



Year One ACHIEVEMENTS

Community
Action Tables
2022-2026





Foreword

Aligned with York Region's Vision of fostering strong, caring and safe communities, Community Action Tables (CATs) were established in Fall 2021, to support the Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan for York Region. Based on the areas of focus identified in the CSWB Plan, CATs were established within the following communities: northern Georgina, south-central Markham, central Newmarket and south-central Richmond Hill. Between 2022 and 2026, these community-driven groups will work through CATs to implement the actions outlined within the CSWB Plan. In its first year, approximately 43% of actions are completed or underway and 5,992 residents have been engaged through CATs.



As the Plan evolves, there will be opportunities to scale up successful initiatives across northern Georgina, south-central Markham, central Newmarket and south-central Richmond Hill. We look forward to seeing more successful initiatives emerge as the work of the Tables continues. It is our pleasure to acknowledge and thank our partners, all residents involved, and each Table Lead. (*Table Lead's agency names can be found on the back cover*). Each of our partners were instrumental in achieving the results of the first year.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mayors Margaret Quirk, Frank Scarpitti, John Taylor and David West, as well as local councillors and municipal staff from various departments. These staff have been integral to supporting CAT projects, activities and engagements.

As well, a special thanks to the Human Services Planning Board (HSPB) for its valuable guidance and advice along the way.

01



Overview

The Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan for York Region is a long-term tool to enhance the safety and well-being of our communities through proactive, targeted and locally-driven actions.

In May 2021, Council approved Community Action Tables (CATs) in northern Georgina, south-central Markham, central Newmarket and south-central Richmond Hill. CATs bring many stakeholders together and meet regularly to develop targeted strategies that reflect community needs and address specific service gaps.

THE CATS FOCUS ON COMMUNITIES THAT CAN BENEFIT THE MOST, LEVERAGE AND ENHANCE COMMUNITY ASSETS AND STRENGTHEN LOCAL CAPACITY TO DRIVE CHANGE

Informed by data and community consultations, the CATs take a proactive approach and focus on priority risks of mental well-being, housing stability and economic stability.

This report documents some of the many accomplishments of the CATs during their first year and the partnerships and collaboration that made them possible.



A

NORTHERN GEORGINA

Mental well-being and economic stability



B

CENTRAL NEWMARKET

Mental well-being and housing stability



C

SOUTH-CENTRAL RICHMOND HILL

Mental well-being and housing stability



D

SOUTH-CENTRAL MARKHAM

Mental well-being and housing stability



02

Partnership and Collaboration

In their first year, each CAT developed a Community Action Plan that outlined short-, medium- and long-term actions they will take to address priority issues identified by residents and stakeholders. The Action Plan for each CAT can be found in the appendices of the CSWB Plan.

Residents, local agencies and other stakeholders collaborate daily to ensure the actions outlined in each Action Plan are initiated and completed, or continue to have a local impact. In addition to being well connected to the local community, the Table ambassadors know the most significant assets within their local neighbourhoods (for example, the Newmarket community fridge). Community ambassadors and residents contribute their lived experiences, local expertise, and personal connections to move actions forward.



Each Table includes a variety of community practitioners from local agencies who contribute their skills and knowledge to take community actions from point A (a priority in concept) to point B (a priority in action). Many local agencies have ongoing community programs that complement and offer opportunities that the entire Table can make use of. In each of our four focus areas, siloed community work is actively being broken down by partnering with local agencies and stakeholders to maximize resources and positive impact in the community. As part of Table engagement, Regional staff from various departments and units provide leadership and knowledge and approve CAT strategic directions.

“I would love to see our location be engaged with more events to support the community like this. Going forward, I want to stay in touch as I think we can all be great partners as we serve the community around us.”

– Jack Klooster, Genesis Place

Community Actions in Action

The south-central Markham CAT held a Housing Summit at Y-Space in Markham on November 24, 2022, which fulfilled an early action identified under its housing stability priority. The successful Summit was the result of partnerships in action.

