



# VISION 2051

*strong, caring, safe communities*



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Town of Markham



Regional Councillor  
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Town of Markham



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Town of Richmond Hill



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### Message from York Regional Council

*Vision 2051* establishes a blueprint for the future of The Regional Municipality of York and outlines the steps we can take collectively to achieve our vision. It is the outcome of two years of studies and consultations with residents, stakeholders, partners and staff.

*Vision 2051* is a bold and innovative strategy to guide us in creating strong, caring and safe communities designed with sustainability in mind. It will guide us to take actions, such as using more low-carbon, local energy systems to power zero carbon buildings. It will compel us to leverage innovative technology to re-use water and waste.

If we hold to this vision, we will improve the liveability of our communities, providing appropriate housing for all ages and stages of life, preventing homelessness and promoting healthier, active living.

This is a vision great enough to guide us a long way. We encourage you to use *Vision 2051*, which is available on our website at [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

Please join us in working towards our vision for the future.



Regional Councillor  
Brenda Hogg  
Town of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor  
Michael Di Biase  
City of Vaughan



Mayor  
Tony Van Bynen  
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Mayor  
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Mayor  
Virginia Hackson  
Town of East Gwillimbury



Mayor  
Steve Pellegrini  
Township of King



Mayor  
Wayne Emmerson  
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

## Preamble

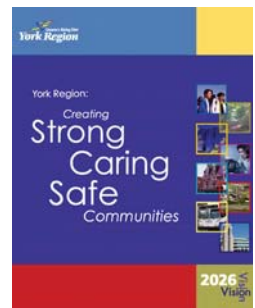
On the occasion of its 40th anniversary, The Regional Municipality of York has a lot to celebrate. As a destination of choice for newcomers, major employers and the skilled professionals they hire, the Region has grown from a series of small rural villages into a mosaic of communities as diverse as its people; small towns, villages, suburban neighbourhoods and emerging city centres. York Region's rich natural heritage—the shores of Lake Simcoe, major valleys, extensive forests and wetlands, the productive soils of the Holland Marsh and the rolling hills of the Oak Ridges Moraine—continues to attract people to the region and sustains our health and our economy. Residents of York Region are proud of our communities. We cherish the quality of life that living in York Region brings, and want to continue to ensure the liveability of our communities, the health of our children and the services and support networks we have come to rely on.

*Vision 2051* celebrates and builds on how far we have come in the last 40 years, examines where we are today and provides a pathway to an even brighter future ahead in the next 40 years. As the third vision of its kind, *Vision 2051* builds on a legacy of long term strategies that have established a direction for future initiatives within York Region, together with partners and the community.

*Vision 2051* is the new blueprint for York Region's future and helps guide Regional Council and staff decisions, ensuring that we set a course today for the future we desire by the year 2051. This Regional Council and community initiative articulates an integrated pathway to achieve our desired collective future. It establishes a series of goals and actions that inform the decisions of Regional Council, corporate strategies including York Region's *Strategic Plan*, and conversations with our partners and future collaborations.

This vision advances our efforts in sustainability, fosters the health and well-being of our residents, and the liveability of our communities.

This vision is about the people of York Region, the places we live in, the systems and services that support and sustain us, our economy and our environment. It's about creating strong, caring and safe communities.



# Strong Caring Safe Communities



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## York Region in Retrospective: 1971

In 1971, York Region provided the following services:

1. Planning and Development Services
2. Police Services
3. Public Health
4. Regional Roads
5. Sewer/Pollution Control
6. Water Works
7. Welfare
8. York Manor and Child Care Centres

Regional Committees in 1971:

- Engineering Committee
- Finance Committee
- Health and Social Services Committee
- Planning Committee

Prior to 1971, the land area now known as York Region was called the "County of York", and was comprised of 14 municipalities: Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King Township, Markham Township, Markham, Newmarket, North Gwillimbury, Richmond Hill, Stouffville, Sutton, Vaughan Township, Whitchurch Township, and Woodbridge.

The Province of Ontario reformed local government and created a system of Regional governments. On January 1, 1971, The Regional Municipality of York was created and the existing 14 municipalities were consolidated into nine local municipalities. York Region was one of six regional governments created in Ontario.

*By establishing this new Regional Government we together, demonstrate that rational plans can be translated into reality. We shall demonstrate that sprawling, uncontrolled growth is not inevitable. With a local government system having strength financially and administratively, we shall be partners in making the essential decisions that lead to orderly, balanced development.*

*- Honourable Darcy McKeogh, Minister of Municipal Affairs  
Inaugural Regional Council, October 14, 1970*

In 1971, York Region was considered a 'bedroom community' with most of the development in York Region being residential in nature and most workers commuting outside of the Region to work. Issues facing the Region in 1971 included rapid urbanization, traffic congestion, pollution, urban sprawl, strip development and local finances.

### YORK REGION IN 1971

Population	169,200 <sup>1</sup>
Employment	47,770 <sup>2</sup>
Households	44,720 <sup>3</sup>
Regional Staff	381 <sup>4</sup>
Regional Budget	\$18.7 Million <sup>5</sup>

### Population by Local Municipality<sup>6</sup>

Aurora	13,900
East Gwillimbury (Prior to)	9,500
Georgina	15,300
King	13,100
Markham	37,400
Newmarket	19,300
Richmond Hill	33,000
Vaughan	16,200
Whitchurch-Stouffville	11,500
<b>York Region Total</b>	<b>169,200</b>





## York Region in 2011

The Regional Municipality of York is one of six regional governments in Ontario. Regional Council is comprised of 21 members—the Regional Chair and 20 local municipal Mayors and Regional Councillors who sit on both their Local Municipal Council and Regional Council.

