 months of the year (0.1% of respondents). Their primary residence is in York Region.

- Residents who are renters and live in York Region for less than 6 months of the year unanimously strongly agree with the implementation of a vacant homes tax.
- The age of these renters are split evenly between the ranges of 18 to 24, 25 to 34, and 45 to 54 (a third each).
- The gross household income of renters who live in York Region for less than 6 months of the year ranges from 0 to \$24,000 (33.3%), and \$100,000 to \$149,000 (33.3%).
- One-third of renters who live in York Region for less than 6 months of the year are also immigrants who've arrived in Canada within the last five years.
- When renters who live in York Region for less than 6 months of the year are not occupying their homes, 2 in 3 would sublet it.
- All respondents who are renters and live in York Region for less than 6 months of the year are supportive of diverting VHT revenue to housing initiatives and programs (e.g., building new affordable housing, providing rent supplements, supporting emergency shelters, etc.).

APPENDIX D: Comments and Questions from the BILD & Development Community Stakeholder Meeting

July 5, 2022

Below is a consolidated list of all comments and questions and responses from the Project Team, transcribed from the meeting.

Table 6—BILD & Development Community Stakeholder Meeting Questions and Comments

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
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| General Comments | | |
| 1 | How do these other jurisdictions determine the vacant of units? | Vancouver collects property declarations via a survey. Ottawa is implementing something similar to that, as is Toronto. |
| 2 | Has it been successful in other jurisdictions? | Vancouver is the only municipality in Canada that has implemented this tax. It has seen success. |
| 3 | Has York Region done any homework on how many houses are actually vacant? Is it just 3? Or 1000? | We are working on this now. We are identifying this with water usage data. Low water usage typically means vacant. There are other data sources. If there isn't enough vacancy, then it may not be worth going down this avenue. |
| 4 | The goal is not for the Region to make a lot of money but to make more housing and make housing available for people to afford them. You know that they're out there, our measure of success is just to see fewer and fewer houses being vacant. There are a lot of units that can be put back on the market and help the rental shortfall that we have. There is a need. | |

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
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| 5 | It needs to be made really clear that it would only apply to principal residents. This is for non-principal residences. | |
| 6 | I'll let you know, our house is for the seniors but not under their name. York Region does not give you a break for rental buildings. Even application fees are so much money. Yet we all know that for anyone to do a rental building, they have to qualify at a financial institute proving they will be able to pay their loan with a certain percentage of their vacancy. The Region and the municipalities aren't playing ball. | These are points we will continue to assess because, we agree, it has to be affordable for everybody. |
| 7 | What happens when this process becomes more costly than the revenue that it will generate? | On the cost side of things, Vancouver is the best benchmark. It costs around 5 million dollars a year. We are looking into what the pricing will be for the York Region. We anticipate this will be a declining revenue source. It may not be a permanent policy, but it is a worthwhile initiative to correct the speculation of properties in the Region (sit and hold approach). As for revenue, we have to make sure the local municipalities that share the administrative burden will be covered first before allocation. |
| 8 | Not just affordable housing, we need just regular rent in the Region. All the young couples need a place to live. | Our current DC policy is 175% of average market rent. Through the VHT, we aim to address the affordability of mid-range income households. |
| 9 | Has York Region looked to see what other regions do? With the land that the Region owns? Questions for the Affordable Task Force. We shouldn't leave any stone unturned to deliver housing. | <p>We completely agree. We're doing two exercises parallel to one another. The Housing Services branch is working on a community housing development master plan. We will work together to find middle ground.</p> <p>The community housing plan is currently looking at a long-term timeline to grow the supply of deeply affordable units. There may be partnership opportunities with the development industry.</p> |

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| Identification Methods | | |
| 10 | How would the Region know the homeowner isn't lying? | <p>The mechanics of implementation are the desired outcomes of the feasibility study and public feedback. If it's their legal principal address, they will automatically be exempt from the tax. If someone claims that they live there, that is something that we are still in the process of determining the compliance and audit procedure.</p> <p>Vancouver's approach is dedicating a team to review this and perform spot checks, i.e. ask that they provide the tenant agreement or other documentation. The approach isn't overly onerous, not trying to make it challenging for the homeowners. They had a return on investment and were positive from a revenue perspective.</p> |
| 11 | In a lot of condos water is bulk. Some will try to submeter but in older condos it's just a bulk rate. Are there other metrics other than water usage? | Yes, water data can be tricky and that's a discussion we've been having with the Region staff, specifically with those condos. |
| Defining Vacancy | | |
| 12 | Do vacation homes count in the vacant homes tax? | We haven't done the 180 day criteria. This is part of what we are trying to figure out in our feasibility study and public engagement. We're not planning on including homes that aren't intended for year-round occupancy. The survey includes a number of exemptions we are looking for feedback on, and one exception is for residential units that remain vacant due to seasonal use. |
| Tax Rate | | |
| 13 | Is the tax rate going to be on the price of the specific home or the average price of the home? | It will likely be calculated on the assessed value of the particular home. This is what we've seen other cities do. |
| Net Revenue Sharing | | |

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
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| 14 | If the Region moves forward and implements the tax, where is the tax revenue going? | The Council direction is such that proceeds net of cost will go back into the program and the rest goes towards affordable housing initiatives. |

APPENDIX E: Comments and Questions from the Local Municipal Housing Working Group Stakeholder Meeting

July 15, 2022

Below is a consolidated list of all comments, questions and responses from the Project Team, transcribed from the three breakout groups at the meeting.

Table 7—Local Municipal Housing Working Group Stakeholder Meeting Questions & Comments

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
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| General | | |
| 1 | How many/what % of properties in York are vacant? | There are valid reasons for why the homes may be vacant. Through consultations like these, we are trying to set the boundaries of what vacant homes look like. |
| 2 | *Head nod* supportive. | |
| 3 | I would like more information about current vacancy rates. | |
| 4 | Depending on the percentage, it could be a good tool. Need more information to justify the decision though. Cost and man hours would add up. Without more information it is hard to commit, hard to say I'm 100 percent behind it. | |
| 5 | A cost benefit analysis is needed. Depends on the numbers, yes. If we're looking at 1%, is it worth it? | |
| 6 | Jury is out. Agree with the principle that a vacant homes tax is good. But thinking about all the exemptions and work needed might not make it worth it. A third party might be the way to go. | |

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
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| Identification Methods | | |
| 7 | Is there not another option about monitoring water usage? The way I understand it, if I was in my house for 6 months and 1 day, but if all the houses are metered and we're looking at their usage, we could know that there's been no usage for that amount of time. We could write to the owner that it's our understanding that there's been no usage for whatever duration and you'll be charged the VHT. | One of the problems with that approach is data privacy. It encroaches on the privacy of citizens - other municipalities have the same concerns. In some instances, they've used that water usage data to assess what the vacancy rate could be, but they cannot use that as an enforcement mechanism. It's not included here because we want to avoid that. Additionally, condos are bulk-billed and not individually metered. |
| 8 | I live in Toronto but will have to declare every year. It's either speak up or get charged, it's a bit punitive. But on the other hand, why would anyone voluntarily tell you? There's no incentive for that. As for the complaint system, I don't see that being a good way either. I'd say the lesser of all evils and say the mandatory declaration, but making it an easy way of making that possible. | It would come down to the design of the program and ensuring that it is user-friendly and accessible to the public. |
| 9 | I suppose if your tax form said, unless you tell us otherwise, your property tax for year 20XX will be \$\$\$\$\$, and then you are directed to a quick online place to indicate that your unit was not vacant or meets the exemption criteria. And you have 30 days to do that... | |
| 10 | Would agree, Mandatory Universal Declaration would be most appropriate. Just curious, are there other jurisdictions that have imposed a penalty and what were the results of that? | In all of the cases that we've reviewed, there is an audit mechanism to check if residential properties are vacant. Vancouver has indicated that the majority of their revenue comes from those audits and it's a much stiffer penalty if you're not declaring. It has been 5 years and the penalty is significant compared to what an owner would pay for the VHT. There is an incentive to declare appropriately. That would be set up with this tool too. |
| 11 | Mandatory universal declaration makes the most sense in terms of getting the best data. But the devil's in the details of how it's administered and educating the public. I know I miss notices all of the time, so it's good to think about grace periods and | Thank you so much for that comment. |

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
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| | ensure there's a transition period if we implement this. | |
| 12 | The punitive measure is an interesting one. You need a council and organization that goes to bat against its residents. I can imagine that we'd be facing some serious blowback. I wonder how it was received in Vancouver. | For the most part, these types of taxes have been highly supported by the public, particularly by neighbours of vacant homes who are frustrated. We have seen that with communities in other jurisdictions as well. You're right, we need to think about how punitive that penalty is but for the most part, we've seen support for the VHT. |
| 13 | If it's seen that cheaters are pariahs, then it works. But if it's a speeding ticket, then nobody wants to see their neighbours get hit too hard about it. I'm going to double down and ask about Toronto's experience and why the mandatory universal declaration was the way to go? | KPMG actually advised Toronto for their VHT. All of these options have their advantages and shortcomings. Mandatory Universal Declaration makes sure all properties have to be declared. The voluntary self-identification is what Melbourne uses. But they've had challenges identifying what those processes are and through their audit, they've found a lot of vacant homes that were undeclared. Universal declaration is probably the best approach for capturing the most amount of vacant homes. If they want to get the tax reversed, it's more effort. |
| 14 | Can't believe that any of these are that effective. I thought there may be a fourth option. For privacy, number two is asking that you spy on your neighbours. Hearing the effectiveness in other jurisdictions, I'm surprised. | It's a lot like personal income tax. The government isn't auditing each person, but the expectation is that you're submitting your income tax every year. There's a risk that you can be selected to be audited and if you haven't done it properly, there's a penalty associated with tax avoidance. |
| 15 | Have Toronto and Vancouver taken a voluntary self-declaration approach? | Vancouver uses the mandatory declaration method. |
| 16 | I'm concerned about the administration involved with the mandatory option. You would be sending bills and declaring them afterwards. Too much effort. | |
| 17 | I am not sure which is best. Some are punitive. Possibly a hybrid. Voluntary - who is going to volunteer that money? Complaining seems like a punishment and all you're left with is mandatory. but if you are foreign investment - how would we know? | |
| 18 | My biggest concern is with the senior population. With the online service, they don't always know how to use the | |

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| | technology, it may cause extra problems. They might miss a bill. Not any of them are the answer, possibly a combination is the best solution. | |
| 19 | Because of the comments made about the mandatory declaration, I'm thinking of a hybrid between voluntary and complaint. Voluntary first and then there is a warning that there could be a complaint. The complaint wouldn't be a neighbour thing, it would just be picked up. | |
| 20 | Are there other identification methods that could be used? Possibly utility bills, using that as an identifier to see if the property is vacant? | <p>The information we collect for water billing can only be used for water billing under the Privacy Act. There would need to be legislation change.</p> <p>We did look into utility as other municipalities have used it to form an estimate, but you cannot use it as an identifier. Reasons include privacy and low consumption (e.g. single ppl who go to gyms).</p> |
| 21 | The mandatory universal declaration is a good idea. It needs a soft launch. So if they don't declare, don't charge them in the first year. You send a couple warnings to give people who don't understand or know yet a chance to learn. | |
| 22 | Communication early on is key, especially those who aren't technologically savvy. It needs to happen overtime and be public in the media as well. Maybe a hybrid model of mandatory and complaint and incorporate it all in a central portal. | |
| 23 | I see the challenges with all three. Mandatory is the way to go as it appears the most effective but the enforcement piece will be the most challenging. Voluntary may not be as effective. I don't know if other municipalities have the voluntary model. | Mandatory universal declaration is the method that is identified as a potential, but Canadian municipalities use it. |
| 24 | Will it be administered by the Region or local municipalities? Are there any enforcement or bylaws in place to put non-payments on a tax bill? | Administration-wise, our current property tax is under the municipality. Vacant homes tax can be similar. The province is quite open as to how we set it up. They would strongly encourage a two tier setting, the municipalities could be responsible for tax collection. There will |

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
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| | | be a bylaw if Council endorses this idea, with further consultation in the fall. |
| 25 | Have you seen an appeal against the tax? | In our research, we haven't seen any pushback against the tax. |
| 26 | Voluntary self-identification seems inefficient and too easily ignored. | Melbourne uses it and indeed voluntary self-identification hasn't resulted in many houses being declared. |
| 27 | I want to know more about a mandatory universal declaration. Is the data secured? Improper players could use that to falsify a rental. How would the declaration happen? Is it done on paper / letter / email? People might be suspicious when looking at the declaration? | In examples where the mandatory declaration has been used, it is generally done online using a secure form or system. The owner has the option to declare if the home was vacant. |
| 28 | Why wouldn't you implement all options? Voluntary self identification – why would anyone do it? | The voluntary method has been used in Melbourne – our opinion is that it hasn't been so successful. Only people with vacant homes are required to identify. In Vancouver, they use a mandatory declaration and an audit function, as well as complaints and checks used. |
| 29 | Of the three options, I'm thinking that mandatory declaration would be most efficient. | |
| 30 | Still not clear on reporting. Are we going to allocate some administrative resources to audit? | If voluntary, there will be audits. If people aren't being honest, there will be a penalty. These options are still being explored. |
| Defining Vacancy | | |
| 31 | It was mentioned 6 consecutive months and a day. That makes some sense to me. Certainly if it's a seasonal home, it may be applied to settlement areas of the community, which might address that. If that's the general way other jurisdictions have done it, there's probably a good reason for that. But I think it has to be consecutive, it can't just be randomly throughout the year, right? | Some respondents have said consecutive, others have said throughout the year. There are different ways to think about it. Generally, it's been 6 months throughout the year. The VHT has also been used as a tool for municipalities who don't want Airbnbs. In Vancouver, for 30 or 31 consecutive days, you could have someone in it, and you can consider it unoccupied. This could be a tool to target them. |
| 32 | The shorter the vacancy period, the harder to enforce. If it's 1 month or 3 months, then you're basically turning to voluntary | The problem with 12 months, if you're a homeowner, you could come back and live for a week and say it was occupied. So |

