



2023 Annual Report

# **UNLOCKING** YORK REGION'S **DIGITAL** FUTURE



## Vision

Helping create equitable access to high-speed internet

## Mission

Expanding open access to high-speed internet throughout York Region

## Focus

Planning, building and operating an affordable, reliable and sustainable fibre network across York Region

### Land acknowledgement

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

## Contents

2023 Chair of the Board message .....	4
Governance .....	6
Mandate .....	7
2023 accomplishments .....	8
2024 key priorities .....	9
Fibre gets a boost in York Region .....	10
The evolution of YorkNet.....	12
Elevating connectivity through partnerships .....	14
Partnership success stories.....	16
Connecting to and empowering communities.....	18

# A message from the 2023 Chair of the Board



The team at YorkNet works every day to advance how York Region's 1.2 million residents connect with each other and the world. While our business is installing dark fibre infrastructure, our impact goes far beyond laying cables underground. YorkNet is embarking on a digital journey to ensure equitable access to high-speed internet for everyone, while also enhancing Regional services.

Our progress in 2023 saw YorkNet achieve several key milestones in expanding the dark fibre network to meet its mandate of increasing connectivity in York Region. By the end of 2023, YorkNet had constructed 710 kilometres of dark fibre network. Total network connections increased to a total of

887 adding more reliable, secure and fast connections to the network in support of essential services such as police, fire, paramedics, traffic control and public transit.

Our achievements were truly transformative—made possible by the announcement of a nearly \$48-million joint investment from the federal and provincial governments through the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF). Together with funding from the Region and the Internet Service Provider of the project, nearly \$120 million will be infused into YorkNet's network, allowing for the expansion of hundreds of kilometres to reach thousands of underserved homes by the end of 2025. The expansion of the network will enable redundancies for York Region services, reducing the risk of loss of connectivity and provide fibre across the Region to support future opportunities.

As our society and economy increasingly rely on electronic and online interactions, YorkNet is prepared for this evolution. Fast, effective broadband infrastructure is now vital for the Region's success in delivering services and interacting with residents. Reliable digital connectivity is also critical to support economic development and attract new investment to York Region. Looking forward, YorkNet has a clear plan to build on the momentum of expanding its fibre network. A strong foundation will allow us to capitalize on key growth opportunities and we will continue working with partners to enable digital services to more people and places. YorkNet's network is the backbone to unlocking the Region's digital future and sets York Region apart as a leader through its world-class digital infrastructure.

As Chair and on behalf of every member of the Board, thank you to our many partners within the private and public sectors, helping to make our cities and towns more connected places. By combining efforts and utilizing the power of dark fibre, we can narrow the digital divide, fostering a more connected and inclusive York Region.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Margaret Quirk". The signature is fluid and cursive.

2023 Chair of the Board  
Mayor, Town of Georgina

**“YorkNet’s network is the backbone to unlocking the Region’s digital future and sets York Region apart as a leader through its world-class digital infrastructure.”**

# Governance

YorkNet is one of three York Region-owned corporations and is funded by the Region. It is governed by the *Ontario Business Corporations Act*, the *Municipal Act Regulation* and Shareholder direction.

## 2023 Board of Directors

Reporting to the Shareholder (Regional Council), Directors of the Board are required to oversee YorkNet's business and affairs, approve the annual business plan and budget, appoint or hire officers of the Corporation and delegate day-to-day management to officers.

## Board of Directors



Chair of the Board  
**Margaret Quirk**  
Mayor  
Town of Georgina



Vice Chair of the Board  
**Steve Pellegrini**  
Mayor  
Township of King



Director and CEO  
**Wayne Emmerson**  
York Region  
Chairman and CEO



Director  
**Iain Lovatt**  
Mayor  
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville



Director  
**Frank Scarpitti**  
Mayor  
City of Markham



Director  
**Michael Chan**  
Regional Councillor  
City of Markham



Director  
**Joe DiPaola**  
Regional Councillor  
City of Richmond Hill



Director  
**Mario G. Racco**  
Regional Councillor  
City of Vaughan



Director  
**Tom Vegh**  
Regional Councillor  
Town of Newmarket

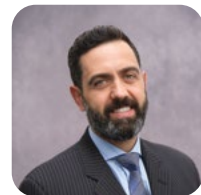
## Executive Leadership Team



**Dino Basso**  
Vice President



**Laura Bradley**  
General Manager



**David Di Giovanni**  
Chief Financial Officer

# Mandate



## Growing York Region's dark fibre network

Improve the delivery of Regional services, such as traffic management, transit systems, water/waste water control management, security monitoring, policing and cloud-enabled applications



## Collaborating with public-sector organizations to improve high-speed internet service

Work with municipalities, hospitals, libraries, fire halls, schools, community centres and other public-sector organizations to improve broadband services they deliver using our network



## Providing private-sector organizations with open access to the network

Drive economic and social benefits and enhance broadband service for the Region's residents and businesses, particularly in rural and underserved areas of the Region

# LAYING THE GROUNDWORK...

## 2023 accomplishments

Throughout its short six-year history, YorkNet has constructed hundreds of kilometres of dark fibre infrastructure helping local businesses compete and enabling customers to connect with increasingly greater speed, reach and reliability.