York Region provides many services to residents, businesses and visitors, including:

1. Court Services
2. Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
3. Family and Children's Services
4. Housing
5. Long Term Care
6. Planning and Economic Development
7. Police Services
8. Public Health
9. Regional Transportation System
10. Social Assistance
11. Solid Waste Management
12. Public Transit System (YRT/ Viva)
13. Water/Wastewater

### Regional Committees and Boards in 2011

- Audit Committee
- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Community and Health Services Committee
- Finance and Administration Committee
- Planning and Economic Development Committee
- Environmental Services Committee
- Transportation Services Committee
- Rapid Transit Corporation Board of Directors
- Housing York Inc.
- Human Services Planning Board of York Region

### YORK REGION IN 2011

Population 1,073,200

Employment 516,000<sup>7</sup>

Households 322,000<sup>8</sup>

Regional Staff 2,836<sup>9</sup>

Regional Budget \$2.52 Billion<sup>10</sup>

### Population by Local Municipality<sup>11</sup>

<b>Aurora</b>	<b>55,600</b>
<b>East Gwillimbury</b>	<b>23,700</b>
<b>Georgina</b>	<b>46,500</b>
<b>King</b>	<b>21,400</b>
<b>Markham</b>	<b>312,100</b>
<b>Newmarket</b>	<b>84,600</b>
<b>Richmond Hill</b>	<b>189,600</b>
<b>Vaughan</b>	<b>300,600</b>
<b>Whitchurch-Stouffville</b>	<b>39,000</b>
<b>York Region Total</b>	<b>1,073,200</b>



Trends serve to influence the services required by residents in the future. In understanding global, national and local trends, Regional Council can respond effectively to needs with high-quality services and programs.

### **York Region's population is growing, aging and diversifying**

York Region will continue to experience rapid population growth. In 1971, the population of York Region was 169,248; in 2011, it is 1.073 million, and in 2051, it is forecasted to be 1.8 million<sup>12</sup>. Our aging population will experience the greatest increase during this period with a 250 per cent increase in the population over the age of 65 between 2011 and 2051<sup>13</sup>. The population also continues to diversify and by 2051, 60 per cent of the population will consist of newcomers to Canada<sup>14</sup>.

### **Our communities are urbanizing: the Region will transform into an intensified city-region**

York Region's communities are intensifying. The four Regional Centres: Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Centre, Markham Centre and Newmarket Centre; and the Regional Corridors of Yonge Street, Highway 7, and portions of Davis Drive and Green Lane will have the highest levels of intensification across the Region. The Regional Centres will accommodate population and jobs at densities of 200 people and jobs per hectare.

### **We are dealing with health issues related to lifestyle; particularly our children**

Canadian adults are dealing with 21st century lifestyle diseases: obesity, cardiovascular and respiratory disease, type 2 diabetes, stress, mental illness and cancers related to unhealthy lifestyles including lack of physical activity and poor eating habits. The current generation of children is not likely to live as long as its parents due to the risk of developing life-threatening illnesses such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and heart disease<sup>15</sup>.

### **More York Region residents are having difficulty making ends meet**

A growing number of York Region residents are subject to economic vulnerability. York Region had the fifth highest median family income in Canada in 2006<sup>16</sup>; yet one in eight of its residents or 112,165 people lived in low income households. Between 2001 and 2006, York Region experienced a 55 per cent increase in the low income population<sup>17</sup>, illustrating the growing gap between household income and the cost of living in York Region<sup>18</sup>.

### **The cost of housing is continuing to climb**

The price of housing in York Region continues to climb to an all-time high. In 2011, the average resale house price was \$638,158<sup>19</sup> while what is considered to be affordable based on Provincial standards is \$404,007<sup>20</sup>. There is a mismatch in the housing types, tenures and stock with the housing necessary to accommodate the Regional labour force and meet the needs of our population throughout our lives, driving people outside of the Region to find appropriate housing. For our most vulnerable residents, there is a growing need for social and transitional housing.

### **Our agricultural and natural environment lands continue to be highly valued**

Approximately 43 per cent of York Region's land base is designated as Agricultural or Specialty Crop Lands (the Holland Marsh). The agricultural and rural areas of the Region are highly valued for their economic production and their contribution to the Regional identity. Sixty-nine per cent of the Region's land base is protected within the Provincial Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. These areas are critical to our economy and lifestyle in York Region.



## Trends

### **York Region's climate is starting to change**

The climate of the Great Lakes Region, which York Region is a part of, is already changing with winters getting shorter, annual average temperatures growing warmer and violent storms increasing in frequency<sup>21</sup>. Changes to climate have impacts on our infrastructure, health care, human services, emergency services, natural systems and how we plan communities and deliver services.

### **Local, alternative, renewable energy sources will become more important**

With energy costs rising and availability declining, local sources of alternative and renewable energy are becoming more important components of our community and economy.

### **Providing infrastructure services for our population is becoming more expensive and challenging**

A growing population and economy demands more services. New services are more expensive and challenging to provide. A new approach to managing services is required, including water conservation, waste reduction, transportation demand management and reduction in energy use. More emphasis also needs to be placed on transit, walking, cycling and complete streets.

### **Moving around the Region is a challenge**

As we grow, the ability to travel throughout the Region will become more challenging. Increasing mobility in the future will rely on a diverse range of transportation choices and other solutions, including transportation demand management, better land use arrangements, congestion management, optimizing the capacity of our road network and the use of intelligent transportation systems.

