

# FUTURE COMMUNITY HOUSING AT 14TH AVENUE AND DONALD COUSENS PARKWAY IN THE CITY OF MARKHAM

## COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

*Last updated: May 2025*

York Region is planning to develop community housing development at the corner of 14th Avenue and Donald Cousens Parkway in the City of Markham. Community engagement is critical to the Region's plans, and we are committed to keeping community members informed and engaged as we progress from planning to design to construction. By working with our neighbours, we can address community considerations and build a complete community with housing options to support residents at all ages and stages in their lives.

We look forward to working with the Box Grove community and City of Markham as the development moves forward. For more information and to get involved, visit [york.ca/BoxGroveHYI](https://york.ca/BoxGroveHYI)

This document will be updated regularly to respond to questions from the community.

## WHAT IS COMMUNITY HOUSING?

Community housing offers subsidized or affordable rents to households with low and moderate incomes, provided by non-profit groups, cooperative housing providers and Housing York Inc. (HYI), York Region's housing company.

At the end of 2024, there were more than 18,400 households on York Region's subsidized housing wait list.

Affordable housing is one of the greatest challenges facing the Region today. In the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, York Region has the lowest proportion of rental housing at 14%, and the highest proportion of households spending 30% or more of their income on housing costs, with 52% of renters facing affordability challenges.<sup>1</sup> In early 2021, York Regional Council declared a housing affordability crisis and established a Housing Affordability Task Force to identify solutions and initiate actionable change. York Region and Housing York Inc. are committed to increasing the supply of community housing in all communities across the Region.

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<sup>1</sup> Housing Matters: A Review of the Housing Market in York Region (2019 Update)

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New community housing buildings include market rate apartments available to the public to rent. This offers a key component of 'missing middle' housing, homes that fall in between single detached dwellings and high-rise apartments, providing an opportunity for those who prefer renting over owning.

## **WHAT IS YORK REGION'S ROLE IN COMMUNITY HOUSING?**

As the designated Service Manager under the [Housing Services Act, 2011](#), York Region is responsible for funding, administering and delivering community housing and homelessness services as mandated and regulated by the province.

The Region's housing provider, Housing York Inc. (HYI), has a critical role within the community housing segment by providing safe, affordable housing options to more than 4,500 residents. Housing York Inc. owns and operates 41% of community housing units in York Region and has committed to doubling the rate of growth to increase much needed community housing supply.

## **WHAT IS HOUSING YORK INC.?**

[Housing York Inc.](#) (HYI), York Region's housing company is the largest community housing operator in York Region. As a leader in the Region's housing sector, HYI manages and maintains 38 housing properties with more than 4,500 residents in more than 3,000 units located in all nine local cities, townships and towns.

## **WHY WAS THIS LOCATION CHOSEN?**

The property at the corner of 14th Avenue and Donald Cousens Parkway is already Regionally owned and supports critical underground infrastructure to support York Region residents.

The site was selected for housing based on the established need for affordable housing in Markham, the existing neighbourhood that includes numerous parks, shops and community amenities and its alignment with City and Regional land use planning objectives. The site is located close to schools, the Box Grove Community Centre, cycling routes and the Rouge National Urban Park. Major shopping centres with grocery stores, medical offices and daycare are within 1.5 kilometres of the site. The site is serviced by [York Region Transit](#).

There is a significant need for affordable housing options in the City of Markham<sup>2</sup>. Research shows:

- One-in-three households in Markham have housing affordability issues
- Nearly one-in-five households in Markham are spending 50% or more of their income on housing alone
- Average price of a resale home in Markham has doubled over the last 10 years
- Average market rent is increasing faster than inflation

The proposed location at 14th Avenue and Donald Cousens Parkway provides an opportunity to help address the significant need for more housing options.

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<sup>2</sup> City of Markham Affordable and Rental Housing Study Phase 1: Housing Needs Assessment (April 2019)

## **WHAT IS THE PLANNING APPROVAL PROCESS FOR THIS DEVELOPMENT?**

Like any proposed development, municipal planning approvals from the City of Markham and community consultation are required. The project received Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw Amendment approvals in 2024. The required Site Plan Approval application was endorsed by City of Markham Council, with full approval anticipated in 2025. Construction will not begin until all appropriate approvals and permits from the City are in place.

## **WHAT IS PROPOSED ON THE SITE?**

The proposed development is for 153 units within a four and six-storey building with underground and surface parking and outdoor amenity space. The project incorporates technical and community feedback and offers much-needed rental housing, including affordable and market rent options.