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| | declaration at that point. At what point is vacancy problematic for housing affordability? I wonder if a year would be more appropriate? It lines up with property tax schedules, lease terms and a level of duration at which it would be problematic. | that restarts the clock on them. There needs to be a balance between, is this a property where people are spending time and being a part of the community, or are they coming to stay to cheat the tax? |
| 33 | It's an interesting discussion about the definitions of "vacancy" and "occupied." | It's part of what we're working through, what constitutes "vacancy" and "occupied." |
| 34 | I also think 6 months is a little bit short, thinking about all of the snowbirds that are out of the country and the residency requirements of Canadian citizenship. I'm someone who's out for 6 months and still paying taxes, I don't think I'm the target audience for the VHT. | There's a principal residence component to it as well. There's some definition around the tax that could help with some of these issues that are being raised. |
| 35 | I know kids in uni who get a lease for the year and might not be living there for a year. They're not there all year and they have the option to sublet. One year would be too long. The University cycle is about 8 months. Somewhere between 6 and 8 might be more reasonable. I do think it's important that it's a consecutive period of time. This shouldn't be the vehicle to address curtailing Airbnb. The incentive is to either live in their home or to sell it to someone. We need to create the program in that way. If you do still want to use this home as an investment only, then you should pay the city for having that option, so that we could have that money to provide affordable housing elsewhere. It's important to be clear. | |
| 36 | Who is it we're targeting? I think the snowbirds who are leaving their homes for 6 months, they are affecting the housing crisis. No one wants to touch them because they vote but they have an impact. | Our primary target is real estate speculators, people who are holding onto property and using them as vehicles for investment. |
| 37 | There's a lot of vacancy that happens. The people who need housing need housing year-round. If there's a whole cohort who vacate and reoccupy at the same time, it's not going to solve the problem. We can't have people living in snowbirds' homes for half a year then elsewhere for half the time. | |

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| 38 | In my mind, we're targeting non-primary residences. | Essentially yes. |
| 39 | What is the industry standard now? | 6 months is what people typically adopt. This is something that could change if need be. 6 months, unless there is an active building permit. |
| 40 | Yes, 6 months is good. | Seems reasonable. |
| 41 | If you go to Florida for the winter, would that qualify? | You can only be in the US for 6 months. If you're out of the province for 6 months you lose healthcare. Another incentive to stay. |
| 42 | Snowbirds are only gone for 6 months – they wouldn't have an issue. How is 6 months determined? Rolling? Calendar year? | The exemption provided for principal residence, home on the tax filing. As for determining the "6 months" – other jurisdictions use 1 month occupancy to count towards 6 months. Can be separate periods of occupancy that add up to 6 months. |
| Exemptions | | |
| 43 | Reminded of the stormwater charge, and the first thing they thought about is what we're going to exempt. I see nothing wrong with some of these exemptions, I wonder who will actually pay this. I'm fine with these, but I'm concerned that there are so many exemptions. | |
| 44 | They all made good sense to me except I didn't understand "the principal resident living outside of the Region.." I don't really understand that circumstance can someone help me understand it? | This exemption is not captured in other municipalities. But sometimes people need residence for their work but they don't need to be there all the time. They may need to come in a few weeks at a time to participate in their employment. Can't remember which jurisdiction this was observed in, but that's the purpose. |
| 45 | There are two company-owned houses in my neighbourhood. But they lived there for quite an extensive period of time. If the requirement is 6-8 months, you probably don't need this. But if someone is staying for 2 weeks or once a year, why wouldn't the company put them in a hotel? In Richmond Hill, there's a building where a | |

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| | lot of it is foreign-owned and a lot of it sits basically vacant. | |
| 46 | A big factor is how you scope the target audience. How you define occupancy, tenancy, etc. Some of the things like seasonal use of primary residence may not require a VHT. I was interested in short-term rental as an exemption and what's the principal intent of the vHT? Is it about protecting long-term spaces or to curb short-term rental? What if I had someone occupy my basement every week once a month to get around it? | |
| 47 | Looked at this in Markham. Stacked townhouses, condos, apartments, that's the bottomline. 20-30% are located in Canada but most of it is overseas money. A good chunk of those individuals will willingly contribute to the VHT and pay and will have no interest in putting those homes into the market. People who reside in Ontario or other parts of Canada may consider putting them to rent or market. A lot of questions asked today will be resolved with a more wholesome definition. More interested in hearing the Region's position on how this will roll out and who is administering it. | We're running out of time but we do have some questions about implementation. |
| 48 | When you have extenuating circumstances, you should just halt it for a year. Everyone can click that, it's a bit of an easy out. There needs to be some qualifiers (i.e., a reno can't go on for 9 years). | |
| 49 | Short term rentals go against what we are trying to achieve. | |
| 50 | Can we put a time frame? How long do we let these things be, before a resolution? If you use it once, you don't get to use it again? | |
| 51 | We need to step back and think, what is the purpose of this? All of these points could be valid. It seems it will be voluntary, there won't be any evidence needed? Those who actually participate in that would select these options and there is no backup, there is no penalty. Why would they report something that would lead to additional tax? | |

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| 52 | We talked about a 6 month time period. If we go with this time frame, we start to take off some of these items. I.e. death of the owner. If it's a heritage property, it doesn't mean that it can't be lived in. | |
| 53 | I'd be cautious about heritage buildings. Just because it isn't habitable doesn't mean there isn't value. | Great point. If it's heritage, there is special value. What we heard from the last round of consultation, there are these buildings in a municipality and tax may be a good tool to discourage buildings from being degraded. There is a correlation between vacancy and heritage buildings. |
| 54 | We can keep heritage on this list of exemptions, but there should be some additional nuances, e.g. are they actually doing something for its upkeep? | |
| 55 | We do want heritage buildings to be habitable. There are some caveats. They have to be in a habitable state. If they are just sitting on it and leaving it empty, tax it as a vacant home. | |
| 56 | When talking about designated heritage property, it is counterproductive to not also include listed heritage properties. Either way, I would love to be able to tax them, as many get boarded. So I'm against the exemption. | |
| 57 | Doubting the purpose of an Airbnb exemption because there are many controversial issues with them already and the tracking would be an administrative nightmare. | |
| 58 | Would love to have Airbnb rentals of less than a month to not be counted as being occupying a building. Only rentals of more than 1 month should count against vacancy. | |
| 59 | Fire damage, and houses that are not all-seasons (cabins without heating for example) should be added to the tax exemptions. | |
| 60 | Renovation exemptions can be abused by saying your house is being renovated all the time. | In other jurisdictions, only renovations that prevent usage of the house count and also, a time limit exists (an example is given of an owner in Vancouver whose house was being renovated and vacant for |

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| | | 5 years and was denied an exemption because of that). |
| 61 | On heritage exemption – our issue is the listed heritage homes that haven't yet been designated. Generally, developers buy the properties and are boarded up. Don't like the idea of homes hanging around in this state. | |
| 62 | Heritage definition should be expanded – should be taxed. | Other jurisdictions have given exemptions to designated heritage homes. Just an option up for discussion. |
| 63 | Agree, vacant heritage homes shouldn't be exempt. Airbnb, it could be a combination of many short term renters, shouldn't get an automatic exemption. Could also be an administrative nightmare to monitor. | Airbnb and short term rental could be exempt if it adds up to a month |
| 64 | Airbnb tends to steal from the legitimate hotels which we're trying to promote – won't want to provide an exemption. My opinion is that if it's rented out for more than one month by one tenant, it could count toward an exemption. We do need some short term rentals. | |
| 65 | Airbnb has been found to remove long term rentals, and shouldn't be exempt from VHT tax. Opinion that if they met the definition of 6 month minimum, then exemption would also apply. There are situations where longer term rentals are needed, options between hotel and longer term. | |
| 66 | Airbnb shouldn't be exempt. Not usually used for accommodation. Too many issues associated with Airbnb. How would we be tracking 6 months for Airbnb? | Would be up to the owner to track and declare, would say it was occupied by Airbnb tenants for 6 months. Through the audit function could request for proof, asking for receipts. A strong audit function can help make sure people are acting correctly. |
| 67 | Looking at things that define a seasonal house, can they be occupied year round? Apart from that, I don't see why they would be exempt. | |
| 68 | I agree with the previous comment about seasonal residences. | |

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| 69 | Other exemptions. Fire damage that isn't spelled out – extenuating circumstances that aren't spelled out. | |
| 70 | Renovation exemption, it would have to be a definite amount of time, cap on timing – could be an ongoing renovation for years. | Needs to be reno that makes it so that the house can't be occupied. Has to be in the process of renovations, with permits / work happening. |
| 71 | We would have to make a decision about if permits are needed to fall under exemptions. Are you giving an exemption to renovation without a building permit? | |
| 72 | If it's substantially unusable I would agree about the exemption. | |
| 73 | I agree with mixing and matching, that would be appropriate. What if the owner is having trouble getting renter? | Other jurisdictions have not applied an exemption for trouble finding renters. Needs to price the home to get renters even if it means. Risk as a property owner. |
| Tax Rate | | |
| 74 | When looking at Vancouver moving to the 5% range, we need to view this as a baseline. We've seen residential equity grow much higher than 5%. In Newmarket we looked at the gains since 2018. We found that with a 5% tax, developers would gladly take the fee because their revenue they gain on an annual basis is much higher than that. We should push the percentage higher than that. We might see investors snap up the properties if we don't get ahead of it. | |
| 75 | We need to think about balance. What is the motivation for this tax? To rent the properties? Sell the properties? Or truly start offering affordable housing? If the units are for rent, market rent is not affordable. | |
| 76 | Look at Vancouver as an example. Vancouver increased the rate over time. There will be a learning curve so we should start with a lower percentage. | |
| 77 | Agreed. There will be a learning curve when it is first implemented. Where is the tax going? Is it specifically for affordable housing? | Legislation allows parties to use the funds to do whatever the municipalities want to do. Before the report to council, all the net proceeds will be used for affordable housing initiatives. |

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| 78 | <p>If the status changes over the course of the year, can they apply for a rebate? Or taxed outright?</p> <p>1 or 2 % to start and do a one- or two-year assessment once the program is in effect.</p> | How it works in other jurisdictions is the owner makes a declaration at the end of the year. One year lag, based on what has happened. |
| 79 | 1% is a good start. Wouldn't go beyond that. See how it goes. | |
| 80 | See how 1% is received and go from there. | Start and see is what I'm hearing, some sort of assessment. |
| 81 | *Non verbal agreement with statement.* | |
| Net Revenue Sharing | | |
| 82 | For Richmond Hill, we would like revenue sharing. We have our own affordable housing initiatives so we would look to this as a funding source to our own initiatives. Probably based on property assessment value would be consistent with the approach. That's something I would vote for. | |
| 83 | For Newmarket, the key thing is that any costs incurred are covered. That's my primary concern. The rest is just the cherry on top as far as I'm concerned. | |
| 84 | Any revenues should cover the costs incurred by Municipalities to administer. The revenues gained within a municipality, you noted at the bottom the subsidy opportunity. I would like to see that the rent subsidy is diverted to the municipality where the units are staying vacant. Irrespective of whether or not there's cost-sharing. If there's a unit out there that's staying vacant, let's make sure there's another unit that somebody can live in. | |
| 85 | That's a great point. By distributing it to the proportion of vacant homes in each municipality, there may be barriers to that as well. Once we present someone with a rental subsidy that's a long-term arrangement for as long as they qualify. It's not mainly a revenue collection tool, but it | |

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| | may impact us to divert it to the operating budget or capital development plans. | |
| 86 | Sharing the revenue. | |
| 87 | Some of the bigger municipalities may be a bit different depending on if affordable housing initiatives are happening. Locals should be able to collect some of the tax. We primarily need to recover costs, i.e., Aurora needs another tax person, at the moment and doesn't have that capacity. | If there is affordable action happening in a municipality we should be sharing - locals should be able to recover any costs they incur implementing this program. |
| 88 | Will the funds be partially used for the administrative costs? | Yes, after all costs of admin are covered the remainder is what we are trying to figure out how to share |
| 89 | If the solution is for local municipalities to administer that. If this is done correctly, the revenue would go down because there are less vacant homes. The revenue isn't there forever. Net of cost is better for some municipalities. | |
| 90 | Whoever is doing the work for this should be getting the revenue – I suspect a fair bit of effort to implement the program. I haven't seen the revenue vs expenses. There will be people who will challenge, maybe take to court. It's hard to say if this will be revenue positive, need more data. | York Region will need to spend a couple million (around 4 million), for Toronto it's about the same. The idea is that this program covers the expenses and then produces net revenue. We need to assess if there are enough vacant homes to make this viable. Can this be revenue positive or neutral? It isn't the goal of the project team to move forward with this if it's losing significant money. |
| 91 | Question on Vancouver – vacant homes dropped by 26%. What was the vacancy rate before? 1 - 4% in York Region doesn't seem significant. | Vancouver was 3–4% vacant before. Only 1% taxed, others received exemptions. We can share Vancouver's report, it breaks down the numbers quite well. |
| Implementation Model | | |
| 92 | In terms of “vacancy,” is it across all municipalities? From an administration perspective, are there some where it's low and not administered at all? | There is higher prevalence of vacancy in condo units. Southern municipalities that have more condos and likely more vacancy in those ones. We'll do our best to put some structure around the analysis. |
| 93 | Not my area of expertise. But we can implement it through the property tax billing that goes out. There are various mechanisms for paying those taxes. Some sort of enrollment in a property stream, then something through that mechanism | We've seen that in other jurisdictions for ease of payment and administration. |

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| | for those pre-authorized or monthly payments, where you have to declare what kind of property. | |
| 94 | For ease of administration it would have to be coordinated with property tax. For this program to be successful, there needs to be some parity with other regions in Ontario. In terms of advertising and marketing, if the regions are all conducting it in relatively the same way, it'll be easier to piggyback on that. Having both the Region and municipalities, it's a complicated process and duplicated efforts. | |
| 95 | You need that hybrid model to have a common messaging. One methodology across the Region would be good. I have no idea how we do the property tax billing but it sounds like the best vehicle in declaring and letting people know about the program. In the end, it's to do with the property so it seems like the right place to do it. | |
| 96 | Shared with the Region. | |
| 97 | Shared. Important for the Region to take the lead, we want the same message going to everyone. | |
| 98 | Shared, option 2 | |
| 99 | If the lower tiers are collecting them, who are they appealing to? There needs to be hierarchy. If there is an issue, you go to the Region. This way it is the same for everyone. Otherwise towns will be making different decisions. | The province doesn't provide a lot of detail now. The province is supposed to be forming a municipal working group. |
| 100 | Would have to be a joint effort (option 2) – don't have the staffing to undertake independently. Involving MPAC (Municipal Property Assessment Corporation) could work too. | |
| 101 | I agree – would have to be a joint effort, we don't have the manpower to undertake on their own. | |

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
|-----|---|---|
| 102 | Has the team considered MPAC?, site visits etc.? | Noted as a third option. |
| 103 | Feeling that we'll implement the tax and will have to reverse half. | Vancouver learned a significant amount of communication was needed. |
| 104 | MPAC wouldn't be for free. | |

APPENDIX F: Comments and Questions from Public Meetings

Public Meeting 1

July 7, 2022

All public comments and questions and the corresponding responses from the Project Team.