### **The Region's economy will continue to transform into a knowledge economy**

As the Region matures, its economy, while resilient, is continuing to transform. Service-oriented jobs are outpacing traditional goods-producing jobs in York Region as there is a continuing decline and off-shoring of manufacturing. Signs of transition toward a knowledge economy with value-added manufacturing and an increased emphasis on innovation are present. York Region needs to adapt to a changing economy and position itself as a leader in the emerging knowledge economy.

### **Governments are finding more ways to be open and responsive and to engage residents**

Information technologies, including social media and social networking, are being utilized more effectively to facilitate the operation of government and communicate with our community and businesses about government information and services.

### **York Region will continue to manage its finances carefully**

The demand for human services and new infrastructure is increasing as York Region grows and matures. The demand for existing and enhanced services, as well as revival of infrastructure systems, is expensive and requires careful financial management. Increasing efficiencies and tough financial choices will be required.

## Developing the Vision for 2051

The development of *Vision 2051* was based on a number of objectives:

- To reflect changes and emerging issues in the Region
- To recognize the Region's expanded mandate
- To co-ordinate strategic initiatives and guide business planning in the Region
- To provide an opportunity for residents to think and talk together as a community about what kind of place they want York Region to be
- To build on recent and emerging Regional policies and strategies

*Vision 2051* builds on the foundation and legacy of successes established by York Region's previous long term strategies *Vision 2021* and *Vision 2026*.

Since the development of *Vision 2026* in 2002, there have been a number of innovative policies and initiatives developed by the Region and the Province that have influenced how the Region does business. In the face of a significant amount of growth, there is a greater emphasis on sustainability coupled with an increasing concern with respect to climate change and energy. Pressures on York Region's transportation, waste, water and social infrastructure, an increasingly diverse and aging population, and meeting the housing, human services and safety needs of our population are continuing challenges. *Vision 2051* responds to this landscape and establishes priorities and actions to guide decision making in York Region.

*Vision 2051* builds on the Region's ongoing consultation with the community, partners and stakeholders for a number of years on recently developed strategies, including the *Sustainability Strategy*, the *Regional Official Plan*, Infrastructure Master Plans and the *Community and Health Services Multi Year Plan*, just to name a few. To complement the existing feedback on Regional strategies, a targeted engagement program was used for *Vision 2051* which relied primarily on the internet and social media.

### **Vision webpages and social media sites were the focus of the discussion**

Facebook and Twitter were used to share information, exchange ideas, generate discussion, network with other groups and organizations, ask important questions and gather input from the community. *Vision 2051* enabled the Region to practice new engagement tools, including an interactive mapping application which allowed the community to tag a map of the Region and share "My favourite place", "My vision for this area is", "This area has potential because", and "The area could be improved by". Invitations to participate were sent to 6,000 businesses and individuals across the Region.

### **Engaging Regional youth**

York Region youth were consulted throughout the *Vision 2051* process, including at the Youth Environmental Network of York Region (YENYR) Ecological Action Conference in October 2011 where more than 250 students from 13 schools across the Region were engaged. *Vision 2051* was also presented as a part of the York Region Geography Teacher's Conference "Illuminating Our Future."





### Summarizing Feedback

This Word Cloud provides a snapshot of the vision statements collected during consultation on *Vision 2051*. The size of each word illustrates the frequency with which the term was used.

York Region:

creating

**Strong  
Caring  
Safe**  
communities

creating  
communities  
caring  
safe

creating  
communities

## Guiding Principles

The following principles have influenced the approach used throughout *Vision 2051* and shape the future directions and actions:

Accessible & Inclusive	Programs and services that are available to all, regardless of location or personal abilities and the inclusion of all, regardless of age, gender, ability, income, culture or faith
Adaptable & Flexible	Solutions, processes, policies or built form that is able to be changed or repurposed in response to changing needs or technologies
Collaborative & Integrated	Working together to achieve success in partnership with our community and examining challenges and issues in a holistic manner, where they are connected or overlap
Efficiency & Conservation	Using less; achieving more or the same with fewer resources
Innovative & Creative	The ability to transcend traditional ideas or solutions and to create meaningful new ideas or more effective solutions, processes and opportunities
Leadership	Motivating or driving action towards achieving a strategic vision for the future
Open & Transparent Government	Openness of government decision making and operations
Preventative	Addressing the root cause of social and health issues through education, partnerships and policy development
Resilient	Strength or capacity of people, communities, ecosystems, economy and organizations to overcome, successfully adapt or continue to thrive under any number of conditions
Sustainable	Achieving economic vitality, healthy communities and a sustainable natural environment by meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

## York Region in 2051



By 2051, it is estimated that York Region will have a population of 1.8 million. Of this population, 23 per cent will be over the age of 65 and 60 per cent will be newcomers to Canada, representing the myriad of global cultures and ethnicities. The communities of York Region will have matured into a system of compact and complete communities—towns, villages, rural areas and cities where people live, work, play, age and are supported throughout all ages and stages of life in a safe, healthy and vibrant city-region.

York Region's residents are able to live active and healthy lives, achieve a level of economic self sufficiency, and practice wellness and sustainable living. They are able to walk or cycle for all their daily needs: get healthy local food, access community services, chat with their neighbours, walk their children to a local school and find meaningful employment. The urban structure makes sustainable and affordable living choices easier. The community works together and assists each other in finding solutions to their challenges. In this safe and supportive environment, the community becomes stronger.

