



Community and Health Services Department
Office of the Commissioner

Memorandum

TO: Members of Committee of the Whole
FROM: Adelina Urbanski
Commissioner, Community and Health Services
DATE: April 7, 2016
RE: **York Region Seniors Strategy Advisory Task Force Update**

This memo is to provide an update to Council on the work of the Seniors Strategy Advisory Task Force.

The Task Force has been working to better understand the changing seniors demographic to help inform a York Region Seniors Strategy. The Task Force has two key deliverables, including:

1. A Corporate Seniors Strategy
 - To define the Region's role in serving seniors
 - To establish guiding principles
 - To identify areas for action
 - To support an advocacy agenda
2. A Decision-Making Tool
 - To be based on guiding principles
 - To guide Regional staff in making recommendations to Council on current and new programs for seniors

The Advisory Task Force will provide advice and feedback to inform the Strategy

The Task Force was established in June 2015 to serve as a temporary advisory body to Regional Council. The Task Force is made up of eight Regional Council members appointed by Council, and is chaired by Regional Councillor Mario Ferri, with Regional Councillor Brenda Hogg serving as Vice Chair.

During each meeting, Task Force members hear from external subject-matter experts introducing cross-jurisdictional innovation and best practices; and regional staff presentations to identify current programs and growing pressures. In addition to an

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orientation session, the Task Force has met twice. The key outcomes and discussion highlights from these meetings are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Task Force Meeting Discussion Highlights

Meeting Theme	Discussion Highlights
<p>The Financial Lens: Broader policy and financial sustainability <i>December 9, 2015</i></p> <p>Presenter: <i>Financing Municipal Services:</i> Harry Kitchen, Professor Emeritus, Trent University</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to focus on intergenerational equity, as many seniors are financially stable, while many working-age people are struggling. • Policy needs to consider all low-income people, regardless of age, while keeping fiscal sustainability a priority.
<p>The Health Lens: Health promotion, prevention and protection <i>February 24, 2016</i></p> <p>Presenters: <i>The Healthcare Perspective- Living Longer, Living Well:</i> Dr. Samir K. Sinha, MD, DPhil, FRCPC, Director of Geriatrics, Mount Sinai and the University Health Network Hospitals and Provincial Lead, Ontario's Senior's Strategy</p> <p><i>The Municipal Role in Long Term Care:</i> Dan Buchanan, Financial Policy Director with the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes & Services for Seniors (OANHSS)</p> <p><i>Paramedic and Seniors Services:</i> Norm Barrette, Chief and General Manager, York Region Paramedic and Seniors Services</p> <p><i>Healthy Aging, The Public Health Perspective:</i> Dr. Karim Kurji, Medical Officer of Health, The Regional Municipality of York</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our population has changed, but the healthcare system has not. The most complex 10% of older adults, amongst those 65 and older, account for 60% of Ontario's healthcare spending. • Homecare is a cost-friendly option, but it is also the preference among seniors. • A need exists for better system navigation of services for seniors and a greater role for Community Paramedicine and seniors outreach programs. • The demand for long-term care beds outpaces the supply and is projected to double between now and 2021. • There is a need to divert residents back to the community and explore the option of combining long-term care homes with supportive housing to create a continuum of care. • It is important to ensure that municipal governments are included in the policy planning process. • An aging population means that long-term care residents are older and have a greater complexity of care, resulting in an increased cost per day and implications for sustainability. • Task Force members heard about innovative and cost-effective initiatives coming out of Paramedic and Seniors Services and Public Health around prevention. • While preventable, falls are the leading cause of injury related hospital visits for seniors, and as the senior population grows, these numbers will continue to rise.

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Next Steps:

The remaining Task Force meetings will focus on:

- Aging in place: Housing and community planning
April 8, 2016
- Staying Safe and Connected: Civic, Community Engagement and Communications, Social Supports and Safety, Transportation and Mobility
June 17, 2016
- Finalization of Task Force recommendations
September 2016 (TBD)

The York Region Seniors Strategy will be presented to Council for approval in November 2016.

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