Table 8—Public Meeting #1 Questions & Comments

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
|----------------|---|---|
| General | | |
| 1 | It's good to see it's a multidisciplinary team working on this project. | |
| 2 | Who has the lead on the project team to present to Council? | We will be putting forward a joint report from finance and community housing to Regional Council. |
| 3 | Markham has already turned down studying a vacant homes tax, can York Region override Markham? | The Region would set the policy but local municipalities have a chance to offer input. We will be hearing from Finance, Planning and Housing staff at the municipalities. |
| 4 | As mentioned earlier, one of the primary objectives of this Vacant Home Tax is to target and reduce vacant homes coming from real estate speculation. I want to first understand what would be the primary reasons real estate speculators would leave their homes vacant? It seems counter-intuitive as it's not generating revenue. | There are numerous reasons. In some cases taking on a tenant isn't something people want or it can be a risk. Therefore it might simply be easier to wait and resell. Selling a home can also be easier if it is vacant. In other cases, the home might be under renovation. |
| 5 | Has the Region considered incentivizing people making their property available as a rental unit rather than taxing everyone who might have legitimate reason for vacancy? If it's risky for owners to rent, have we explored why it's risky as a part of the issue? The tax seems to be trying to | Introducing a VHT is certainly not the only tool the Region is using to increase affordable and attainable housing and we appreciate this perspective. We hope that the survey and our public engagement will help us inform the development of a VHT to act as an incentive. |

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| | 'slap' them for not renting it out, rather than rectifying the core reasons why they don't want to rent out. I used to rent out a property and had bad tenants, and it cost me. | |
| 6 | It's worth noting that one of the causes for the home crisis I believe is due to rent control. Current inflation is 7.7% and rent control is 2.5%. It's not sustainable. | Thank you for your comment. |
| 7 | Is there more information about the further engagement and studies? | <p>There will be three reports— the feasibility study, housing market analysis and the What We Heard Consultation Report.</p> <p>We are currently conducting a public survey and there is an additional public meeting next week. We are planning on conducting additional engagement in the fall and any opportunities will be posted on the project website. We've dropped the link in the chat.</p> |
| 8 | Does the municipality of Markham need to change its mind or would the Region respond unilaterally? | <p>The Region works with the 9 local municipalities on Regional policies.</p> <p>The initial response to the VHT has been positive and staff have received positive responses from stakeholders. The Region is planning and wants to hear from all the local municipalities and we'll be speaking with the housing working group across all municipalities next week.</p> |
| Identification Methods | | |
| 9 | According to Statscan 4% of homes in Markham are vacant. I've had some interaction with staff that say the actual number is lower. Has the work been done to get an accurate net percentage? | <p>The StatsCan numbers represent a single point in time. When we are considering vacancy, and it's something other regions do, is that we look at aggregate water data on an anonymized basis.</p> <p>This could point to homes being vacant, although there could be valid reasons for vacancy or low water use. We look at several sources. Vancouver used utility data and some other methods, and so this</p> |

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| | | could potentially be used as a proxy in York Region. |
| Defining Vacancy | | |
| 10 | What definition of 'vacant' is used in Toronto? | Toronto used 6 months as their benchmark to deem vacancy. |
| 11 | Are seasonal properties/cottages considered vacant? Georgina has many cottage properties used for only 4 months of the year. Are such properties considered vacant? | <p>We don't yet know for York Region. If we decide to implement, we will need to determine how to define vacancy. Many other jurisdictions use 6 months to determine vacancy, so in this case they might be considered vacant.</p> <p>It is important to consider intent. The Region is considering ways to fill homes, not tax cottage owners.</p> |
| 12 | Is it feasible for York Region to implement the VHT in Markham, if Markham council disagrees with a VHT? How would York Region staff identify "vacant" without cooperation from Markham staff, e.g. by law officers? | <p>The Region is able to set the policy and Markham would have to accommodate. We will work with staff to hear their perspective.</p> <p>We are in the process of determining how to identify vacancy but the options would include via community complaint, voluntary self-declaration or mandatory declaration. In all cases, identifying vacant homes is in part coming from the homeowner.</p> |
| 13 | What is the definition of "principal residence" in Toronto or other places? | It's commonly 6 months or more of the year, but there are some other exemptions or considerations. |
| 14 | What if I live in downtown Toronto for the weekday and live in Markham (close to my family) during the weekends? Will that be considered a "vacant home" in Markham? | While this might be considered vacant, this might also be covered under an exemption that could be included. |
| 15 | What about speculators buying vacant land and sitting on it? | There are other municipalities that will tax vacant land, like a vacant homes tax. We can take this comment back to the Province, as vacant land is something that could potentially be brought forward to be included in the legislation. |

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
|-------------------|--|---|
| 16 | Some participants speaking of homes remaining vacation, I would just like to point out that having a second home is a privilege. Before we look into subsidising (incentivizing) instead of taxing, sub would benefit people who already have money to own property. | Thank you for your comment and we appreciate that perspective. |
| 17 | There are at least 6 unoccupied homes, dilapidated homes, in my area. There should be proper maintenance of property as a part of this. | |
| 18 | If the home is occupied by close family members (i.e. parents), will that be considered an exemption of vacant home? | In that case you wouldn't need an exemption, as the home is occupied. It doesn't have to be the homeowner who occupies the house, we just want to disincentivize homeowners from having empty homes and get them back into the market as rental units or to sell and unlock those units. |
| Exemptions | | |
| 19 | Is there a list of exemptions and details thereof that have been executed by other municipalities? | In Toronto, the exemptions include death of the owner, hospital care of owner, legal ownership transferred to someone at arm's length (1 year) and court order that restricts occupancy. In Melbourne, holiday homes used 4 months of the year are exempt. This was also a question asked on the survey, as we want to understand which exemptions residents of the Region would support. |
| 20 | Don't recall seeing seasonal property listed in the survey as an exemption. | It is listed there, but we would welcome a second survey entry if you'd like to redo it (arrangements made to email a new survey). |
| Tax Rate | | |
| 21 | If passed, how often would this tax rate be reassessed? | Most often in other jurisdictions, it's an annual basis. |

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
|----|---|---|
| 22 | Are we going to have an updated MPAC assessment for house value? When housing values are dropping as they are right now, basing tax on old assessments could make a big difference. | Not sure when the reassessment will happen but yes, appreciate this point and it's something we'll look into. |
| 23 | This tax seems reasonable, I would like to see this on the ballot in the fall election so more can be consulted. | Thank you for your comments. |

Public Meeting 2

July 11, 2022

All public comments/questions and responses from the Project Team.

Table 9—Public Meeting #2 Questions & Comments

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
|----------------|--|---|
| General | | |
| 1 | With provincial approval, can the Region implement a tax across all municipalities? | Yes, the Region can impose the tax in all participating municipalities. This is dependent on Council's decision. |
| 2 | For Vancouver and other cities that have a vacant tax, is there evidence that the vacant homes are now occupied by the people that were not able to rent/buy a home previously? Or is the idea of the vacant homes tax purely to generate revenue? | Looking at homes that have been vacant and are now occupied, those homes had higher assessed value. They're not an affordable housing option but instead, they're increasing the housing supply. The idea is to disincentivize speculation. |
| 3 | Has it been discussed that vacant homes aren't a way to get affordable housing into the market? There seems to be a strong argument to allocate funds generated towards affordable homes. | Yes, we recognize that the supply that is typically unlocked from a VHT is not necessarily affordable housing, however there can be a ripple effect when you increase the supply on the market which can support overall affordability. Regional Council did direct that net revenues should be directed to other housing and affordable housing programs. |
| 4 | When Vancouver introduced the VHT, did the housing values change as a result? People's homes are also investments, and it would be a shame to see those assets lose value as a result of this tax. | When Vancouver first implemented, there was a slight decrease in value but it also coincided with other regulations so it's difficult to evaluate. However, it hasn't caused a persistent or negative impact on housing values. |
| 5 | I'm with the Affordable Housing Coalition in York Region and we conducted a survey that asked about a VHT and found that the overwhelming majority, more than 90%, were supportive of a VHT. Do you have a sense from your survey what the support is like from residents? | It's too early to share any survey analysis, as the survey hasn't closed yet but that information will be shared in future reports. We are finding that residents are very engaged and the response is generally positive to date. |
| 6 | I generally support a VHT but I am not sure that releasing more homes will lead to more affordable housing options. I would agree that money has to go to affordable homes. | This is just one tool the Region is looking at, and appreciate your perspective. Council has already endorsed that funding could go toward affordable housing |

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
|----|---|--|
| 7 | If we're talking about real estate speculation, is there a tax on foreign investment/buyers? | Yes, there is a non-resident tax but the Region doesn't see a share of that revenue. |
| 8 | Regarding the affordable housing that the tax revenue will be dedicated to - will inclusionary zoning be considered to make the housing more effective/livable? | Inclusionary zoning is a local municipal tool but we have had some preliminary discussions with local municipal staff to discuss how the Region can take on a role in inclusionary zoning in some form or another. We are exploring different options of using revenue to increase the supply of affordable housing. |
| 9 | I am happy to hear about this tax, because while it doesn't provide affordable housing, vacant homes being filled by those who can afford them might leave other options open. We might see homes available at different tiers and having a domino effect which will support affordability, so that those on the lower tier will be available for them. | Yes and this is one of the potential benefits or outcomes of such a tax. |
| 10 | Would it be possible to join with Habitat for Humanity with the monies collected? | We are exploring various options to use VHT revenue to increase supply of affordable housing. We do provide support and incentives to Habitat for Humanity. |
| 11 | It's good to know that while the province has stood by the implementation of a foreign home buyers tax, the bigger crisis is brought on by domestic speculation and real-estate investment trusts that are financializing housing and putting it out of the reach of low and moderate income individuals and families. | This is a good observation. A VHT may be able to tackle housing issues that the foreign buyers tax could not. |
| 12 | At what point would affordability be reached? Is there a goal that can be reached and is the tax temporary? | This is something we're exploring. There is a drawback when you turn off the tax, which could cause a knock on effect over a number of years where vacant homes become a problem again. |
| 13 | I like that the revenues are aimed at providing funds for affordable housing. There's a lack of housing, available properties, in general. | |
| | There needs to be consideration to enforce the existing property standard for both rentals and vacant houses. I'm noticing some vacant properties that are run down in my neighbourhood. | Yes, keeping top property standards would not be a part of the VHT and there are some regulations but this is something to consider. |

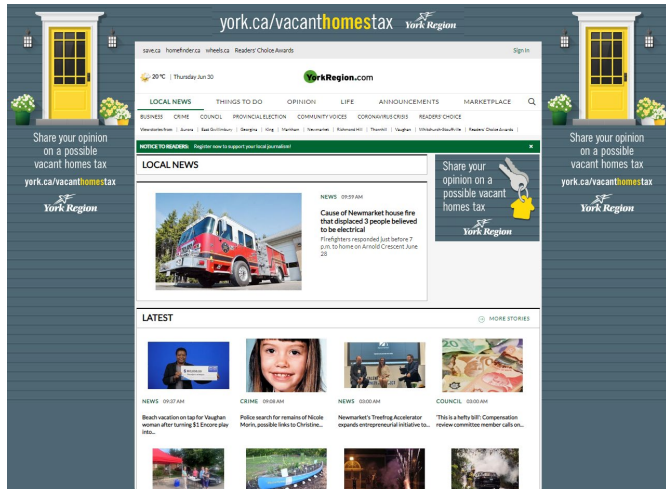
| # | Question/Comment | Response |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| | Only issue with lack of availability is that the homes that are going to be taxed won't be included in the inventory as they would be out of the range for most renters. | |
| Identification Methods | | |
| 14 | Is the Region considering using utility records in the audit process? | Privacy and data related concerns make using utility records a challenge. We are still exploring at this stage and looking at other options. |
| Defining Vacancy | | |
| 15 | How does the identification process of vacant homes work? | There are a few different options. One is that owners make a self declaration which can be voluntary or mandated. There can also be a tip line for complaints and tools for auditing and enforcement, like spot checks based on past declarations. A penalty could apply if it turned out a homeowner was not truthful. |
| Exemptions | | |
| 17 | How will exemption apply if the tax is being implemented from Q2 instead of the beginning of the year? | These are potential exemptions, the bylaw and plan implementation will come following approval from Council in September. |
| 18 | What about if one renter is leaving? If you completed some major maintenance or renovation, would you risk being taxed with a VHT? | Other jurisdictions require a home to be vacant for 6 months, so it sounds like this wouldn't apply. However, it is important to remember that the VHT is to disincentivize speculation, not punish people who want to rent their property out. This is a great example of exemptions to be considered in the bylaw. |
| 19 | Would there be a maximum number of months or years whereby a home can be exempt from the tax? For example, there is a house in my neighbourhood that had a fire several years ago (more than 5) and has a safety fence around it and windows and doors are boarded. I don't know why it has stayed that way for so long. | Typically it's an exemption for one year for the death of a family, one year of sale and some limits on renovations. |

| # | Question/Comment | Response |
|-----------------|--|---|
| 20 | How will the law protect people who fall into grey zones, who are trying to rent out their home, but no one wants to rent their home? | There isn't an explicit way to protect against that but we appreciate the perspective. |
| Tax Rate | | |
| 21 | As a part of the feasibility study, is the Region looking at which tax rate would be most effective at disincentivizing or changing behaviour? | Yes, we're considering various tax rates and seeking input. Generally other jurisdictions have implemented a 1% to 2% tax and in many cases that has been successful in changing behaviour. Vancouver saw a 25% reduction in vacant homes as a result of the VHT. |

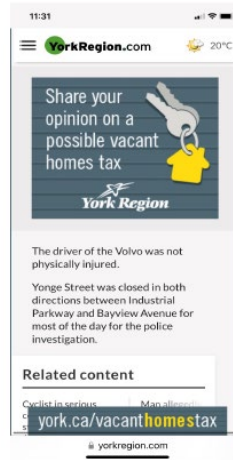
VACANT HOMES TAX - EXAMPLES OF MEDIA OUTREACH