By expanding access and empowering underserved communities, YorkNet is bridging the digital divide and unlocking significant opportunities for the Region's digital future.

**136KM**

new network built through Universal Broadband Fund program

**710KM**

of network complete

**887**

total network connections

**87**

total connections made to municipal and Regional locations, hospitals and third parties

## 2024 key priorities

### EXPAND

- Fibre network by more than 300 kilometres through the network expansion, funded in part by the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF)

### CONNECT

- More than 100 Regional, municipal, public-sector and third-party connections to the network including new Recreation Centres in The Township of King and Town of East Gwillimbury, and a new Paramedic Response Station in Vaughan

### COLLABORATE

- With third-party partners to achieve efficiencies from joint construction and facilitate use of the YorkNet fibre network
- With internal partners to implement new digital solutions for the Region

### IMPLEMENT

- A new asset management system and state-of-the-art tracking system to monitor the integrity of YorkNet's dark fibre network and assets

### CONTINUE

- Construction funded through York Region, federal and provincial governments and private-sector partner to expand into rural communities to bridge the digital divide in York Region
- Support for Internet Service Provider partner to activate bringing fibre to the home for eligible customers as part of UBF

...TO LIGHT THE **FUTURE**

# Fibre gets a boost in York Region

YorkNet is diligently constructing its dark fibre network and will build hundreds of kilometres over the next few years. The network will connect more Regional and local municipal facilities and support connected communities.

YorkNet has and continues to make considerable progress to deliver equitable access to reliable, cost-effective broadband in its underserved communities. Guided by the YorkNet Expansion Project with support from the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF), what was once a vision to connect all corners of the Region is on the way to becoming an exciting reality.

## The network expansion including UBF entail:

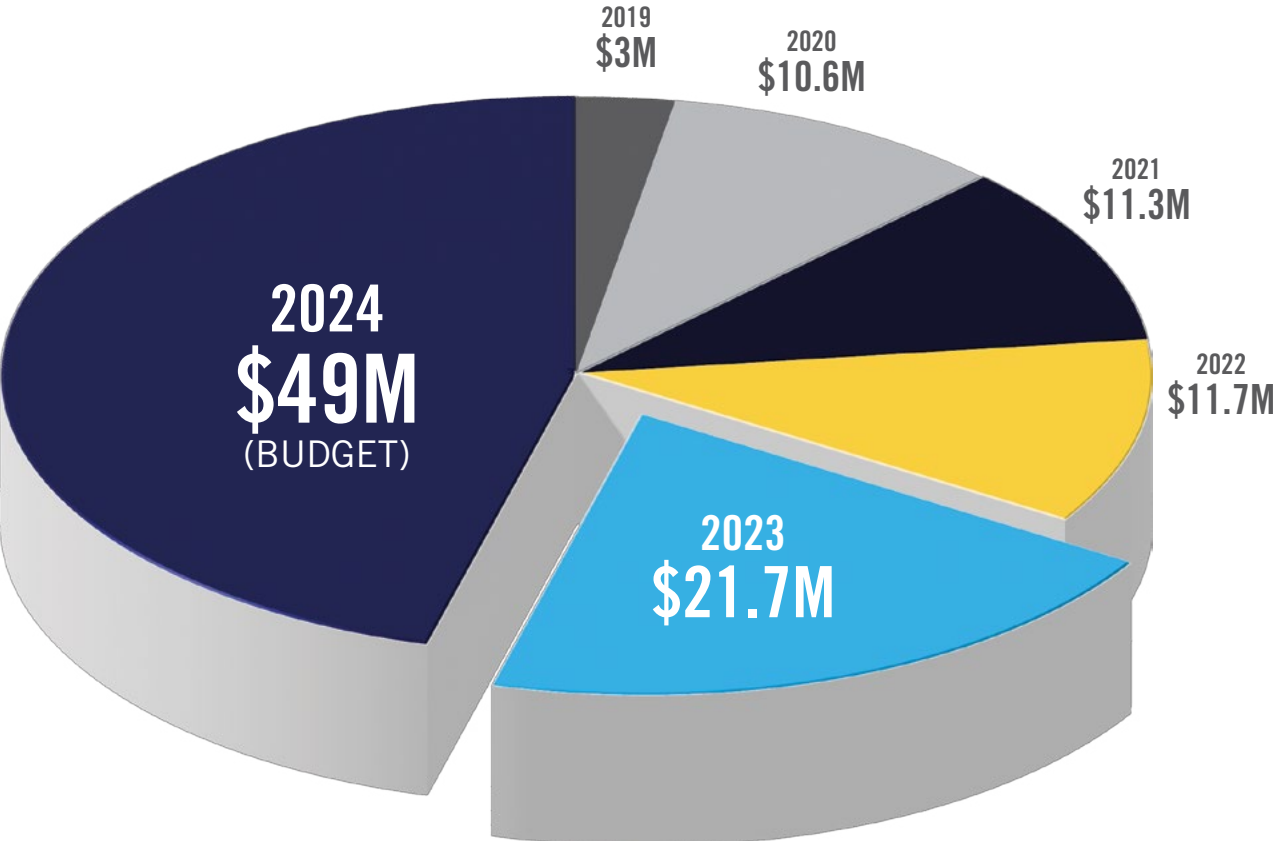
- Extending the network by nearly 750 last-mile kilometres, serving more than 3,800 underserved homes
- Enabling internet service providers to connect to YorkNet’s open-access network
- Preparing York Region to adapt to future technologies while providing connectivity solutions