To determine what topics should be addressed at the Summit, the leadership of the Markham CAT convened numerous sub-committee meetings with agencies, ambassadors and resident leaders. To ensure the community was informed about resources and services relevant to housing stability and to educate tenants on their rights, the housing stability sub-committee worked hard to identify and secure speakers from the Region and the Canadian





Centre for Housing Rights. In addition to lending their support leading up to the Summit and setting up the venue space on the day of the Summit, local agencies also displayed their service offerings to help attendees understand the supports that are available. Furthermore, the CAT partnered with a local business to cater the educational session. People, with a variety of lived experiences along the housing continuum participated in the event, shared their stories and learned more about issues related to housing.

Each CAT is led by a community agency that helps to move forward each Action Plan. York Region staff work closely with the CAT leads to connect resources and broker relationships across the community, institutions, school boards and municipal governments.

“It makes me happy to see many people involved and doing something they love. It really created a sense of community.”

– A resident who joined both of Sing to Sync’s events

03

Implementation and Impact

During the first year, 52 of 122 actions identified in their Action Plans have been completed or are underway. With the support of Quick Action Grants by United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT), CATs were able to empower resident leaders and community agencies to accomplish many actions from each Action Plan.

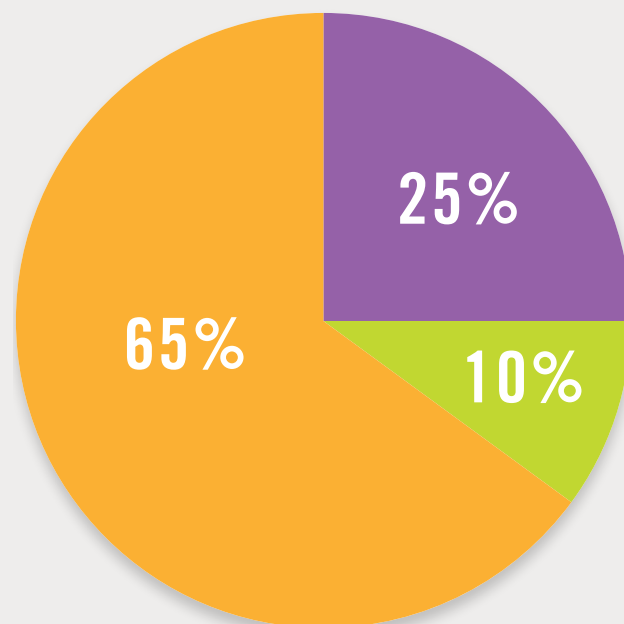
“I am convinced that the Georgina CAT project and the Quick Action Grants will have a great impact on people’s lives. Its a great way to re-introduce Georgina and the Great things that Happen Here. It is a fantastic way to reach out to the Seniors, and Mentally Challenged and show them the great Services that are available here in this community.”

- A Resident Ambassador

HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF THE GREAT WORK ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE QUICK ACTION GRANTS:









- The Wilclay Women’s Group successfully launched a **mental health awareness workshop** for women of colour in south-central Markham.
- In northern Georgina, a resident-led project offered a workshop series to **support residents’ mental well-being** through mindful meditation, music and dynamic movement.
- In south-central Richmond Hill, an agency-led project focused on **working with survivors of mental health diagnoses** through an **instrumental and choral music program**.
- The Newmarket Heights tenant outreach project, in partnership with the central Newmarket CAT, **educated tenants with a history of displacement and illegal evictions about their rights**.

52 ACTIONS ARE COMPLETED OR UNDERWAY:





A. Northern Georgina

| Actions | Completed | Ongoing | In-Progress |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mental Well-Being  |  |  |  |
| Conduct a resident mental well-being survey to inform community projects and service delivery | ● | | |
| Create and maintain a community resource Asset Map | | ● | |
| Share resources to increase access to information and connections to mental health supports | ● | ● | |
| Improve coordination and integration of services with established community networks | | ● | |
| Build partnerships across the focus area for referrals and supports | | | ● |
| Build Resident-led Ambassador Groups to encourage resident participation in CAT actions | ● | | ● |
| Host social and cultural inclusion activities (e.g., community kitchens, free tax clinics, festivals, peer-support groups, and coffee chats for parents) | ● | ● | |
| Develop a Food Program model that adapts to cultures, offering diverse foods | | ● | |
| Find more accessible spaces for communities (e.g., community gardens) | | ● | ● |
| Economic Stability  |  |  |  |
| Host Employment Readiness Workshops with a focus on transitional supports, coaching, interview skills, and resume writing | | ● | |
| Conduct Employer Workshops with a focus on preparing the workplace for a diverse range of workers (e.g., youth, women, Indigenous, newcomer, etc.) and job shadowing/coaching opportunities | | ● | |
| Sponsor/support local job fairs | ● | ● | |
| Conduct a feasibility study for the creation of a Working Centre for Northern Georgina | ● | | |
| Explore developing Youth Business Program with partners | | ● | ● |