York Region Media Group (yorkregion.com) – June 30 - Local News

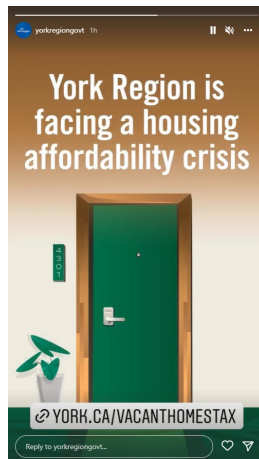
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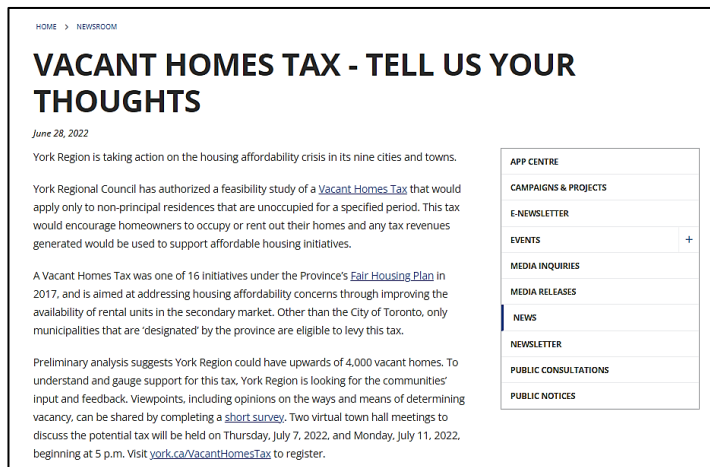
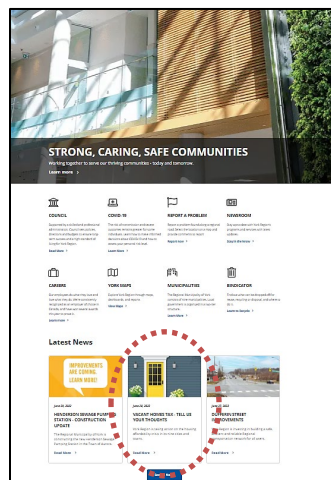
Mobile



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York.ca and Newsroom



From: [McPhail, Roxanne](#) on behalf of [Regional Clerk](#)
Subject: Regional Council Decision - York Region Climate Change Action Plan
Date: October 3, 2022 3:14:05 PM

CAUTION: This email originated outside of the Town of Newmarket. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and trusted content.

On September 29, 2022 Regional Council made the following decision:

1. Council approve the 2022 York Region Climate Change Action Plan (Attachment 1).
2. The Regional Clerk circulate this report and the Climate Change Action Plan to the Clerks of the local municipalities, Lake Simcoe and Toronto and Region Conservation Authorities, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks.

The original staff report is available for your information at the following link: [York Region Climate Change Action Plan Report](#)

Please contact Teresa Cline, Manager Policy and Environment, Long Range Planning at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71591 or Wendy Kemp, Director, Infrastructure Asset Management at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 75141 if you have any questions with respect to this matter.

Regards,

Christopher Raynor ([he/him](#)) | Regional Clerk, Regional Clerk's Office, Corporate Services Department

The Regional Municipality of York | 17250 Yonge Street | Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1
O: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71300 | christopher.raynor@york.ca | york.ca

Our Mission: **Working together to serve our thriving communities – today and tomorrow**

YORK REGION

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN



SEPTEMBER 2022



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the land we are meeting on today is located on the traditional territory of many Indigenous peoples such as 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. This land is now home to many diverse Indigenous peoples. York Region is located within the boundaries of the Nanfan Treaty, Treaty 13 and the Williams Treaties. There are also other land claims and treaty rights involving portions of York Region that have not been resolved. The Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation is a Williams Treaty First Nation and the closest First Nation community to York Region.





Mayor
Frank Scarpitti
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Don Hamilton
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Jack Heath
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Joe Li
City of Markham



Regional Councillor
Jim Jones
City of Markham



Mayor
David West
City of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor
Joe DiPaola
City of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor
Carmine Perrelli
City of Richmond Hill



Mayor
Maurizio Bevilacqua
City of Vaughan



Chairman & CEO
Wayne Emmerson

Climate change is a critical issue requiring the participation of residents, businesses and governments to ensure a sustainable future. Climate change has both immediate and long-lasting impacts on our infrastructure, health care, human services, emergency services, natural systems and the economy. Changes to the climate are also impacting how we deliver programs and plan for the future of our communities.

York Regional Council recognizes the importance of addressing climate change and has long been committed to taking action to mitigate the impacts and improve climate resiliency. Building sustainable communities is a key priority of our 2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan, with a focus on protecting and sustaining the natural and built environment to reduce our ecological impact.

Through current actions, York Region is reducing greenhouse gas emissions, piloting electric buses and integrating climate change considerations into infrastructure design and asset management.

Aligned with principles of sustainable urban development, this plan addresses climate mitigation and adaptation from a corporate and community perspective. By working with all levels of government and other key stakeholders we are providing benefits to residents and businesses to create sustainable communities that continue to thrive under changing climate conditions.



Mayor
John Taylor
Town of Newmarket



Regional Councillor
Mario Ferri
City of Vaughan

**A Message from
York Region Chairman
and CEO and Members of
Regional Council**



Regional Councillor
Tom Vegh
Town of Newmarket



Regional Councillor
Gino Rosati
City of Vaughan



Regional Councillor
Linda Jackson
City of Vaughan



Mayor
Margaret Quirk
Town of Georgina



Regional Councillor
Robert Grossi
Town of Georgina



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

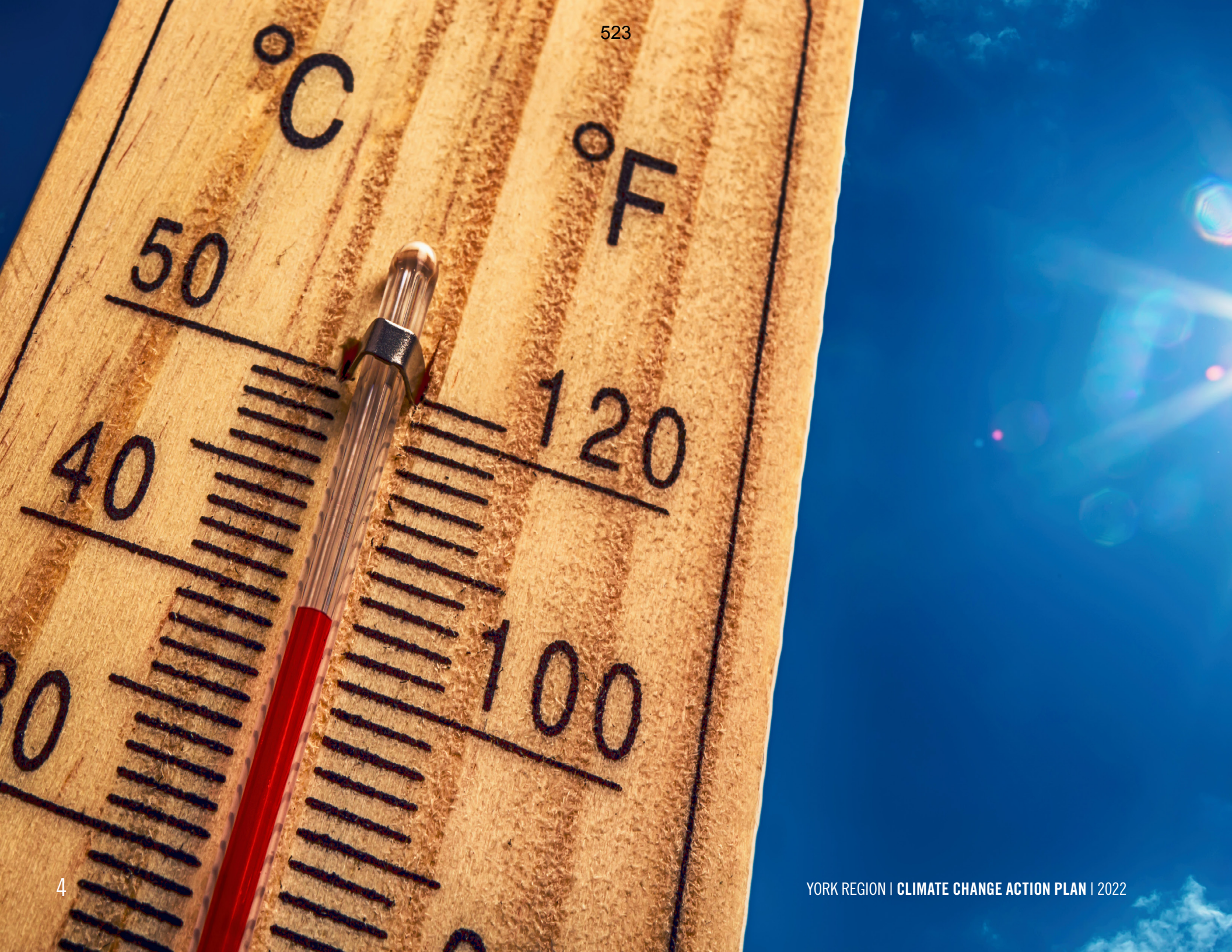


TABLE of CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | 2 |
| A MESSAGE FROM YORK REGION CHAIRMAN AND CEO AND MEMBERS OF REGIONAL COUNCIL | 3 |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS..... | 5 |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 7 |
| CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON YORK REGION..... | 9 |
| CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN..... | 14 |
| PRIORITY ACTION AREA 1: RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE | 19 |
| COMMUNITY RESILIENCY ACTIONS: | 19 |
| ROBUST INFRASTRUCTURE ACTIONS: | 21 |
| PRIORITY ACTION AREA 2: LOW CARBON LIVING | 23 |
| REDUCING EMISSIONS ACTIONS: | 23 |
| FOOD SYSTEMS ACTIONS: | 25 |
| CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACTIONS: | 26 |
| PRIORITY ACTION AREA 3: SUPPORTING AN EQUITABLE TRANSITION | 27 |
| PREPARED AND RESPONSIVE YORK REGION ACTIONS: | 27 |
| LOW CARBON ECONOMY ACTIONS: | 29 |
| SUPPORTING RESILIENCE ACTIONS: | 31 |
| NEXT STEPS | 33 |
| APPENDICES | 35 |
| DEFINITIONS..... | 35 |
| REFERENCES | 37 |

WE ARE COMMITTED TO DELIVERING QUALITY SERVICES

- Children's Services
- Court Services
- Economic Development
- Forestry
- Housing Services
- Long-Term Care
- Paramedic Services
- Planning
- Police Services
- Public Health
- Regional Roads
- Social Assistance
- Transit
- Waste Management
- Water

Core Services: Legislated services provided directly to the public to help maintain a high quality of life for York Region residents.

**Comprised of
9
Municipalities**



Total population estimate
1,228,180
(as of December 31, 2021)

Source: York Region, Corporate Services, Long Range Planning Branch, based on Statistics Canada data and CMHC Housing completion data.

WHAT DOES YORK REGION DO?

York Region offers 15 core services from children's services to water and wastewater infrastructure. As an upper tier municipality, York Region works through various plans and processes to ensure delivery of high quality programs and services to meet the evolving needs of our communities.

INTRODUCTION

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change determined the need for urgent action to reduce carbon emissions by 2030 to avoid catastrophic climate change impacts. The need for urgent action is equally significant for Canada, Ontario¹ and York Region. Canada's climate is projected to warm at twice the global rate and this accelerated pace of warming is anticipated regardless of the emissions scenario resulting from human activity.²

York Region has already experienced effects of climate change with higher average temperatures, increased extreme heat and rainfall and more extreme weather events.³

As a result of this warming, York Region has experienced the following impacts:

- › Blacklegged ticks that can spread Lyme Disease are increasing in York Region as a result of warmer temperatures⁴
- › Extended season for road maintenance as a result of less predictable patterns for snow and ice storms
- › Heat island effect in areas of increased urbanization
- › Flooding as a result of extreme rain events^{5,6}
- › Power outages and tree loss as a result of ice storms
- › Increased capacity needs of wastewater infrastructure to adapt to more extreme weather events

These and other impacts are expected to increase in frequency with further warming of our climate.



York Region recognizes the need to address climate mitigation and adaptation from both corporate and community perspectives. This commitment is identified in the York Region Official Plan and Vision. Initial efforts to address climate change occurred through implementing the Sustainability Strategy in 2007 and Corporate Clean Air Strategy in 2008.

The York Region Climate Change Action Plan (Action Plan) builds upon foundational work and key policies that have guided climate-related action at York Region. Through this Action Plan, York Region continues to expand the use of a climate change lens on its own activities and inspires others to do the same. The Action Plan:

- › Outlines projected impacts of climate change on York Region
- › Describes and prioritizes actions needed in three priority areas:
 - Resilient Communities and Infrastructure,
 - Low Carbon Living, and
 - Supporting an Equitable Transition
- › Identifies the role York Region will play in implementing actions, and
- › Provides a framework for all levels of government, businesses and communities to work together

The intent of these actions is to maintain residents' and workers' quality of life, minimize disruptions to the natural environment, avoid significant costs over the coming decades and to ensure communities in York Region continue to thrive under changing climate conditions.



CLIMATE CHANGE and its POTENTIAL IMPACTS on YORK REGION

CLIMATE CHANGE is HERE

Climate change occurs when long-term weather patterns are altered through natural or human causes. Global warming, a rise in the average global temperature, is one aspect of climate change.

Scientific evidence shows human activity is a major contributor to climate change. Burning fossil fuels releases carbon dioxide and other heat-retaining gases into the atmosphere. The build up of these gases creates a “greenhouse” effect that raises temperatures globally and has other profound climatic effects.⁷

Canada’s climate has warmed and will continue to warm in the future, driven by human influence. Canada’s Changing Climate Report identifies Canada’s climate has been and is projected to continue warming at twice the global rate.² Effects of widespread warming are evident in many parts of Canada and are projected to intensify in the future.²

Any benefits resulting from climate change, such as longer growing seasons and increased agricultural yields, will be outweighed by long-term changes in York Region’s climate from both warming and more extreme weather events. Impacts from the changing climate have already begun and are expected to continue:

- › According to data from Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, average annual air temperature in northern York Region has increased by 1.1 °C over the last 30+ years, starting in the 1980s
- › Over the last 30+ years, southern Ontario, including York Region, saw more frequent and powerful rain and snowstorms, greater temperature volatility and more episodes of extreme heat.⁵ One example of a dangerous storm includes a thunderstorm on May 21, 2022, which resulted in downed trees, hydro lines, and power outages. York region spent resources working with municipal partners to resume services and clean up communities.^{8,9}
- › On June 23, 2017, Jan 11, 2020 and September 22, 2021, more than 60 mm of rain fell in less than 12 hours, causing overflows of sewage and basement flooding, requiring significant operational efforts to address.^{5,6}
- › In December 2013, an ice storm across eastern North America resulted in widespread and prolonged power outages and 27 deaths. York Region spent \$20 million in clean-up costs. Subsequent ice storms in March 2016 and April 2018 were less severe but still required municipal resources to clean up communities.