The majority of the 640,000 households will be located within the Region's urban areas—in particular, within the four Regional Centres: Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Centre, Markham Centre and Newmarket Centre; and along the Regional Corridors of Yonge Street, Highway 7 and portions of Davis Drive and Green Lane. Communities are supported by a transportation system that provides a variety of mobility choices for residents and workers. The low-carbon system prioritizes active transportation—walking and cycling in a safe and convenient system, and an interconnected network of transit services from subways, light rail transit, rapidways and community buses that move our residents to where they need to be. This system is connected through a street network that is designed for all users but prioritizes people; making them attractive places.



The almost one million jobs throughout the Region will be driven by the creative and entrepreneurial spirit of our business owners and labour force. York Region's economy is resilient to global economic changes and is supported by an advanced telecommunications infrastructure that enables quick adaptation to changing technologies and attracts global investment. York Region will be known as the place for innovation.

Technology plays a critical role in everyday life, from enhanced communications which limit the need for people to travel, to intelligent information systems which facilitate efficiencies and allow us to optimize our networks and make more informed decisions on infrastructure, human services and the economy.



Water and waste are recognized as critical resources in our economy and treated as closed systems. Water conservation and reuse are fundamental elements of the water system, and residents actively participate in the prevention of waste generation.

The Region has an extensive green network made up of the most valuable natural lands where native biodiversity can thrive. One can find solace in a peaceful walk in the woods, spot a heron in a shallow marsh or the more adventurous can cycle or hike from Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario through a Regional Trail network. The local agricultural industry thrives and is able to support a healthy population with fresh local food.



## The Vision for 2051

The vision for York Region in 2051 is articulated through eight goal areas and corresponding action areas that take us in the direction of our vision through collective action. Alignment with these goals and actions help ensure that the decisions we make today set a course for the future we desire.



8  
Goals  
Areas

### A Place Where Everyone Can Thrive

In 2051, York Region's diverse population can thrive in an environment that fosters **healthy** living; is **safe**, accessible, **inclusive** and supportive.

### Liveable Cities and Complete Communities

In 2051, York Region's diverse urban form provides a variety of interesting and exciting places to live, work and play. Communities are **people-first** and designed for **healthy**, active **living** and social inclusion, and are the heart of **business**, arts and culture, **community life** and services.

### A Resilient Natural Environment and Agricultural System

In 2051, York Region's natural systems are **connected**, **protected** and **enhanced** through communities; they provide opportunities for **recreation** and support **biodiversity**. Agricultural areas are **thriving** and provide healthy food and resources to a growing population.

### Appropriate Housing for All Ages and Stages

In 2051, York Region has housing to match the needs of its residents and workers. Housing choices support **affordable** and **sustainable** living and address the needs of a diverse and aging population.

### An Innovation Economy

In 2051, York Region's economy is **resilient** and focuses on **creativity** and **innovation** with sufficient **infrastructure** and resources to support a **knowledge economy**. York Region's diverse labour force is supported with **opportunities** for collaboration and continuous learning and development.

### Interconnected Systems for Mobility

In 2051, a seamless network for **mobility** provides access to all destinations using diverse transportation **options** for people in all communities, promotes **active healthy living** and safely and efficiently moves people and goods.

### Living Sustainably

In 2051, sustainability can be practiced in everyday life through climate resiliency, innovative **water conservation** and reuse, water resource protection, **waste** reduction, **energy** conservation and greenhouse gas **reduction**.

### Open and Responsive Governance

In 2051, while the form of government may change over time, the function and principles of **governance**—openness, **accountability**, fiscal responsibility and **engagement** of community members in decision making—remain the key focus.

## **In 2051, York Region's diverse population can thrive in an environment that fosters healthy living; is safe, accessible, inclusive and supportive.**

To support this goal, York Region, working in collaboration with others, will focus on the following actions:

### **A Place Where People Achieve Optimal Health**

- Designing communities to promote healthy and active living, and social inclusion for all life stages and ages
- Fostering health and well-being of the population through the promotion and protection of health and the prevention of illness so that residents are able to achieve optimal physical, mental and emotional health
- Providing community-based primary health supports through community paramedicine
- Facilitating access to affordable healthy food choices and the opportunity for meaningful work for all residents

### **An Integrated Network of Community Support**

- Providing services through an integrated network within communities so that York Region residents can readily access services they need
- Supporting an aging and diverse population and those working hard to make ends meet
- Addressing the core basic needs of residents in our community, including children, the elderly and people with disabilities
- Developing community capacity such that the community has the resources and ability to work together as individuals, groups, organizations and networks to address its own challenges

### **Celebrating our Culture, Heritage and Diversity**

- Fostering a welcoming and inclusive community and ensuring that newcomers are economically, socially, culturally, politically and civically integrated
- Embracing the complete diversity of our population including ethno-cultural, religious, spiritual, ages, abilities and incomes
- Recognizing, conserving and promoting cultural heritage and its value and benefit to the community
- Celebrating our First Nations origins, including recognizing the importance of conserving archaeological resources
- Valuing historic towns, villages and historic buildings and areas as critical elements of our community identity which contribute to sense of place
- Encouraging and promoting arts and culture



### An Accessible Region

- Integrating York Region residents and providing the ability to contribute, free of barriers, to every dimension of Canadian life—economic, social, cultural and political
- Encouraging a built environment, employment opportunities, transportation system and information that are accessible to all York Region residents

### Safe and Secure Communities

- Developing sustainable community safety and crime prevention strategies through community mobilization, engagement and education
- Enhancing crime suppression activities, including traffic safety

#### Making the Connections

A healthy population has the support network to live fulfilled lives and thrive. The residents are able to be active and achieve optimal health by:

- living in walkable, complete communities
- have access to healthy food and a robust natural heritage system
- being able to rely on a formal and informal support network

People choose to live in York Region because they can access jobs to match their skills and housing to match their needs and they can feel safe and secure in their neighbourhoods.