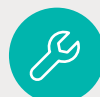
LEGEND



Completed

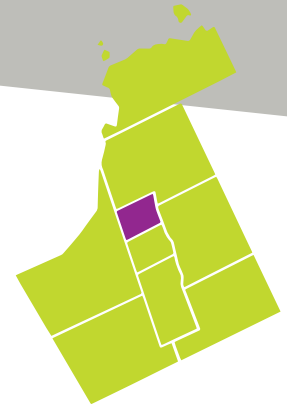







Ongoing



Actions in Progress

B. Central Newmarket











| Actions | | Completed | Ongoing | In-Progress |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Mental Well-Being  | |  |  |  |
| Create and maintain a community resource Asset Map | | ● | ● | |
| Develop a Service Fair Roadshow to support access and awareness of services | | | ● | |
| Develop a self-serve program to improve service navigation (e.g., hotline, directory for mental and health and housing, which are the priority risks in this focus area) | | ● | ● | |
| Create community connections and host mental health events in collaboration with partners | | ● | | ● |
| Housing Stability  | | | | |
| Provide education/awareness workshops (e.g., legal clinics, financial literacy, tenant rights, etc.) | | ● | ● | |
| Explore partnerships to support residents to understand their housing needs | | | | ● |

“Over the past year, the Newmarket Community Action Table (CAT) has engaged local residents and service providers of Central Newmarket to tackle grassroots issues affecting the well-being of our community by focusing on partnership, education, and support. As a CAT member, I’m privileged to be working alongside other local members of this community to improve our collective response to community stressors such as food and housing instability. Together we strive for greater collective impact.”

- Alex Cheng, Director of Programs, Housing and Health, Blue Door











C. South-Central Richmond Hill

| Actions | Completed | Ongoing | In-Progress |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mental Well-Being  |  |  |  |
| Finalize and maintain a comprehensive Asset Map of services to share with residents and partners | ● | ● | |
| Examine and support how institutions and organizations are making their services culturally relevant (e.g., race, language, ethnicity) | | | ● |
| Create a Community Bulletin Board Program to provide frequent updates regarding community programs and services | ● | | |
| Develop Little Libraries and arts programs to connect with residents | ● | | |
| Implement youth and other community engagement events about mental health and substance use | ● | ● | |
| Use community gardens and green spaces to connect with residents | | | ● |
| Increase low-cost/free Recreation Programming for youth and adults | ● | ● | |
| Negotiate use of space to offer services (e.g., library, mall) | ● | ● | |
| Expand Food Donation and Delivery programs to support food stability | | | ● |
| Identify local shower facilities for people experiencing homelessness | | | ● |
| Increase safety monitoring of neighbourhood (e.g., implementing trauma-informed Community Watch Program to complement police services) | | | ● |
| Examine options for increased Street Lighting at night | | | ● |
| Housing Stability  |  |  |  |
| Provide education/awareness workshops, and develop and deliver communication campaigns to improve awareness of housing supports (e.g., legal clinic, financial literacy, tenant rights) | ● | ● | |
| Identify people at risk of homelessness and make connections to them (e.g., referral system to support outreach) | | ● | |
| Enhance support for vulnerable residents (e.g., sign-up for childcare, meal delivery shifts, community Tool Lending Program) | | | ● |