There are significant benefits to acting quickly to prepare for climate change including: avoiding future damages and associated costs, new jobs through transition to a low-carbon economy, improved air quality by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and delivering co-benefits to vulnerable populations and businesses.

CLIMATE will CONTINUE to CHANGE

Climate-related impacts under high and low-emission scenarios project two very different futures for Canada.² Scenarios with substantial and rapid warming illustrate the effects that continued increases in greenhouse gas emissions will have in Canada. Limited warming will only occur if Canada and the rest of the world substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions meaning everyone has a role to play.

Climate change projections³ predict that by 2050, if present trends continue, York Region could expect to experience:

- › An increase in annual mean temperature by approximately 3.3°C
- › A longer growing season by as much as 30 days
- › A 59+ mm increase in annual average precipitation with more precipitation occurring in the winter months
- › More than three times as many days above 30°C (34.4 days a year versus the current 9.8) and several days that exceed 40°C annually
- › More frequent rain, hail, freezing rain and snowstorms
- › A 33% increase in the frequency of heavy precipitation



ASSESSING FUTURE IMPACTS

Impacts of climate change could be costly. Residents and businesses could face increased costs of recovery from more frequent power outages and damage to property caused by flooding, hail, ice, snow and wind.

Transportation networks may face additional challenges due to road closures or difficult driving conditions. Farmers may need to adjust their operations as some crops may no longer be grown effectively in York Region.

Rising temperatures may negatively impact health through more extreme heat events and the spread of mosquitoes and ticks which may carry disease.

Tourism, particularly ice fishing on Lake Simcoe, may suffer due to warmer winters and less ice cover.

POSSIBLE FUTURE IMPACTS of CLIMATE CHANGE

WHAT are the RISKS for YORK REGION?
IF WE DON'T ACT NOW, the COSTS and CONSEQUENCES WILL GROW

HEALTH

HEALTH IMPACTS from
HEAT EXPOSURE
and SUMMER AIR
POLLUTION



CHANGES in
ILLNESSES CARRIED
by TICKS and MOSQUITOS



RISK of INJURY and PROPERTY DAMAGE
from EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

ENVIRONMENT

IMPACTS on FORESTS
from INSECTS,
DISEASE and FIRE



LOSS of AQUATIC and
TERRESTRIAL HABITAT



INCREASED SUMMER DROUGHT STRESS

ECONOMY

INCREASED
ENERGY USE

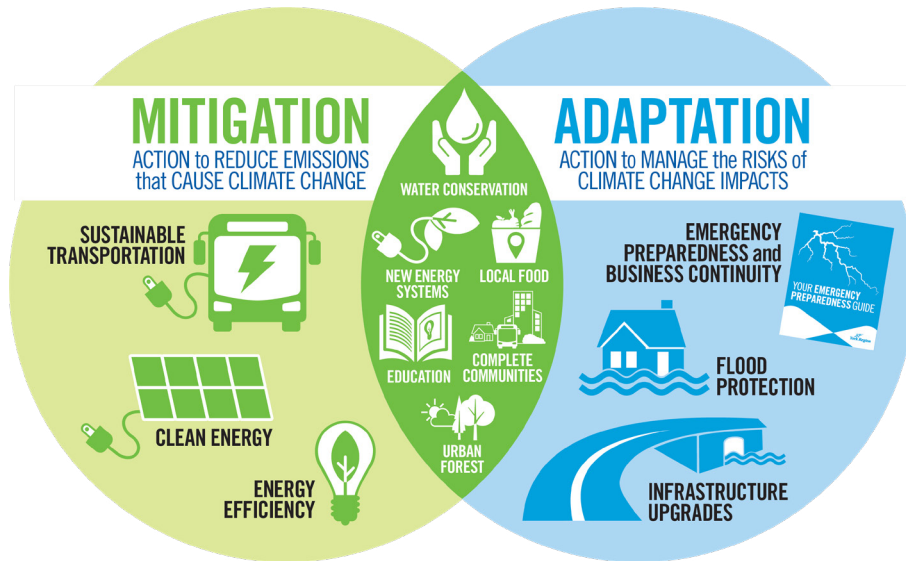


CHANGES to
the FOOD SYSTEM



GREATER RISKS to HOMES, BUSINESSES
and INFRASTRUCTURE





BRINGING TOGETHER MITIGATION and ADAPTATION

Addressing climate change calls for two approaches: mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation refers to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to slow human-induced global warming. Even with substantial mitigation efforts, York Region, will continue to feel and need to adapt to climate change impacts. Adaptation refers to taking action to reduce negative impacts associated with existing and future climate change.

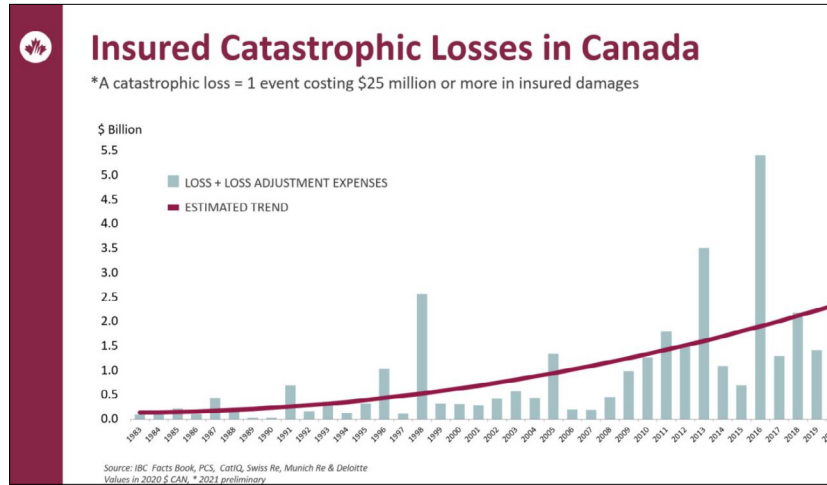
Integrating efforts to mitigate and adapt is the most effective way to manage climate change risks. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change suggested this approach as an efficient way of making communities more resilient over the long-term by building both types of action into strategies, plans and policies. The graphic gives examples of actions related to mitigation, adaptation, or both.

Low impact development provides a good example of how adaptation and mitigation benefits can be achieved at the same time. In low impact development, natural processes and landscaping are used to manage stormwater and the greenery stores carbon providing mitigation benefits.

In addition to being more cost-effective, integration of mitigation and adaptation makes actions more attractive to stakeholders by providing opportunities to address multiple priorities or achieve multiple co-benefits and may increase eligibility for federal and provincial funding opportunities.



ACTING NOW to AVOID HIGHER COSTS LATER



This graph from the Insurance Bureau of Canada shows rising expenses resulting from natural disasters occurring more frequently, at least in part due to climate change.¹⁰ Large scale annual losses due to natural disasters are becoming increasingly commonplace, and in recent years, expenses often exceed \$1 billion CAD per year.¹⁰ In 2021, severe weather events in Canada caused insured losses of \$2.1 billion.¹⁰ The cost of responding to extreme weather events is estimated to range from 5% to 25% of Canada's gross domestic product.¹¹

The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy estimates that, at a national level, the economic costs of failing to address climate change risks could be between \$21 and \$43 billion a year by 2050. Ontario would incur the largest absolute economic impact.¹¹

Building on existing actions and making new investments to give York Region greater climate change resiliency will help minimize the high costs and severe impacts of inaction.

Research and real-world experience show the benefits of being proactive:

- › The Round Table Report concluded that “adapting to climate change is both possible and cost-effective,” citing return on investment as great as 1:38 for some adaptation actions (that is, every \$1 invested now results in \$38 of savings later)
- › The Canadian Federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund is a \$2-billion, 10-year program to help communities build infrastructure needed to better withstand natural hazards such as floods, wildfires, earthquakes and droughts. To qualify, proposed projects must show an expected return on investment ratio of more than 2:1. York Region has already applied to and received funding through this program.

WORKING TOGETHER is VITAL

Regional and local municipal governments are leading the way to address climate change in Canada through municipal policy and citizen engagement. Strategic partnerships and collaboration around climate change are essential to improving community resiliency. York Region is positioned to facilitate co-ordinated and co-operative action on many fronts that bring benefits to households and businesses, create more sustainable lifestyles and maintain a thriving community.

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

HOW the PLAN was DEVELOPED

York Region has undertaken the following to support development and implementation of the Action Plan:

- › Commissioned Regional climate projections
- › Conducted a corporate risk scan to identify the most likely and severe risks the Region faces from climate change under current forecasts. This scan identified the following priority risks:
 - Significant costs resulting from damage to Regional buildings, roads, wastewater systems, street trees and other infrastructure
 - More disruptions to services, including communications, energy, water and wastewater, and transportation
 - Higher demand for emergency shelter, housing, medical and social supports, particularly for vulnerable populations
- Greater and more complex demands on emergency services
- › Engaged staff across the corporation to identify emerging climate-related initiatives and concerns, helping to determine priorities for corporate actions in the Action Plan
- › Engaged local municipal staff to identify opportunities for alignment and partnership on climate initiatives
- › Hosted a community climate change workshop to discuss potential impacts of climate change with community stakeholders, obtain feedback on impacts being felt on the ground, and seek input into roles, responsibilities and actions at the community-wide scale
- › Updated the Corporate Energy and Conservation Demand Management Plan to identify actions to reduce corporate emissions in alignment with Vision
- › Launched an engagement campaign to obtain feedback on the draft Action Plan from the public, local municipalities, Indigenous communities, conservation authorities and stakeholders, helping to determine updates to the March 2020 draft version of the Action Plan

Community greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets will be identified, through the York Region Energy and Emissions Plan, and aligned with provincial and federal targets and Vision.

The York Region Community Energy and Emissions Plan will be aligned with, and support, existing municipal energy plans and the Regional Official Plan.





Photo courtesy of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

PLAN BUILDS on a STRONG FOUNDATION

York Region Council has shown leadership in addressing climate change by endorsing the Sustainability Strategy in 2007 and Corporate Clean Air Strategy in 2008. Council's commitment is further outlined in the York Region Official Plan and Vision.

This Action Plan builds on previous work and existing Regional directions and initiatives:

- › **Land use planning.** Decisions in this area have enormous impact on how new and existing communities will manage climate change impacts. York Region is already taking action through its Official Plan to ensure more complete communities are built, which offer a wealth of benefits for climate change mitigation and adaptation. These include reduced reliance on automobiles, applying low impact design approaches, incorporating trees and green spaces and fostering a stronger sense of community. The award-winning New Communities Guidelines support implementation of the Official Plan in these areas. York Region has demonstrated leadership by piloting the draft Sustainable Building Policy building on experience with green building programs such as LEED and the Living Building Challenge.
- › **Infrastructure and asset management.** The Region relies on more than 19 billion worth of assets to deliver important services such as water and wastewater, waste management, transit and roads, often in partnership with local municipalities. Several programs are in place to plan and manage Regional infrastructure, including master plans for transportation, water and wastewater, and waste management, a corporate asset management plan, business continuity plans and a climate change risk assessment (for transportation and water and wastewater). York Region increasingly recognizes the key role green infrastructure plays in both mitigating and adapting to climate change. and is looking at asset management, including the update to the Green Infrastructure Asset Management Plan, and planning practices through a climate change lens



- › **Natural heritage and forestry.** Natural systems help to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Ecosystem-based approaches provide multiple benefits, including carbon sequestration, regulating climate, improved air quality and water storage, and enhanced well-being of residents and workers. They provide these benefits in very cost-effective ways. York Region has demonstrated a commitment to protection, enhancement and restoration of green spaces. The Region has put in place forward-thinking programs for forest management, urban forestry, green infrastructure asset management, and land securement preserving and restoring natural areas.
- › **Emergency management programs and plans.** York Region and its municipal partners work together on emergency management programs and plans. Annual Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment is undertaken to identify significant threats and considers climate trends and future climate projections as part of this process.
- › **Enterprise risk management.** Corporately, York Region has an Enterprise Risk Management practice that facilitates the identification of potential risks that could impact the services York Region delivers from an operational and strategic perspective. Recognizing climate change as a strategic risk, York Region's Enterprise Risk Management practice considers climate trends and future climate projections as part of this process.

- › **Waste management.** Circular economy has the potential to increase resilience to climate change by extending the life of materials and products and decreasing dependence on raw materials, which allows for greater adaptability and flexibility. As an economic system focused on elimination of waste and continual use of resources, the circular economy aims to:
 - Reduce waste and the negative environmental impacts associated with waste;
 - Reuse, repair, repurpose, and recycle used products and packaging;
 - Maximize capacity and efficiency of waste processing technologies
 - Improve environmental, economic, and social outcomes; and
 - Prioritize access over ownership where consumers collaboratively share, use, and focus on what the product provides rather than the product itself

Through the SM4RT Living Plan, York Region and its local partners continue to show leadership by pursuing waste reduction targets through innovating and inspiring behaviour change resulting in less waste. In particular, the Region has created a commitment to reduce waste through a circular economy system.



- › **Economic development.** Services provided by the Region include market intelligence and innovation, business investment, small business start-up, export development, location selection assistance, local business connections and providing access to government funding programs.

With good farmland and proximity to large urban centres, the Region boasts a food system that extends from growing and harvesting crops and livestock to processing and transporting food to consumers. York Region is committed to protecting its agricultural sector and local food opportunities, and its Agriculture and Agri-food Strategy supports innovation in the agricultural sector, including improved farming practices and greater use of technology. Applying a climate change lens to this strategy is increasingly important as farmers feel the impacts of a longer growing season, drought, less winter protection and more extreme weather.

- › **Community supports.** Often in partnership with others, York Region provides community supports to those in need through programs for housing, public health, paramedic services, childcare and children's services, and services for seniors, including a Seniors Strategy.

Climate change can exacerbate challenges for vulnerable residents and may result in increased need for services and supports.

- › **Energy management.** The Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan, updated in 2019, aims to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions under York Region's control and influence. A particular focus is transit and corporate fleet operations, which account for more than 60% of York Region's total emissions. Other sources include energy needed for water and wastewater systems and to heat Regional buildings. The goal of the plan is to reduce emissions by approximately 60,000 tonnes a year by 2051 compared to 2014. The plan sets a goal of net-zero corporate greenhouse gas emissions by 2051.