**In 2051, York Region's diverse urban form provides a variety of interesting and exciting places to live, work, and play. Communities are people-first and designed for healthy, active living and social inclusion, and are the heart of business, arts and culture, community life and services.**

To support this goal, York Region, working in collaboration with others, will focus on the following actions:

### **A Vibrant City-Region**

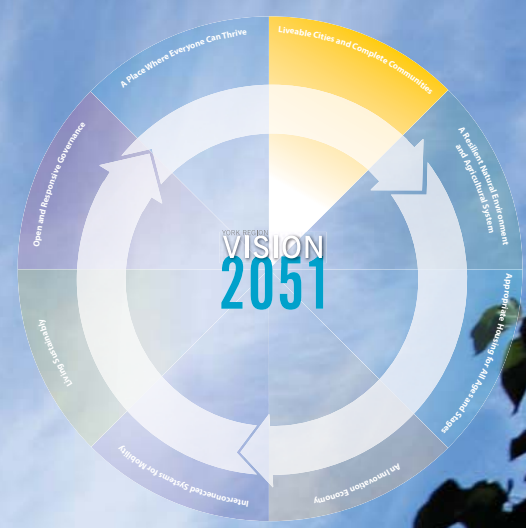
- Focusing intensification in a system of active vibrant Regional City Centres and Corridors that are the hub of commerce, entertainment and culture
- Planning mixed-use pedestrian environments with attractive streets, high-quality urban design and a distinct sense of place
- Providing a place for everyone by ensuring an inclusive, safe, integrated and welcoming community
- Enhancing mobility within Regional Centres and Corridors through higher order transit systems, including subways and rapid transit
- Maintaining economic competitiveness by encouraging major office, institutional, cultural and entertainment facilities to locate within Regional Centres and Corridors with a goal to achieve a balance of employment and residential opportunities

### **Complete Communities**

- Planning for safe, compact, complete, walkable, mixed-use communities, towns and villages that offer residents the opportunity to work and live active and healthy lives in the same community throughout their lives
- Working with others to provide a range of quality human services, including education, social, health, arts, culture and recreational facilities within communities that are accessible to all residents
- Designing communities that are accessible to the entire population, including people with disabilities, seniors and children
- Strengthening our communities by supporting children, families and youth so they can fulfill their potential
- Recognizing the importance of our countryside and rural communities as well as the distinctiveness of our towns, villages and hamlets

### **An Integrated Urban System**

- Planning for an integrated urban network of communities, human services, jobs, transportation and infrastructure systems that connect people to places, jobs and services
- Achieving a transit-oriented urban form
- Achieving better connections between where people live, work, learn and play
- Developing a network of social infrastructure facilities and services that support a growing, aging and diverse population



- Facilitating community building by providing complete communities that allow people to live, work and play in close proximity
- Planning for public spaces, cultural events, attractive urban form and public art that contribute to place making

### A Living City

- Fostering sustainable communities that support a healthy natural environment and sustainable lifestyle choices
- Facilitating an interconnected and enhanced natural system through communities and urban areas that offer opportunities for recreation, urban wildlife and linkages for flora and fauna
- Developing communities to facilitate an integrated approach to water management, including water conservation and reuse
- Providing an energy efficient urban form and buildings that facilitate reduced energy demand, and options for local renewable and alternative energy systems
- Enabling access to local healthy food through urban agriculture opportunities
- Designing and managing infrastructure to be context sensitive and enhance natural systems
- Valuing and supporting the ecosystem services of our green infrastructure

### Making the Connections

Liveable cities and complete communities offer a variety of opportunities to live, work and play in a compact community supported by an integrated mobility system. They foster social inclusion by providing spaces for people to interact, and contribute to a healthier environment through innovative energy use and water management. These communities attract a skilled workforce, particularly newcomers to Canada.

**In 2051, York Region's natural systems are connected, protected and enhanced through communities; they provide opportunities for recreation and support biodiversity. Agricultural areas are thriving and provide healthy food and resources to a growing population.**

To support this goal, York Region, working in collaboration with others, will focus on the following actions:

### **A Protected, Connected and Enhanced Regional Greenlands System**

- Protecting and enhancing a connected Regional Greenlands System and its functions to ensure a healthy system through our cities, communities and rural areas
- Strategically enhancing natural cover to increase biodiversity, system resiliency and mitigate against the effects of climate change
- Partnering with other organizations to secure priority greenlands
- Encouraging private land stewardship and natural area enhancement

### **A Healthy Environment for a Healthy Population**

- Fostering a healthy population through clean air, land and water
- Encouraging recreational opportunities in the natural environment, including the ability to bike or hike from Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario
- Reducing emissions of criteria air contaminants and greenhouse gases that contribute to poor air quality and climate change
- Ensuring a drinking water supply that meets regional, provincial and federal drinking water quality and quantity standards
- Promoting the use of urban tree canopies and other green infrastructure to protect against extreme heat events

### **Protecting Vital Water Systems**

- Protecting Lake Simcoe and its surrounding watershed to ensure they are healthy and contain clean, safe water
- Protecting water system health, ground water quality and quantity, and maintaining natural hydrological function through a system of streams, rivers and lakes from Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario







## A Thriving Agricultural Community

- Recognizing the role of agriculture on the landscape and in our heritage and economy
- Ensuring high-quality agricultural land is available for growing and producing local food that is accessible to residents and communities, and other agricultural products
- Facilitating a secure and safe food supply by encouraging local food production, farmers markets, field-to-table initiatives and a 100-mile diet
- Recognizing the value of the agricultural landscape for its economic productivity, contribution to sustaining natural habitat and corridors, and as a carbon sink
- Encouraging value-added food production, food manufacturing and processing

### Making the Connections

A resilient natural environment supports a healthy population with clean and safe drinking water, and clean air. A connected and enhanced natural system is a permanent legacy for the Region that drives economic investment and makes York Region a choice location for new investment, employers and a creative and skilled workforce. Our agricultural system not only contributes to healthy local food choices and affordable food options, but is also an important contributor to economic vitality in the Region.

**In 2051, York Region has housing to match the needs of its residents and workers. Housing choices support affordable and sustainable living, and address the needs of a diverse and aging population.**

To support this goal, York Region, working in collaboration with others, will focus on the following actions:

### **Housing Choices that Match our Needs**

- Promoting a broad range of appropriate housing choices including mix, range and tenures, and supports to meet the diverse needs of residents and workers
- Addressing diversity in housing stock that accommodates a variety of household compositions throughout all stages of life from young families, to seniors, single persons and multi-generational families
- Providing a diversity of housing choices so that every worker in York Region can afford to live in York Region
- Encouraging housing that is flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of varying households and changing demographics
- Promoting housing affordability options, programs and supports that are integrated throughout York Region for low and moderate income families and individuals
- Promoting housing stability and preventing homelessness through programs that address the conditions that put people at risk for homelessness

### **Housing that Supports Health and Sustainability**

- Promoting energy and water efficient housing that supports human and environmental health
- Supporting the local economy through housing that uses locally sourced sustainable materials, technologies and labour
- Encouraging housing that is carbon neutral
- Ensuring housing at densities and in locations that support our transportation infrastructure
- Supporting healthy housing that ensures good indoor air quality and protection from environmental health hazards
- Encouraging the development of climate resilient housing that uses passive solar techniques, building orientation, shade and cool roofs







### Making the Connections

Providing a variety of housing choices for the residents and workers of York Region, which are in close proximity to meaningful work and an integrated transportation system, ensures a healthy and prosperous Region. Access to safe and affordable housing is one of the social determinants of health, and contributes to the overall well-being of our population. Housing built to be affordable and sustainable through the use of innovative water and energy saving tools allows us to maximize our environmental benefits, save money and reduce our carbon footprint and improve human health.

**In 2051, York Region's economy is resilient and focuses on creativity and innovation with sufficient infrastructure and resources to support a knowledge economy. York Region's diverse labour force is supported with opportunities for collaboration and continuous learning and development.**

To support this goal, York Region, working in collaboration with others, will focus on the following actions:

### **An Economy that Facilitates Creativity and Fosters Innovation**

- Recognizing the Region as a global hub for innovation
- Supporting creativity that leads to innovation and positive change
- Encouraging a strong, resilient, competitive and diverse economy that attracts global investment
- Developing and attracting businesses from a broad array of sectors
- Providing programs and initiatives that foster entrepreneurship and support small business development and growth
- Building on the fundamentals of energy, water and waste as opportunities for innovation
- Promoting the creation of eco-business and employment areas, which facilitate sustainable business practices and an eco-business approach to streamlining business operations through resource and knowledge sharing, and eco-efficiency approaches
- Supporting arts and cultural industries

### **Infrastructure and Resources Supporting a Knowledge Economy**

- Facilitating the creation of an advanced telecommunication technology infrastructure to support the innovation network across the Region
- Supporting an innovation ecosystem and the development of innovation hubs throughout the Region
- Harnessing and developing knowledge resources, including research and academic institutions
- Investing in innovation, education and training, entrepreneurs and the development of innovation incubators
- Encouraging the use of sustainability principles in business operations
- Pursuing the development of a University and a national scale innovation research institute in the Region
- Supporting the efficient movement of people and goods throughout the Region and surrounding areas





## Attracting and Developing a Creative and Skilled Work Force

- Promoting the creation of quality jobs throughout the Region, for every resident of every skill and level of education
- Promoting York Region as a destination of choice for skilled and educated new immigrants by recognizing that their education, skills and experience are vital to our global economic success
- Focusing on continuous education and training and skills development to ensure a labour force that is flexible, adaptable and resilient to economic and labour needs changes
- Identifying the educational needs of the workforce together with key workforce development agencies, business and educational partners
- Encouraging progressive and innovative work and other opportunities that respond to the needs of seniors and people with disabilities, to maximize productivity and inclusivity in the economy and provide opportunities for everyone in York Region to contribute
- Fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in the labour force and encouraging education about business and entrepreneurial skills in early education
- Recognizing the importance of quality and affordable child and elder care options to support a working population

### Making the Connections

A strong and stable economy is essential to a healthy and prosperous York Region. Strengthening the links between the natural environment, attractive cities, communities and the economy is necessary to continue to attract a skilled labour force and progressive employers that help to maintain a high quality of life and opportunities for meaningful employment. We can ensure York Region remains a destination of choice for business and investment by developing vibrant communities, providing affordable housing choices, facilitating the easy movement of goods and people and celebrating a rich arts and cultural community.