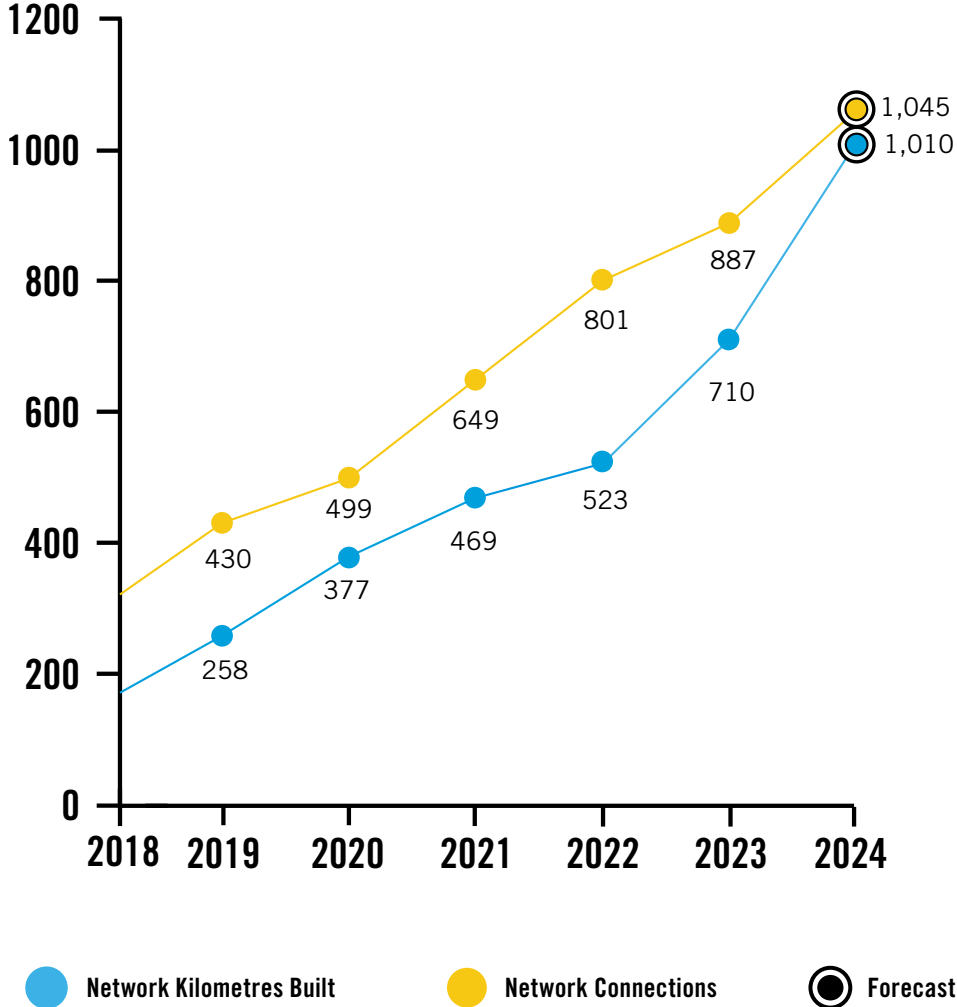
Estimates are based on 2023 pricing.