This Action Plan continues to integrate and build on these existing initiatives.



HOW this ACTION PLAN will be IMPLEMENTED

The Action Plan identifies actions across a range of areas identified as priorities from a climate change perspective. Actions were prioritized by building on existing programs and services, and leveraging existing partnership and funding opportunities. Each action identifies:

- **York Region's Role** as either the Lead in implementing the action or as a Partner supporting implementation of the action.
- **Potential Partners** York Region might work with to implement the action. This is not an exhaustive list and identification of potential partners does not obligate the Region or Potential Partners to a partnership or work associated with an action. Any future roles will be determined collaboratively.
- **Action Type** indicating whether the action is aimed at mitigating climate change impacts (Mitigation), adapting in preparation for change (Adaptation), or both.
- **Action Area** indicating whether the action influences York Region's operation (Corporate), has a larger community-scale impact (Community), or both.
- **Identified Tasks** to be initiated and/or linked into existing programs over the next five years, with anticipated start and end dates.

OUTCOMES and PRIORITY ACTION AREAS

This plan aims to achieve the following **outcomes**:

- › **Reduce Greenhouse gas emissions** with a long-term goal of becoming a net-zero Region by 2050
- › **Increase resilience and capacity of the Region** to withstand and respond to current and future climate events

Achieving the outcomes involves three **Priority Action Areas**:

- › **Resilient Communities and Infrastructure**
- › **Low Carbon Living**
- › **Supporting an Equitable Transition**

These Priority Action Areas align with York Region's Vision to achieve strong, caring, safe communities through focus on: Economic Vitality, Healthy Communities, Sustainable Environment and Good Government.

Each Priority Action Area has several actions associated with it, as outlined in the following sections.

PRIORITY ACTION AREA 1: RESILIENT COMMUNITIES and INFRASTRUCTURE

The following priority action area supports increasing capacity to adapt. The Region will continue to guide and encourage the creation of complete communities. The Region will also work to ensure infrastructure systems are built and maintained for both the current and future climate.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY ACTIONS:

| ACTION 1 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|--|------------------|--|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Integrate climate change considerations into existing and new municipal planning and development tools (e.g. climate change by-laws, development guidelines) | Lead | Local Municipalities and Development Industry | Adaptation and Mitigation | Community |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Ensure climate change policies are integrated into local Official Plans | | | Underway | 2023 |
| Continue to work with local municipalities to support sustainable development programs | | | Underway | On-going |
| Support and advocate for low carbon energy and net-zero emissions by 2050 | | | Underway | On-going |
| Identify financial and land use planning tools to support regional and local Community Energy Plans | | | 2023 | 2025 |
| Assess the feasibility of identifying community resiliency improvement areas in Official Plans | | | 2024 | 2025 |
| ACTION 2 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
| Conduct a vulnerability and ecosystem services assessment on natural systems and integrate adaptive and mitigative actions into watershed planning | Partner | Local Municipalities, Conservation Authorities and Provincial Government | Adaptation | Community |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Assess the vulnerability of natural systems to the impacts of climate change | | | 2024 | 2025 |
| Identify the ecosystem services natural systems provide that mitigate the impacts of climate change | | | 2024 | 2025 |
| Explore opportunities to conduct the vulnerability assessment in partnership with Conservation Authorities and local municipalities | | | 2024 | 2025 |
| Identify actions to mitigate the impacts of climate change and integrate these actions into watershed plans and related strategies. | | | 2025 | 2026 |

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY ACTIONS:

| ACTION 3 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|--|------------------|---|------------------------|----------------------|
| Adapt and respond to introduction, establishment, and migration of invasive species | Partner | Local Municipalities, Conservation Authorities, Provincial Government, First Nations and Indigenous Communities | Adaptation | Community |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Develop an internal Invasive Species Program Plan | | | Underway | 2022 |
| Implement the Invasive Species Program Plan to monitor and manage impacts of current and future invasive species | | | Underway | On-going |
| Trial additional street tree species to improve resiliency to invasive species | | | Underway | On-going |
| Coordinate an Invasive Species Technical Working Group | | | Underway | On-going |
| Complete the York Region Forest Studies including an assessment of the prevalence of invasive species, in partnership with local municipalities and Conservation Authorities | | | Underway | On-going |

| ACTION 4 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|---|------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| Enhance building energy and water performance in new and existing buildings through performance targets and benchmarking within the community | Partner | Local Municipalities, Utility Companies, Businesses and Development Industry | Mitigation | Community |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Continue to work with local municipalities to standardize sustainable building requirements across York Region | | | Underway | 2025 |
| Support local municipalities in developing and implementing building retrofit programs. | | | Underway | On-going |
| Support funding applications that support research, education or training to advance sustainable building guidance or practices | | | Underway | On-going |
| Continue to advocate at the federal and provincial level for energy efficiency codes to mandate net-zero construction | | | Underway | On-going |
| Demonstrate York Region's leadership and share lessons learned through implementation of sustainable building policies and adaptation plans | | | Underway | On-going |
| Collaboratively produce a guideline for sustainable building incentive programs | | | 2023 | 2025 |



ROBUST INFRASTRUCTURE ACTIONS:

| ACTION 5 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|--|------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| Adopt corporate emission reduction targets and guidelines for low-carbon infrastructure construction | Lead | Local Municipalities, Industry Associations and Conservation Authorities | Mitigation | Corporate |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Complete the draft Sustainable Building Policy | | | Completed | 2025 |
| Pilot the Sustainable Building Policy by applying it to new construction projects | | | Underway | 2026 |
| Continue to reduce the carbon footprint of pavement infrastructure through the pavement preservation lifecycle strategy and use of lower-carbon asphalt | | | Underway | On-going |
| Conduct a study to evaluate approaches to quantify lifecycle GHG emissions and reduction opportunities for water and wastewater infrastructure | | | 2023 | 2024 |
| Establish report templates to integrate GHG reduction and climate change mitigation considerations into the assessment, design and construction of water and wastewater infrastructure | | | 2023 | 2024 |
| Develop and implement decision-making criteria to help decision makers regularly consider low emission alternatives in construction projects | | | 2023 | 2025 |
| Establish an annual reporting process for infrastructure design and construction projects that incorporate GHG reduction opportunities | | | 2025 | 2026 |
| Develop low-carbon construction practices for all road construction works | | | 2025 | 2026 |

ROBUST INFRASTRUCTURE ACTIONS:

| ACTION 6 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|---|------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Undertake climate change vulnerability and risk assessments on all Regional infrastructure, systems and assets using a common methodology | Lead | Local Municipalities, Development Industry, and Conservation Authorities | Adaptation | Community and Corporate |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Continue to incorporate adaptive design into new and upgraded Regional infrastructure such as water, waste water, roads and facilities | | | Underway | On-going |
| Continue to leverage available asset management grants | | | Underway | On-going |
| Establish data governance for maintenance and on-going data operations, centralize geospatial infrastructure data and incorporate climate data into infrastructure mapping | | | Underway | TBD |
| Develop and apply an infrastructure risk-criteria, based on level of service, for Regional infrastructure and identify high risk assets, asset systems and infrastructure intense areas | | | Q2 2023 | 2025 |
| Conduct research on asset specific adaptation strategies informing updates to operational procedures and business planning | | | Q3 2023 | 2025 |

| ACTION 7 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|--|------------------|---|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Prioritize infrastructure and asset repairs in climate vulnerable areas | Lead | Local Municipalities, Conservation Authorities and Community Agencies | Adaptation | Community and Corporate |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Update the Corporate Asset Management Strategy and Policy to include climate change considerations | | | Underway | 2024 |
| Assess interdependency and cascading impacts between regional and local infrastructure systems, utilities, and natural systems to identify areas of high vulnerability | | | 2023 | 2024 |
| Incorporate the Regional Public Works Commissioners of Ontario (RPWCO) Climate Resilience Roadmap approach into asset repair prioritization | | | 2023 | 2024 |
| Adjust service area asset management plans to prioritize renewal and repair in areas of high vulnerability | | | 2024 | 2026 |

PRIORITY ACTION AREA 2: LOW CARBON LIVING

Reduced greenhouse gas emissions are critical to mitigating climate change, and also offer near-term benefits to the Region and its residents and workers, like improving local air quality.

Low-carbon living also relies on changing attitudes about how we purchase, use and dispose of consumer goods, and food.

While Regional actions are important, the Action Plan recognizes actions by individual residents, workers and business also needed to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions and zero waste by 2050.

Actions below will help support and accelerate the move to reduced carbon emissions in the way we live, work and play.

REDUCING EMISSIONS ACTIONS:

| ACTION 8 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|---|------------------|---|------------------------|----------------------|
| Establish community-wide greenhouse gas emission reduction targets | Lead | Local Municipalities, Community Stakeholders, Businesses and Development Industry | Mitigation | Community |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Continue to engage with the Local Municipal Climate Change Working Group to collaborate on common actions | | | Underway | On-going |
| Engage with internal and external stakeholders to prioritize proposed community actions and interim targets | | | 2023 | 2024 |
| Review the York Region Official Plan to determine if policy updates are required to implement the Community Energy and Emissions Plan | | | 2024 | 2025 |
| Work with local municipalities to develop or update Municipal Energy Plans to align with targets set in the Community Energy and Emissions Plan | | | 2024 | 2026 |



543

REDUCING EMISSIONS ACTIONS:

| ACTION 9 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|---|------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Increase use of more sustainable modes of transportation, such as walking, cycling and transit, and community adoption of electric and low-emissions vehicles | Lead/Partner | Local Municipalities, Provincial Government and Businesses | Mitigation | Community and Corporate |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Continue sustainable mobility programs and initiatives including expansion of cycling and walking routes, active transportation projects, and alternative commuting programs. | | | Underway | On-going |
| Continue Regional fleet electrification and installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure | | | Underway | On-going |
| Continue to adopt the use of pavement preservation to extend the lifecycle of pavement assets and track greenhouse gas emissions reduction throughout the lifecycle of the pavement program | | | Underway | On-going |
| Review and update the Roads Climate Change Action Plan to ensure alignment with current Regional plans and existing climate change work | | | January 2023 | 2025 |
| Implement a series of climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives under the Implement the Transportation Master Plan Program regarding fiscal and environmental sustainability | | | January 2023 | 2027 |



FOOD SYSTEMS ACTIONS:

| ACTION 10 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|---|------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| Promote a sustainable and local resilient food system | Lead/Partner | York Region Federation of Agriculture, Agriculture Industry, York Region Food Network, Local Municipalities, Business Improvement Areas, Chambers of Commerce and Conservation Authorities | Adaptation | Community |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Continue to implement organic waste reduction and resource recovery actions from the SM4RT Living Plan | | | Underway | On-going |
| Support and promote locally grown food and agricultural products | | | Underway | On-going |
| Update the Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy to include climate change elements | | | 2023 | 2024 |
| Implement the Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy 2.0 | | | 2024 | 2027 |
| Work with industry, experts, and community partners to identify climate change impacts to the agricultural and food system including critical supportive infrastructure for food storage and distribution | | | 2024 | On-going |
| Support business-to-business partnerships across the food value chain to reduce or re-purpose food waste locally to create circular food economy | | | 2025 | On-going |
| Provide education and awareness support for food and farming organizations including local farm groups, agri-tourism, start-up businesses, farm-gate sales, food incubators and accelerator hubs | | | 2025 | On-going |

CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACTIONS:

| ACTION 11 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|---|------------------|---|------------------------|----------------------|
| Support waste prevention and circular economy practices in York Region | Lead/Partner | Local municipalities, Conservation Authorities, Academic Institutions, Community Stakeholders, Businesses and Residents | Mitigation | Community |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Provide funding through the Circular Economy Initiatives Fund to non-profit community organizations for programming that reduces waste or advances the circular economy | | | Underway | 2024 |
| Develop single use item/plastics reduction programming and education campaigns for businesses and the community | | | Underway | 2024 |
| Establish a circular economy working group to guide external action areas such as food system sustainability, reuse and sharing, and community capacity building | | | Underway | 2024 |
| Explore and pilot new reuse programming at depots such as expanded textiles/donations and bike reuse | | | Underway | 2025 |
| Continue to implement circular programs from the SMART Living Plan with a focus on action areas identified in the Circular Economy Roadmap | | | Underway | On-going |
| Leverage curbside and depot waste audit data to identify impactful opportunities for promotion/education/pilots in support of the circular economy | | | Underway | On-going |
| Incorporate climate change messaging into waste reduction and circular economy programs | | | 2023 | On-going |
| ACTION 12 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
| Identify and advance opportunities to apply a circular economy approach to Regional programs and projects | Lead | Local municipalities, Conservation Authorities, Academic Institutions, Community Stakeholders, Businesses and Residents | Mitigation | Corporate |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Conduct a feasibility study of water reuse opportunities at six sites within the Region | | | Underway | 2023 |
| Conduct a baseline waste flow study to identify opportunities to reduce waste and increase circularity | | | 2023 | 2024 |
| Explore a sustainable procurement framework and the opportunity to incorporate circular economy principles | | | 2023 | 2025 |
| Establish a knowledge hub for ongoing staff engagement and learning about circular economy | | | 2023 | On-going |
| Work with stakeholders to identify pilots and develop guidance to track and increase reuse/diversion in the disposal of surplus assets process | | | 2024 | 2026 |
| Explore opportunities to pilot circular economy construction principles into capital projects | | | 2025 | On-going |

PRIORITY ACTION AREA 3: SUPPORTING an EQUITABLE TRANSITION

It is important to assess climate risks and opportunities while working to ensure the health and prosperity of all Regional residents, workers and businesses. Climate change impacts will not affect every resident or every area the same way. Having more information about specific vulnerabilities will be essential in developing the right responses to differing climate change impacts.

The priority actions below aim to support an equitable approach to addressing climate risks and opportunities while working to ensure the health and prosperity of people and businesses.