**In 2051, a seamless network for mobility provides accessibility to all destinations using diverse transportation options for people in all communities, promotes active healthy living and safely and efficiently moves people and goods.**

To support this goal, York Region, working in collaboration with others, will focus on the following actions:

#### **A System that Prioritizes People and Reduces the Need for Travel**

- Ensuring a compact, mixed-use built form that minimizes the need for travel and reduces dependence on single occupant vehicles
- Implementing and supporting transportation demand management initiatives that reduce automobile dependence by enhancing opportunities for residents and workers to walk, cycle, take transit and carpool
- Promoting initiatives including telecommuting, hoteling of offices, shared space, land use as well as working and learning arrangements that reduce the need to travel

#### **Prioritize Alternative Modes of Travel for Active Transportation**

- Providing convenient and reliable alternative modes of travel and prioritizing walking, cycling, public transit and carpooling
- Implementing a comprehensive pedestrian system and programs that encourage walking, cycling and transit use
- Facilitating an on and off-road cycling network that connects municipal cycling networks and trail systems and creates a Regional spine that will facilitate transportation by bicycle and support the use of public transit

#### **A Variety of Transit Choices**

- Providing a variety of transit facilities and services that are integrated into communities and together provide a comprehensive network of transit options that link people to places
- Enhancing public transit by improving existing infrastructure and services and maintaining the system in a state of good repair
- Improving the speed and reliability of the transit system through the use of intelligent transportation systems
- Providing universal transit access
- Providing a public transit system that combines a feeder network of buses operating in dedicated lanes and higher order transit including light rail lines and subway extensions including the Yonge Street and Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extensions







## A Network of Complete Streets

- Designing urban streets as public spaces that contribute to achieving liveable and vibrant communities by accommodating recreation and community interaction for people regardless of age or mobility, and providing access to destinations
- Supporting a road network that has a hierarchy of road types to increase travel choices
- Designing streets to prioritize the most vulnerable users; ensuring accessibility for all
- Managing congestion and optimizing the road network through intelligent transportation systems
- Designing streets to be context sensitive and complement adjacent land uses and environmental needs
- Providing beautiful, clean and well cared for streets that are maintained in a state of good repair

## Moving Our Economy

- Supporting the efficient movement of goods
- Providing an interconnected network for mobility that links people to jobs

### Making the Connections

An interconnected mobility system that encourages active transportation and is supported by an urban form, which reduces the need for long trips, is essential to creating an economically vibrant, socially-connected and environmentally-sustainable Region. Transit can play a key role in creating destinations to live, work, shop and play, and a strong economy when integrated with a vibrant mix of residential, employment and commercial land uses that reduce live-work-play distances, improve air quality and our carbon footprint and enhance the quality of life for residents, employees and visitors.

## **In 2051, sustainability can be practiced in everyday life through climate resiliency, innovative water conservation and reuse, water resource protection, waste reduction, energy conservation and greenhouse gas reduction.**

To support this goal, York Region, working in collaboration with others, will focus on the following actions:

### **Innovative Management of Water Resources**

- Demonstrating leadership in water conservation and efficiency by working to achieve no new water by 2051 by leveraging innovative technology for wastewater reuse
- Providing innovative water conservation programming, water resource protection, energy conservation and greenhouse gas reduction in water and wastewater infrastructure
- Maximizing the sustainability of the water supply and wastewater treatment through the application of best-in-class technology and practices
- Treating wastewater, including stormwater, as a resource
- Optimizing the capacity and efficiency of the wastewater system through reduced inflow and infiltration and the use of intelligent information systems
- Supporting the development of an innovative water centre in York Region

### **Waste as a Resource**

- Revaluing our resources through the provision of integrated solutions, focusing on waste prevention and reduction programs, leading to waste elimination in all sectors; striving to achieve a zero waste society
- Evolving the concept of resource management through innovative education, demonstration projects and showcases that lead the way in valuing resources while reducing waste
- Advocating for industry responsibility for full lifecycle costs for all consumer goods and repositioning waste as a resource to drive toward the achievement of enhanced product design, increased product durability and 100 per cent product and packaging recyclability
- Recognizing waste as an important resource by focusing on resource recovery, energy-from-waste opportunities and creative repurposing and reuse initiatives

### **Low-Carbon Local Energy Systems**

- Reducing dependency on non-renewable, carbon-based energy sources by diversifying local energy supply, prioritizing local energy generation and distribution and using renewable and alternative energy sources
- Promoting an energy efficient transportation network and reducing fossil fuel emissions by promoting walking, cycling and public transit
- Promoting fuel efficiency, emissions reductions, renewable fuels and the necessary infrastructure to support a low-carbon transportation system
- Encouraging energy and water efficient new building construction and retrofits to existing building stock, such that buildings can contribute to energy efficiency and water management
- Creating energy efficient water and wastewater systems





### Adapting to a New Climate, Mitigating the Change

- Advocating for increased energy efficiency and building standards to move toward zero carbon buildings
- Encouraging initiatives that move toward zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2051
- Building resiliency into infrastructure and communities
- Promoting preparedness for emergencies related to climate change including more frequent extreme weather days, droughts and flooding, vector borne diseases, invasive species, water borne diseases, extreme heat events and air quality issues
- Adapting to a changing climate by developing and implementing a corporate Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan
- Mitigating the climate impacts of urban development through cooling measures including urban forestry initiatives and other shade promoting initiatives

### Fostering Healthier and More Sustainable Behaviours

- Promoting an awareness of the value and benefits of our environment and sustainable lifestyle choices
- Providing education and training on the use of alternative transportation modes including commuting safely on cycling routes and transit use
- Fostering behavioural changes to maximize waste reduction, reuse, recycling and energy recovery
- Providing public education and outreach to increase awareness of the health impacts associated with air quality, climate change and the built environment
- Creating supportive physical and social environments through policy development and support

#### Making the Connections

Living sustainably means practicing water and energy conservation, minimizing waste generation and adapting to and mitigating against climate change. Living sustainably ensures a better quality of life for our residents and a stronger economy.