# The evolution of YorkNet

## BUDGET SPENT



## NETWORK CONNECTIONS AND KILOMETRES BUILT



The above statistics do not include the UBF/ICON routes. Numbers are current as of 05/27/2024



## Elevating connectivity through partnerships




Partnerships and collaboration are essential to defining, developing and continuing to grow a broadband network to serve all of York Region. That's why YorkNet continues to grow its relationships with key stakeholders.

### YorkNet connections in 2023

As a trusted fibre partner, YorkNet connected 87 additional Regional and municipal sites and worked with third-party providers to further expand. By the end of 2023, there were a total of 887 network connections, up from 801 the previous year.

These important alliances are instrumental in ensuring the building of an affordable, reliable and sustainable high-speed network that not only enhances Regional and municipal services, but also bridges the digital divide to close the gaps and connect every corner of the Region.



### Regional connections

-  54 traffic controllers that support roads and operations
-  2 paramedic stations
-  6 water and wastewater facilities

-  A new early intervention centre and seniors affordable housing development in Markham
-  The Bernard Bus Terminal in Richmond Hill

### Local connections

-  The York University Campus located in Markham set to open in 2024 ([see page 16](#))
-  The Multi-Use Recreational Complex in Georgina opening in 2024
-  5 local municipal facilities including a library, recreation centre and a museum

-  2 health clinics including a cardiovascular clinic and dialysis urgent care clinic
-  A school within the York Region District School Board



# Partnership success stories

## Dark fibre is the connection to a brighter future

In July 2020, construction of the first university in York Region, the York University Markham Centre Campus began. The new 10-storey campus, will be located in a transit-integrated, mixed-use, and high-density urban core in the centre of Markham.

As the Markham Campus gets set to welcome its inaugural student cohort in the fall 2024, faculty and students will be able to take advantage of state-of-the-art technology for academic learning and research needs. YorkNet played a key role in enabling access to the latest technology by installing a dark fibre connection to the new campus. In November 2023, the University lit the dark fibre enabling digital activities such as network services in preparation for staff and students.

The new Markham Campus is a remote network site. By using YorkNet's connection, digital information is sent safely and securely to the main Keele Campus. Having a direct

fibre connection between the two campuses allows for high-speed network connectivity, collaboration and the flexibility to grow with more students and faculty in the future.

YorkNet's dark fibre will enhance business operations as it provides high-speed connectivity and allows the network and services to be closely monitored. An equally important benefit of partnering with YorkNet ensures operations at the new campus are future proof, meaning the network has capacity to increase bandwidth as requirements expand.

Finally, being connected to YorkNet's network allows the University to deliver highbandwith to the Markham Campus, ensuring reliable network connectivity, low latency and scalability for enhanced education, research, cloud computing and virtual reality to name just a few.

YorkNet is proud to contribute to the new campus project that will embed York University in the heart of Markham, one of the most diverse and dynamic cities in Canada. It's an ideal home for a community of positive changemakers, with opportunities for students and faculty to collaborate directly with employers, start-ups and community partners to right the future.



## Enhancing Regional services through YorkNet connections

To fulfill YorkNet's mandate of improving the delivery of Regional services, such as traffic management, transit systems and water/wastewater control management, YorkNet connects Regional sites to the corporate network and enables the connection to wireless network services known as Wi-Fi. Wi-Fi connectivity utilizing YorkNet's network provides improved security, increased availability and reliability and is fundamental to the delivery of important Regional services such as:

- York Region's long-term care homes allowing staff and seniors to stay connected with technology
- Vaccine clinics allowing for real-time reporting, workflow efficiencies and improved patient experience
- Water and wastewater facilities ensuring the capture of real-time data for surveillance and quality monitoring

In 2023, YorkNet, in partnership with York Region Paramedic Services and the Region's Information Technology team, installed Wi-Fi at all new paramedic response stations and two existing stations in Sutton and Markham. Using YorkNet's network for Wi-Fi connectivity allows for improved security features, the ability to provide on-site training to first responders, provides increased stability by decreasing the number of service calls and service disruptions. It also eliminates external internet service provider costs.

Wi-Fi connectivity will be implemented at other paramedic response stations and Regional buildings as part of YorkNet's planned future network expansion.