PREPARED and RESPONSIVE YORK REGION ACTIONS:

| ACTION 13 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|--|------------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Include the most severe and likely climate-related risks in Enterprise Risk Management practice | Lead | All Departments | Adaptation | Corporate |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Review and update risk registries by operational group | | | November 2022 | 2024 |
| Collaborate with internal departments during the risk registry update process to identify possible climate risk | | | January 2023 | 2023 |
| Incorporate a climate focus into Enterprise Risk Management using Business Continuity Planning and Hazard Identification Risk Assessment, with assistance and guidance from Emergency Management | | | April 2023 | 2025 |
| Launch a new risk registry tool to replace the Excel spreadsheet methodology | | | May 2023 | 2023 |
| Load risk registry information and produce draft reports including prioritization and action plans | | | May-September 2023 | 2024 |
| Include risk registry information in the Operational Risk Management services stewardship report | | | January 2024 | 2025 |
| Present an Enterprise Risk Management report to the Senior Management Team that includes and highlights the most severe and likely climate risks as part of the Enterprise Risk Management framework | | | March 2024 | 2024 |

PREPARED and RESPONSIVE YORK REGION ACTIONS:

| ACTION 14 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|--|-------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Integrate future climate information and adaptation planning into York Region's Emergency Preparedness Plans and Business Continuity Plans | Lead | All Departments and Conservation Authorities | Adaptation | Corporate |

| IDENTIFIED TASKS | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Integrate available climate change data into the annual York Region hazard identification and risk assessment methodology | Underway | On-going |
| Identify Regionally owned/operated at-risk critical infrastructure | Underway | On-going |
| Integrate severe weather considerations into business continuity plans | Underway | On-going |
| Incorporate severe weather event scenarios into York Region emergency exercise and emergency management training | 2023 | On-going |

| ACTION 15 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|---|-------------------------|---|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Co-ordinate strategies York Region and its partners can undertake to increase community resilience and emergency preparedness | Lead | Local Municipalities and Conservation Authorities | Adaptation | Community and Corporate |

| IDENTIFIED TASKS | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Coordinate meetings with local municipal Community Emergency Management Coordinators | Underway | On-going |
| Support local municipalities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from severe weather events | Underway | On-going |
| Develop targeted public awareness and education campaign focusing on personal preparedness for severe weather event emergencies | Underway | On-going |
| Educate York Region residents on household preparedness for disasters and emergencies | Underway | On-going |
| Engage community stakeholders in emergency exercises | 2023 | On-going |



LOW CARBON ECONOMY ACTIONS:

| ACTION 16 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|---|------------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Update existing procurement policies to specify climate-related performance targets | Lead | All Departments | Mitigation | Corporate |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Integrate available climate change data into the annual York Region hazard identification and risk assessment methodology | | | Underway | On-going |
| Identify Regionally owned/operated at-risk critical infrastructure | | | Underway | On-going |



LOW CARBON ECONOMY ACTIONS:

| ACTION 17 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|--|------------------|--|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Generate awareness and understanding of climate change impacts amongst vulnerable economic sectors and promote programs that support businesses to increase resiliency and transition to low-carbon economy | Lead | All Departments, Local Municipalities, Business Improvement Areas, Chambers of Commerce, Industry Associations | Adaptation and Mitigation | Community |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Promote green technology and low-carbon business enterprises in York Region | | | Underway | On-going |
| Undertake research to identify sectors and businesses that are most vulnerable to understand climate change impacts on York Region's economy and educate business leaders on risks related to climate change | | | 2024 | 2025 |
| Generate awareness on climate change impacts and demonstrate business case for implementing climate smart initiatives (e.g. food waste reduction) | | | 2024 | On-going |
| Support businesses in the transition to a low-carbon economy by promoting existing partnerships and programming | | | 2024 | On-going |
| Partner with academia and the private sector to support the circular-economy in alignment with the SM4RT Living Plan | | | 2024 | On-going |
| Collaborate with post-secondary education and vocational training partners to support development of training for low carbon economy workers, trades, and construction practices | | | 2025 | On-going |
| Engage industry leaders and innovators to share best practices and solutions to demonstrate business value and encourage participation | | | 2025 | On-going |



SUPPORTING RESILIENCE ACTIONS:

| ACTION 18 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|---|------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| Complete the York Region Climate Change and Health Vulnerability Assessment and share the findings with internal and external stakeholders | Lead | Local Municipalities, Provincial/Federal Agencies, and Community Stakeholders. | Adaptation | Community |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Post the Climate Change and Health Vulnerability Assessment on the Regional website for public access | | | Completed | On-going |
| Share results of the Climate Change and Health Vulnerability Assessment and other related research with relevant internal and external stakeholders | | | Underway | 2023 |
| Identify and monitor existing sources of climate-health data (e.g., extreme heat, vector-borne disease, Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System). | | | Underway | On-going |
| Review existing literature to identify adaptation strategies which support reduced climate-related health outcomes | | | 2023 | 2024 |

SUPPORTING RESILIENCE ACTIONS:

| ACTION 19 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Apply an equity lens to prioritizing and supporting climate mitigation and adaptation actions | Partner | Local Municipalities, Conservation Authorities, Academic Institutions and Community Stakeholders | Adaptation | Community and Corporate |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Develop a framework for considering equity in climate mitigation and adaptation actions | | | 2023 | 2024 |
| Build relationships with the public and community groups who are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (e.g., partner with community service organizations) | | | 2023 | On-going |
| Integrate equity considerations in climate change risk assessments and adaptation planning | | | 2023 | On-going |
| Partner to address climate vulnerabilities in priority neighbourhoods (i.e., TRCA SNAP program) | | | 2024 | On-going |

| ACTION 20 | YORK REGION ROLE | POTENTIAL PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | ACTION AREA |
|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Continue to build relationships with First Nations and Indigenous communities around resilience | Partner | First Nations and Indigenous Communities, Local Municipalities | Adaptation | Community |
| IDENTIFIED TASKS | | | ANTICIPATED START DATE | ANTICIPATED END DATE |
| Support neighbouring Indigenous communities with their adaptation plans | | | 2023 | On-going |
| Continue to build relationships with First Nations and Indigenous Communities through ongoing engagement activities, building on collaboration initiated through engagement on the Regional Official Plan, Water and Wastewater Master Plan and Transportation Master Plan | | | 2023 | On-going |
| Provide a transparent view of York Region services and current climate change actions | | | 2023 | On-going |

NEXT STEPS

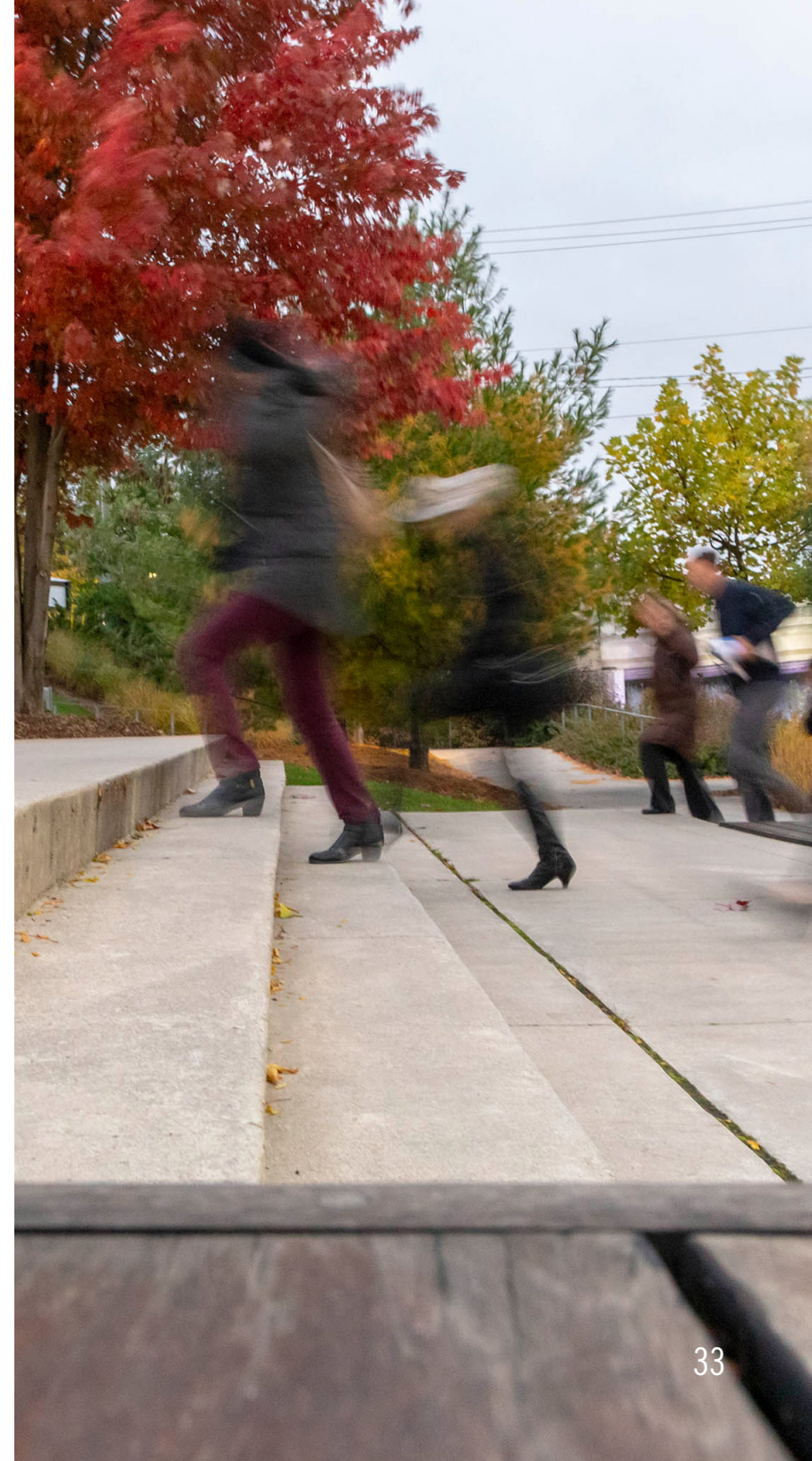
Implementing the Action Plan requires the creation of innovative and strong partnerships to enable collaborative climate action. It also requires a commitment to educating and engaging the Region's residents, businesses, local municipalities and others.

To support implementation of the Action Plan, York Region will:

- › Develop performance indicators to track climate change indicators, greenhouse gas reduction, adaptive action and implementation of Actions and identified tasks outlined in this plan.
- › Develop communication and education strategies on the impacts of climate change and strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing resiliency in the community to support the implementation of the Actions outlined in this Plan.
- › Develop or acquire the best available data and information needed to integrate climate change considerations into all decision-making.

The Action Plan has been developed as a living document. Although the impacts of climate change are already being felt, its long-term consequences continue to evolve and the effects of mitigation efforts are still uncertain. As the plan rolls out, the Region and its partners will learn lessons and gain new information and knowledge.

York Region and its partners need to be flexible and agile when implementing this Action Plan given that the climate landscape including the legislative framework is continuously evolving. An agile approach will allow the Region to fine-tune identified actions and add new ones to take advantage of opportunities, adapt to unexpected events and trends, and learn from other leading jurisdictions. The Action Plan will be monitored annually, and progress will be reviewed and communicated every four years to ensure continuous improvement.





APPENDICES

DEFINITIONS

Adaptation: The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects, in order to moderate harm or take advantage of beneficial opportunities

Circular Economy: A circular economy eliminates waste and pollution and conserves resources. It is a shift from a throw-away to a circular mindset that extends the life cycle of goods, food and resources through better design and continuous reuse, so nothing goes to waste. In a circular economy, instead of industries, manufacturers and consumers taking and using resources for a short period of time and then disposing of them, they will be kept in use. Innovators will design products that are more durable, reusable, repairable and recyclable. This circular shift will lessen impacts on the environment, allowing its resources to recover and regenerate.

Climate: Climate is usually defined as the average weather or, a statistical description of climate variables such as surface temperature, precipitation and wind over an extended period of time ranging from months to thousands or millions of years. The recommended period for averaging these variables is 30 years, as defined by the World Meteorological Organization.

Climate change: Climate change refers to a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g. by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcing factors, or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use.

Climate Change and Health Vulnerability Assessment: A study undertaken to better understand how York Region communities may be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change from a health perspective.

Co-Benefits: The benefits that occur in addition to a single prioritized policy goal. In the context of this Plan, these are other benefits that result from a specified action over and above those directly tied to climate change mitigation and adaptation which can increase plan effectiveness.

Co-Harms: Unintended or incidental effects resulting from adaptation and mitigation efforts and can range from being small to highly significant.

Equity: The principle of fairness in burden sharing and is a basis for understanding how the impacts and responses to climate change, including costs and benefits, are distributed in and by society in more or less equal ways. It is often aligned with ideas of equality, fairness and justice and applied with respect to equity in the responsibility for, and distribution of, climate impacts and policies across society, generations, and gender, and in the sense of who participates and controls the processes of decision-making.

Emission Scenario: An emission scenario describes a possible future evolution of emissions of greenhouse gases, and other climate drivers. They assist in climate change analysis, including climate modelling and the assessment of impacts, adaptation, and mitigation. The likelihood of any single emissions path described in a scenario is highly uncertain.

Greenhouse Gases: Greenhouse gases are gases in Earth's atmosphere that trap heat. They let sunlight pass through the atmosphere, but they prevent the heat that the sunlight brings from leaving the atmosphere. The main greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide, chlorofluorocarbons, methane, nitrous oxide, and water vapour.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change

APPENDICES CONTINUED

DEFINITIONS CONTINUED

Low Carbon Economy: A low carbon economy is an economy based on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Mitigation: A human intervention to reduce sources or enhance sinks and sequestration of greenhouse gases.

Model: Climate models are developed and used at climate research institutions around the world to make projections of future climate, based on future scenarios of emissions and concentrations of greenhouse gases and aerosols.

Net Zero Emissions: Net zero emissions are achieved when anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere are balanced by anthropogenic removals over a specified period. Where multiple greenhouse gases are involved, the quantification of net zero emissions depends on the climate metric chosen to compare emissions of different gases (such as global warming potential, global temperature change potential, and others, as well as the chosen time horizon)

Resilience: The capacity of social, economic, and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event or trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity, and structure, while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning, and transformation.

Urban Heat Island: An urban area or metropolitan area that is significantly warmer than its surrounding rural areas due to human activities. The main cause of the urban heat island effect is the change in land cover from pervious to impervious land surfaces.

Vulnerability: The tendency or susceptibility to be adversely affected by climate change. Vulnerability encompasses a variety of concepts and elements including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt.