**In 2051, while the form of government may change over time, the function and principles of governance—openness, accountability, fiscal responsibility and engagement of community members in decision making—remain the key focus.**

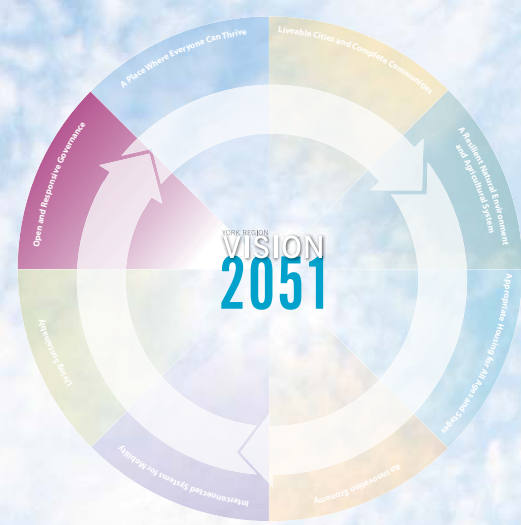
To support this goal, York Region, working in collaboration with others, will focus on the following actions:

### **Open Government**

- Setting high standards for transparency and accountability in policy and decision making
- Finding new ways to facilitate easy access to services
- Responding to the customer service needs of a diverse population through a suite of tools, techniques and approaches including e-government
- Offering services in an integrated, seamless and transparent manner with increased efficiency and effectiveness
- Supporting better representation of our cultural diversity in staff, leadership and decision making roles
- Facilitating effective communication, meaningful inclusion and citizen engagement through the use of new media tools and technologies to foster a more interactive conversation with stakeholders
- Building stronger relationships with our diverse communities including First Nations and Métis communities
- Identifying new measures to evaluate and report on our performance
- Facilitating information sharing and open data so the broader community can benefit and add value to data collected and maintained by government
- Recognizing and valuing the importance of the Region's history as a way to inform the future

### **Service Delivery through Collaboration and Partnerships**

- Examining new partnerships and collaborative opportunities to deliver services
- Improving access to services in a co-ordinated manner with all levels of government
- Maximizing partnerships with local municipalities, neighbouring municipalities, community agencies, public-sector and private-sector partners
- Fostering community-based social innovation including social enterprise, grass roots community leadership and the development of community capacity
- Advocating for progressive policy changes and integration at all levels of government
- Identifying alternative ways to deliver services, including demand management



## Operational Excellence

- Fostering a culture of innovation and excellence
- Developing high performance teams by attracting and retaining quality staff and fostering a corporate culture of continuous improvement
- Leading by example in operations, maintenance, and customer service delivery
- Evaluating decisions using the triple bottom line elements of environment, economy and community
- Using intelligent information systems to understand and make strategic and informed decisions
- Providing an adaptive and flexible structure to facilitate the ability to respond to changing context and influences
- Being a leader to whom others turn for best practices

## Fiscal Responsibility

- Practicing responsible stewardship of finances and assets
- Practicing efficiency in service delivery and operations
- Promoting fiscally responsible growth by ensuring that growth pays for growth
- Advocating for sustainable sources of funding from other levels of government
- Using a full-cost accounting approach to financial management
- Exploring innovative financial models and funding tools
- Investing in infrastructure systems to ensure they remain in a state of good repair

### Making the Connections

An open and responsive government makes transparent decisions by involving its residents, businesses and stakeholders in decision making processes. Services and information are provided through a variety of interactive e-government technologies to allow all residents and businesses to participate in their own way, and on their own time, in decision making or using government services. Government services are offered in an integrated manner, and the Region pursues excellence in its operations.

## Implementing the Vision



### Vision 2051 Informs Regional Council and Staff Decisions

Implementation and monitoring are important components of a plan's success. To ensure *Vision 2051* is successful, we will measure how goals are being achieved and monitor the appropriateness of these goals as we advance, or as circumstances and trends change.

*Vision 2051* is a key component of York Region's strategic planning and business planning processes. *Vision 2051* establishes the overall vision and direction for Regional Council and the Region's employees and sets the stage for future strategic initiatives.

### The Strategic Plan Takes Us in the Direction of Vision 2051

*Vision 2051* provides a long-range desired state for York Region. The Region's short-term *Strategic Plan* provides the critical path necessary to reach the vision. The *Strategic Plan* is set up in four-year horizons corresponding with the terms of Regional Council.





## Reporting on Our Progress

*Vision 2051* will be monitored through both the *Strategic Plan* process and progress reports itemizing the achievements made in moving toward the vision for 2051. Progress reports will be prepared every four years, the first being in 2015. Reporting on *Vision 2051* will be co-ordinated with other Regional reporting including the *Strategic Plan* and the *Sustainability Strategy*. Together, these will provide the monitoring and reporting tools required to ensure the Region successfully meets its desired future.

### **Vision 2051 is a living document**

*Vision 2051* will be a living document for York Region. Regular progress reports and monitoring ensures that we are moving in the direction of the vision. These will be prepared every four years, coinciding with the term of Regional Council. As trends, issues, and the landscape changes, *Vision 2051* will be reviewed and updated as appropriate to respond to the changing needs of the community.

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