D. South-Central Markham



| Actions | Completed | Ongoing | In-Progress |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mental Well-Being  |  |  |  |
| Conduct asset mapping to create an inventory of services and identify those that are culturally specific | ● | ● | |
| Engage residents of all cultures to better understand and address barriers to service access | ● | ● | |
| Reduce stigma around mental well-being through public education and awareness | ● | ● | |
| Explore the use of community space for programs and networking | ● | ● | |
| Host events to bring people together and improve the community's sense of belonging | ● | ● | |
| Strengthen partnerships with faith-based and cultural organizations to better engage the community | | ● | |
| Build resident civic engagement skills | | ● | |
| Advocate/create/support opportunities for community agencies and residents to participate in government decision-making | | ● | |
| Identify and understand relationships across cultures (resident to resident) and develop a Culturally Diverse Stories Project about mental wellness | ● | | |
| Housing Stability  |  |  |  |
| Create a platform to improve community outreach using social media | | ● | |
| Share information on resources and services at existing hubs, faith-based centres, and libraries | ● | ● | |
| Educate tenants on their rights and build awareness of eviction prevention programs | | | ● |
| Host education and awareness-building sessions on housing issues, (e.g., documenting lived experiences along the housing continuum) | ● | ● | |
| Examine service pathways to better understand and address barriers | ● | ● | |
| Create opportunities for tenant-led initiatives and resident capacity building | ● | ● | |
| Examine how to integrate Community Action Table work with other organizations that have similar mandates (e.g., Affordable Housing Coalition) | ● | ● | |
| Advocate to implement the Rights to Housing Framework and bylaws to support housing affordability | ● | | |

04



First Anniversary Celebration of The Community Action Tables

On October 15, 2022, York Region held the First Anniversary Celebration of the Community Action Tables to celebrate and recognize the accomplishments of the CATs and the contributions of the community ambassadors.

Newmarket Mayor John Taylor, Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Richmond Hill Mayor David West, Police Inspector Sarah Jane Riddell and United Way Greater Toronto Manager Neighborhoods Ronni Gorman spoke about the Plan, the importance of community safety and people well-being for the Region and the value of creating an environment where everyone is safe, cared for and can thrive.

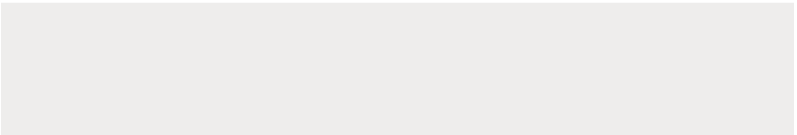
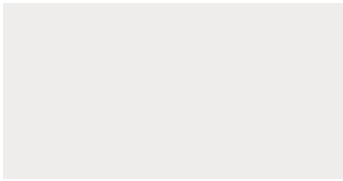
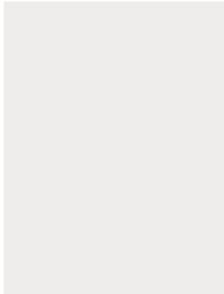
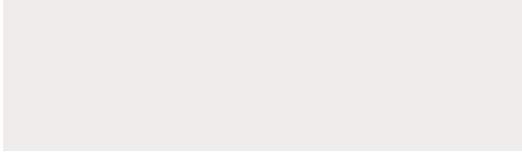
York Region's Director of Strategies and Partnerships, Joseph Silva, served as the Master of Ceremonies at the Celebration.

05

Looking Ahead: Next Steps For 2023

In 2023, York Region will continue its strategic and collaborative efforts to foster robust, safe and caring communities. The CATs will work alongside resident leaders, learn from their lived experiences and co-create opportunities to act on local priorities across the four focus areas.

The Tables will build on the successes and lessons learned in year one as they continue to implement their action plans. For example, each focus area is working on expanding their resident-centered community asset maps, expanding the involvement of community ambassadors and resident leaders, creating additional opportunities for school and youth collaboration, developing community watch programming, rerunning successful workshops and projects and much more.



To Get Involved

Would you like to get involved? Please reach out to communityaction@york.ca

We extend our sincere thanks to all Community Action Table lead agencies who served in northern Georgina, south-central Richmond Hill, central Newmarket, and south-central Markham. The following were lead agencies during the first year of the Tables: *Routes Connecting Communities, Agincourt Community Service Association, and Canadian Mental Health Association.*

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