Watershed Planning: Planning that provides a framework for establishing goals, objectives and direction for the protection of water resources, the management of human activities, land, water, aquatic life and resources within a watershed and for the assessment of cumulative, cross-jurisdictional and cross-watershed impacts. Watershed planning typically includes: watershed characterization, a water budget and conservation plan; nutrient loading assessments; consideration of climate change impacts and severe weather events; land and water use management objectives and strategies; scenario modelling to evaluate the impacts of forecasted growth and servicing options, and mitigation measures; an environmental monitoring plan; requirements for the use of environmental best management practices, programs, and performance measures; criteria for evaluating the protection of quality and quantity of water; the identification and protection of hydrologic features, areas and functions and the inter-relationships between or among them; and targets for the protection and restoration of riparian areas. Watershed planning is undertaken at many scales and considers cross-jurisdictional and cross-watershed impacts. The level of analysis and specificity generally increases for smaller geographic areas such as subwatersheds and tributaries.

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- 3 Fausto, E., Milner, G., Nikolic, V., Briley, L., Basile, S., Behan, K., and Trainor, E. (2015). Historical and Future Climate Trends in York Region. Ontario Climate Consortium: Toronto, ON: pp.48.
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- 5 York Region Internal data collected from 71 rain gauges and 290 sewer flow monitoring stations (2014-2021)
- 6 York Region Inflow and Infiltration Reduction Project DMAF application (Attachment E)
- 7 Definition of Climate Change. (2017, October 5). Retrieved from <https://davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/what-is-climate-change/>
- 8 Storm Recovery Continues Across York Region. (May 25, 2022). <https://www.york.ca/newsroom/storm-recovery-continues-across-york-region>
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- 10 Insurance Bureau of Canada (Jan 18, 2022). <http://www.ibc.ca/ns/resources/media-centre/media-releases/severe-weather-in-2021-caused-2-1-billion-in-insured-damage>
- 11 National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy. (2011). Paying the Price: The Economic Impacts of Climate Change for Canada. <http://nrt-trn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/paying-the-price.pdf>

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CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on York Region's Climate Change Action Plan, please call 1-877-464-9675 or visit york.ca/climatechange

YORK REGION
**CLIMATE
CHANGE
ACTION PLAN**

SEPTEMBER 2022

Corporation of the Municipality of Thames Centre

4305 Hamilton Road, Dorchester, Ontario N0L 1G3 – Phone 519-268-7334 – Fax 519-268-3928 – www.thamescentre.on.ca – inquiries@thamescentre.on.ca

October 5th, 2022

Township of Lucan Biddulph
270 Main Street
PO Box 190
Lucan, ON N0M 2J0

BY EMAIL

RE: STRONG MAYORS BUILDING HOMES ACT

Please be advised that at the Regular Council Meeting held on October 3rd, 2022, the Council of the Municipality of Thames Centre passed the following motion, supporting the resolutions from the Councils of the Township of Lucan Biddulph, Town of Kingsville and Town of Wasaga Beach regarding the *Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act*:

Resolution: 253-2022

Moved by: K. Elliott

Seconded by: C. Patterson

THAT Council of the Municipality of Thames Centre support the following resolutions regarding opposition to Bill 3, Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022:

- Township of Lucan Biddulph, dated September 14, 2022
- Town of Kingsville, dated September 1, 2022
- Towns of Wasaga Beach, dated August 19, 2022

AND THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing of Ontario, Rob Flack, MPP for Elgin-Middlesex-London, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and all Ontario municipalities.

Carried.

Municipality of Thames Centre
October 5, 2022
Page 2

Should you have any questions regarding the above, please advise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Henshaw". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sara Henshaw
Deputy Clerk

cc: The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Rob Flack, MPP - Elgin–Middlesex–London
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
All Ontario Municipalities



Township of Lucan Biddulph

270 Main Street
 P.O Box 190, Lucan, Ontario N0M 2J0
 Phone (519) 227-4491; Fax (519) 227-4998; E-mail (info@lucanbiddulph.on.ca)

September 14, 2022

Town of Wasaga Beach
 30 Lewis Street
 Wasaga Beach, ON
 L9Z 1A1
eamc@wasagabeach.com

AND TO:

Town of Kingsville
 2021 Division Road North
 Kingsville, ON
 N9Y 2Y9
jsettington@kingsville.ca

RE: STRONG MAYORS BUILDING HOMES ACT

Please be advised that at the Regular Council Meeting on September 6, 2022, the Township of Lucan Biddulph Council passed the following motion, supporting the resolutions from the Council of the Town of Wasaga Beach and Town of Kingsville regarding *Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act*.

Resolution No. 2022 - 203

Moved by D. Regan

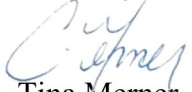
Seconded by D. Manders

That Council of the Township of Lucan Biddulph supports the following resolutions regarding opposition to Bill 3, Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022:

- *Town of Kingsville dated September 1, 2022*
- *Town of Wasaga Beach dated August 19, 2022*

Should you have any questions regarding the above motion, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tina Merner', is written over the printed name.

Tina Merner
Deputy Clerk

cc: The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Steve.Clark@pc.ola.org)
Monte McNaughton, MPP – Lambton, Kent, Middlesex (Monte.McNaughtonco@pc.ola.org)
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) (amo@amo.on.ca)
All Ontario Municipalities



2021 Division Road North
 Kingsville, Ontario N9Y 2Y9
 Phone: (519) 733-2305
 www.kingsville.ca
 kingsvilleworks@kingsville.ca

COPY VIA EMAIL (Premier@ontario.ca)

September 1, 2022

The Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
 Legislative Building
 1 Queen's Park
 Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford:

**RE: Town of Kingsville Council Resolution #336-08292022 in opposition to
 Bill 3, Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022**

At its Special Meeting held August 29, 2022 Council of The Corporation of the Town of Kingsville passed a Resolution against Bill 3 as follows:

Resolution #336-08292022

Moved by Councillor Kimberly DeYong
 Seconded by Councillor Laura Lucier

“WHEREAS the Government of Ontario, through the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, has introduced Bill 3 which is described as "An Act to amend various statutes with respect to special powers and duties of heads of council";

AND WHEREAS this Bill, if enacted, will initially apply to the City of Toronto and City of Ottawa, but will later be expanded to include other municipalities according to a statement made by the Premier at the 2022 AMO annual conference;

AND WHEREAS this Bill, if enacted, will give Mayors additional authority and powers, and correspondingly take away authority and powers from Councils and professional staff, and will include giving the Mayor the authority to propose and adopt the Municipal budget and to veto some decisions of Council;

AND WHEREAS this Bill, if enacted, will give authority over professional staff to the Mayor, including that of the Chief Administrative Officer;

AND WHEREAS these changes will result in a reduction of independence for professional staff including the CAO, who currently provide objective information to the Council and public and will now take direction from the Mayor alone when the Mayor so directs;

AND WHEREAS these are surprising and unnecessary changes to the historical balance of power between a Mayor and Council, and which historically gave the final say in all matters to the will of the majority of the elected Council.

THEREFORE, this Council of the Town of Kingsville, passes this resolution to petition the Government of Ontario that:

1. These changes to the *Municipal Act, 2001*, are unnecessary and will negatively affect the Town of Kingsville;
2. That if the Ontario Government deems these changes necessary in large single-tier municipalities such as Toronto and Ottawa, that such changes should not be implemented in smaller municipalities;
3. That the Ontario Government should enact legislation clarifying the role of Mayor, Council and Chief Administrative Officer, similar to those recommended by the Ontario Municipal Administrator's Association and those recommended by Justice Marrocco in the Collingwood judicial inquiry of 2020; and
4. That if the stated goal of this legislation is to construct more housing in Ontario that this can be accomplished through other means including amendment of the *Planning Act* and funding of more affordable housing.

Council further directs the Clerk to ensure that a copy of this resolution be provided to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the "Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy", Kingsville's MPP, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and other Municipalities in Ontario."

RECORDED VOTE – Carried Unanimously

| | YEA | NAY |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|
| Deputy Mayor Gord Queen | X | |
| Councillor Kimberly DeYong | X | |
| Councillor Tony Gaffan | X | |
| Councillor Laura Lucier | X | |
| Councillor Thomas Neufeld | X | |
| Councillor Larry Patterson | X | |
| Results | 6 | 0 |

If you have any questions or comments please contact Paula Parker at pparker@kingsville.ca.

Yours very truly,



Paula Parker
Town Clerk, on behalf of Kingsville Council

cc: The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
(Steve.Clark@pc.ola.org)
Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy; Attn.: Committee Clerk
Isaiah Thorning (schicp@ola.org)
Anthony Leardi, MPP – Essex (Anthony.Leardi@pc.ola.org)
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) (amo@amo.on.ca)
All Ontario Municipalities



August 19, 2022

The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street
17th Floor
Toronto ON
M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Clark:

Re: Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act

Please be advised that the Council of the Town of Wasaga Beach, during their August 18, 2022 Council meeting adopted the following resolution:

“That Council receive the letter dated August 10, 2022 from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing pertaining to Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, for information;

And further that a letter be sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing outlining these proposed powers are not appropriate and to outline other ways for the province to institute housing and other matters, and that the motion be circulated to all Ontario municipalities.”

The Town of Wasaga Beach Council does not support the Strong Mayors, Building Housing Act as the proposed changes will not demonstratively speed up the construction of housing and will erode the democratic process at the local level where members of Council have to work together to achieve priorities. What is needed to speed up construction of housing is greater authority for local municipalities to approve development without final clearances from outside agencies after they have been given reasonable time to provide such clearances.

Your favourable consideration of this matter is appreciated.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at mayor@wasagabeach.com or (705) 429-3844 Ext. 2222.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Bifulchi".

Nina Bifulchi
Mayor

c. Members of Council
All Ontario Municipalities

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister

777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
Tel.: 416 585-7000

**Ministère des
Affaires municipales
et du Logement**

Bureau du ministre

777, rue Bay, 17^e étage
Toronto ON M7A 2J3
Tél. : 416 585-7000



234-2022-3540

August 10, 2022

Dear Head of Council:

As Ontarians face the rising cost of living and a shortage of homes, our government was re-elected with a strong mandate to help more Ontarians find a home that meets their needs.

Our government also made an election promise to build 1.5 million new homes for the people of Ontario over the next 10 years to address the housing supply crisis.

I am pleased to inform you that our government introduced the proposed Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act on August 10, 2022, that, if passed, would make changes to the *Municipal Act, 2001*, *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, and the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*. These amendments would empower mayors in the City of Toronto and City of Ottawa to deliver on shared provincial-municipal priorities and get more homes built faster.

If passed, the proposed changes impacting the City of Toronto and City of Ottawa are intended to take effect on November 15, 2022, which is the start of the new municipal council term. Other growing municipalities could follow at a later date.

If you have any comments or feedback regarding these proposed changes, you may submit them to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing at: StrongMayors@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Clark".

Steve Clark
Minister



IAN LAING Fire Chief

984 Gorham Street
Newmarket, ON
L3Y 1L8
905-895-9222
www.cyfs.ca

September 8, 2022

Flynn Scott
Town of Newmarket
395 Mulock Drive
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 4X7

Dear Flynn:

Re: Council Declaration of "FIRE PREVENTION WEEK" October 9 – 15, 2022

Each year a one week period in October is proclaimed by the Government of Canada as "Fire Prevention Week", and is used to place emphasis on the prevention of fire, and for the preparation of plans to be enacted in the event of fire.

Central York Fire Services is respectfully requesting the Town of Newmarket also proclaim the week of October 9, 2022 through October 15, 2022 Fire Prevention Week, with this year's theme being:

"Fire Won't Wait. Plan Your Escape"

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "I. Laing". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Ian Laing
Fire Chief



Simon Granat
Legislative Coordinator
Town of Newmarket
395 Mulock Drive
P.O. Box 328 Station Main
Newmarket, ON L3Y 4X7
Email: sgranat@newmarket.ca
Tel: 905-953-5300 ext. 2207
Fax: 905-953-5100

October 7, 2022

Sent to: ilaing@cyfs.ca

Dear Chief Laing:

RE: Proclamation Request – Fire Prevention Week – October 9 to 15, 2022

I am writing to advise that your proclamation request has been approved in accordance with the Council-approved [Proclamation, Lighting Request and Community Flag Raising Policy](#), and the Town of Newmarket will proclaim October 9 to 15 as Fire Prevention Week. Your proclamation request will be communicated on the Town's Twitter account, and on the Town's website on the Proclamation and Lighting Request page.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Simon Granat", written over a horizontal line.

Simon Granat

Legislative Coordinator



October 7, 2022

Sent to: ilaing@cyfs.ca

Dear Chief Laing:

RE: Proclamation Request – Fire Prevention Week – October 9 to 15, 2022

On behalf of the Town of Newmarket Council I am pleased to recognize Fire Prevention Week as October 9 to 15, 2022.

Thank you for submitting your request and for your contributions to the community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

John Taylor
Mayor



Simon Granat
Legislative Coordinator
Town of Newmarket
395 Mulock Drive
P.O. Box 328 Station Main
Newmarket, ON L3Y 4X7
Email: sgranat@newmarket.ca
Tel: 905-953-5300 ext. 2207
Fax: 905-953-5100

October 7, 2022

Sent to: [REDACTED]

Dear Laura Bradford:

RE: Proclamation Request – World Polio Day – October 24, 2022

I am writing to advise that your proclamation request has been approved in accordance with the Council-approved [Proclamation, Lighting Request and Community Flag Raising Policy](#), and the Town of Newmarket will proclaim October 24, 2022 as World Polio Day. Your proclamation request will be communicated on the Town's Twitter account, and on the Town's website on the Proclamation and Lighting Request page.

In addition, the Riverwalk Commons and Fred A. Lundy Bridge located on Water Street will be illuminated in red on October 25, 2022 to recognize World Polio Day. Please note that the lighting will occur from sunset until 11:00 PM.

In addition, the community flag pole located at Peace Park on Cane Parkway will fly your flag on October 21 to 28, 2022 to recognize World Polio Day. Please note that the flag must be dropped off at the Town of Newmarket Operations Centre at 1275 Maple Hill Court by 4:00 PM on October 19, 2022, ATTN: Nick Evans. Alternatively, you can leave it in the drop off box at the front of the building after 4:00 PM.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Simon Granat", written over a horizontal line.

Simon Granat
Legislative Coordinator



October 7, 2022

Sent to: [REDACTED]

Dear Laura Bradford:

RE: Proclamation Request – World Polio Day – October 24, 2022

On behalf of the Town of Newmarket Council I am pleased to recognize World Polio Day as October 24, 2022.

In addition, the Riverwalk Commons and Fred A. Lundy Bridge located on Water Street will be illuminated in red on October 25, 2022 from sunset until 11:00 PM.

In addition, the community flag pole located at Peace Park on Cane Parkway will fly your flag on October 21 to 28, 2022.

Thank you for submitting your request and for your contributions to the community.

Yours sincerely,

John Taylor
Mayor