## **WHAT ARE THE PROJECT TIMELINES?**

York Region anticipates securing site plan approval and prequalifying potential builders in 2025. Site preparation work and construction are expected to begin in 2025 once required approvals and permits from the City of Markham are in place.

York Region submitted an initial planning application to the City of Markham in January 2022. The application has been reviewed by City departments and other commenting agencies like the Toronto Region Conservation Authority. As part of the approvals process, the proposal was shared at a [Public Meeting held by the City of Markham in June 2022](#).

York Region submitted revised planning applications on October 12 and December 21, 2023, to address community and City feedback. The City of Markham held a second [Public Meeting on January 23, 2024](#), to discuss the revised proposal and receive public feedback. The supporting Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment was approved by the City of Markham's [Development Services Committee on March 5, 2024](#), and adopted by [Markham City Council on March 20, 2024](#).

The proposal is subject to site plan control, which is a development approval process in the City of Markham. Through the site plan application process, the City reviews the design and layout of the development including building location, landscaping, parking, drainage, pedestrian access, sidewalk improvements, etc. to ensure compliance with City standards and urban design guidelines. The City is the approval authority for all planning applications; building permits will only be issued once the City is satisfied and has approved the site plan application.

## **CAN THE DESIGN OF THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT BE COMPLEMENTARY TO THE EXISTING HOMES IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD?**

Yes! All new HYI developments consider the existing neighbourhood and use high-quality building materials and design. For examples of recent projects, visit [york.ca/HousingDevelopment](https://york.ca/HousingDevelopment)

## **HAS YORK REGION CONSIDERED HOW THE NEW BUILDING COULD CHANGE THE NEARBY COMMUNITY AND SERVICES?**

As the City of Markham considers York Region's request for a future community housing development, a number of studies, including environmental and traffic studies, have been prepared to support the required planning applications.

### **On existing infrastructure and traffic**

As part of the required planning approvals process, a traffic impact study was done to look at how the development works within the existing transportation network. Traffic counts of existing traffic are done to better understand current traffic flow, and then projections for the future traffic caused by the new development are considered. The findings are in the consultant's final report and sent to the City for review.

There is a trunk sewer on the property that must remain accessible be maintained, so this part of the property will not be developed. This requirement was considered when planning the design and the location of site entrances/exits.

### **On natural areas**

The proposed development is being reviewed by the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to ensure that the proposal does not cause adverse effects on surrounding natural areas and watercourses.

### **On local schools and hospitals**

The Region works with partners such as local school boards and hospitals throughout the planning process to ensure that existing and planned services can accommodate proposed developments.

### **CAN SIDEWALKS BE INSTALLED ON 14TH AVENUE?**

Any development will include installing sidewalks at the front of the site along 14th Avenue. York Region and the City of Markham are working closely to establish sidewalk and road connections.

### **ARE THERE PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ROAD NETWORK IN THE AREA?**

York Region continues to invest in building a safe, efficient and reliable Regional transportation network for all travellers.

As the City of Markham continues to grow, a number of road improvement projects have been identified, including improvements to Ninth Line between Steeles Avenue and the Box Grove area. Improvements include widening the road to four lanes and building walking and cycling facilities. These improvements are part of a joint project with the City of Toronto that will include widening Steeles Avenue to six lanes, between Ninth Line and Morningside Avenue. Construction for this project is currently scheduled to begin in 2025. Visit [york.ca/RoadConstruction](https://york.ca/RoadConstruction) for details as they become available.

### **WHAT AMENITIES ARE CLOSE TO THIS SITE?**

Located on the southwest corner of 14th Avenue and Donald Cousens Parkway, the site is situated in the Box Grove community and well-suited for a future community housing location. The site is close to amenities, including schools, the Box Grove Community Centre, parks and outdoor amenities spaces such as Rouge National Park. Major shopping centres with grocery stores, medical offices and daycare are within 1.5 kilometres of the site. The site is directly serviced by York Region Transit (YRT).

### **HOW WILL RESIDENTS ACCESS AMENITIES AND SERVICES IN THE AREA WITHOUT ADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION?**

In addition to the regular bus routes, there are several YRT services that are available to future residents:

- **Mobility On-Request (MOR)** provides specialized door-to-door transit service using smaller vehicles.
- **MOR 65+** is available across York Region for seniors 65 years or older. Seniors travelling within York Region simply call YRT at 1-866-744-1119, and YRT will pick them up and take them to their desired location within five kilometres of their home. This can be a grocery store, doctor's office, pharmacy or any other address.
- **MOR-Paratransit** is YRT's specialized transit service for people with physical or functional disabilities who may be unable to use other YRT services for the entire duration of their trip.
- **The Transit Assistance Program (TAP)** is available for all eligible York Region residents between the ages of 18 to 64 years old. Participants are provided a free PRESTO card and are eligible for a 50% discount on a single ride (current TAP fare \$1.98). After 40 trip rides in a calendar month, any additional rides become free for the remainder of the calendar month.
- YRT offers **Travel Training** for York Region residents of all ages and abilities who need additional knowledge and skills to use YRT independently. Additional information on myRide Travel Training can be obtained via email [myride@york.ca](mailto:myride@york.ca) or by telephone 1-877-464-9675, ext. 75867