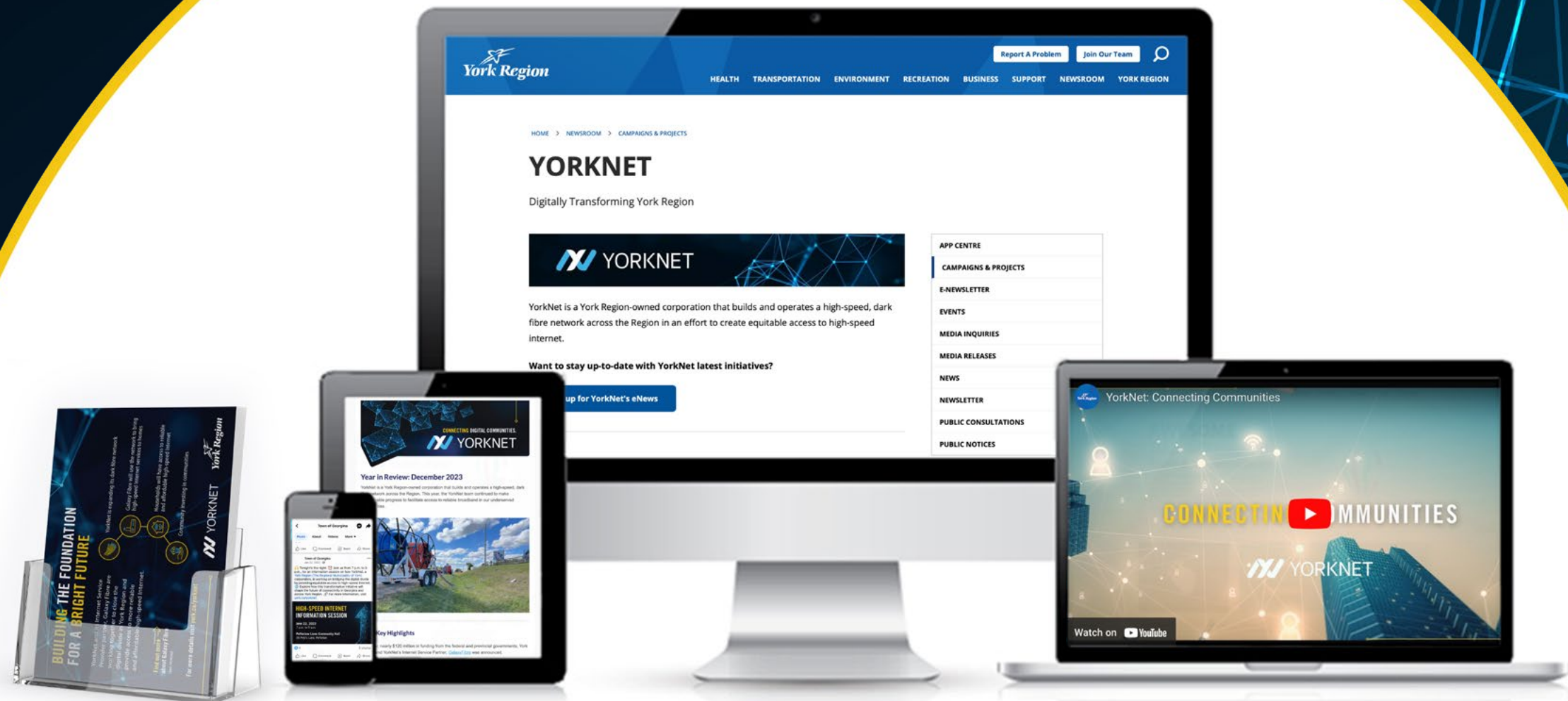
# Connecting to and empowering communities

YorkNet continues to make significant strides in narrowing York Region's digital divide. Bringing internet access and information to underserved communities is crucial for empowerment, education and economic growth. Access to dark fibre helps overcome barriers and paves the way for a more inclusive future.

As YorkNet constructs hundreds of kilometres of network over the next several years, the team is committed to engaging and communicating with citizens and interested parties throughout the network expansion.

## 2023 highlights

- **Held four engagements sessions** (King, East Gwillimbury, Georgina and Stouffville)
- **Issued inaugural edition of *Connecting Digital Communities***, an electronic newsletter with updates on construction and the project expansion
- **Distributed more than 500 information cards** about the role of YorkNet and its Internet Service Provider partner in bringing high-speed internet to communities
- **Relaunched [yorknet.ca](http://yorknet.ca)** with the latest information on YorkNet's expansion
- **Released a video** to provide a better understanding of what's involved in bringing high-speed internet to a home





[york.ca/yorknet](http://york.ca/yorknet)

17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket, Ontario  
1-877-464-9675 | [yorknet@york.ca](mailto:yorknet@york.ca)