In addition to transit services, there are several existing and planned cycling facilities located near the site on 14th Avenue and Donald Cousens Parkway. As part of the planning process, York Region is integrating indoor and outdoor bicycle parking spaces for residents. York Region will also explore innovative transportation solutions such as ridesharing programs to ensure all residents have access to transportation services that meet their needs.

## **WHY DO HYI BUILDINGS INCLUDE A MIX OF AFFORDABLE AND MARKET RENTAL OPTIONS?**

York Region develops community housing with a mix of affordable and market rents to help support a complete community. HYI typically aims to provide 30% units at market rents and 70% at affordable rents.

Providing mixed-income housing supports economic integration and creates well-maintained and amenity-rich housing options for all community members. Mixed-income housing helps create inclusive and complete communities. Currently, there are 17 HYI locations across York Region that provide a mix of affordable and market units.

## **WHO WILL LIVE IN THE NEW DEVELOPMENT?**

The new development will offer housing for seniors, families and individuals, with a mix of affordable and market rent units. Typically, a new Housing York Inc. building has 30% of apartments for rent at market rental prices, and 70% of apartments at rents that vary, but are approximately one third of the residents' income.

Once construction is complete, apartments will be offered to eligible people who are on the top of York Region's centralized wait list for affordable housing

Market rent vacancies are filled on a first-come, first-served basis, and are open to everyone. More information about market rentals is available at [york.ca/MarketRentHYI](http://york.ca/MarketRentHYI)

York Region provides high-quality homes that are open to all community members. Everyone deserves a safe place to call home.

## **HOW CAN I APPLY TO LIVE HERE?**

HYI's community housing includes subsidized and market rental units. This project is currently in its pre-development stages with construction anticipated to begin in 2025. Visit [york.ca/BoxGroveHYI](https://york.ca/BoxGroveHYI) for updates and to subscribe for the project e-newsletter.

### Subsidized housing

For information about subsidized housing in York Region, including eligibility and how to apply, visit [york.ca/Housing](https://york.ca/Housing) or call Access York at 1-877-464-9675. New applicants should know that the demand for subsidized housing in York Region is high and wait times are long. If you are not on the subsidized housing wait list already, it is unlikely you will be offered a unit in this building when it opens.

### Market rate units

HYI market rate unit vacancies will be filled on a first-come, first served-basis. There is no wait list. Information on future market rent units, including rent and move-in dates, will be available closer to the end of construction. For more details, visit [york.ca/MarketRentHYI](https://york.ca/MarketRentHYI)

Once construction of a new development is complete, available affordable units are offered to applicants with the highest placement on the Region's centralized wait list for affordable housing for the building and available unit type. The wait list is kept in chronological order based on application date, as required by the Province of Ontario. Currently, over 36% of individuals on the wait list are seniors.

## **HOW WILL YORK REGION ENSURE COMMUNITY SAFETY?**

HYI properties are designed with safety in mind. Throughout the planning process we work with the community and community agencies, including York Regional Police, to provide safe, secure and inclusive housing. For the safety of our residents and our neighbours, future development plans will include Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and will be reviewed by York Regional Police.

York Region will work closely with neighbours and a Community Liaison Committee to ensure all perspectives about the design of the building and surrounding property are heard throughout the process.

## **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE VALUE OF MY PROPERTY?**

Housing values on average have risen year over year for more than a decade in York Region. HYI has operated community housing for many years, and the neighbourhoods surrounding their buildings continue to see the same trend of appreciation of property values.

Using publicly accessible data from HouseSigma, property values near recent HYI developments, including Woodbridge Lane (completed in 2019), Richmond Hill Hub (completed in 2016), and Belinda's Place (completed in 2015), are not negatively affected and have increased similar to home prices across the broader community.

This experience is supported by extensive Canadian and international peer-reviewed research. For example, a report on Exploring the Impacts of Non-Market Housing on Surrounding Property Values

looked at 13 case study sites in British Columbia to research the market impacts of introducing non-market housing into a neighbourhood. The property values in the immediate area surrounding the cases study sites typically either mirrored or surpassed similar housing in the surrounding municipalities.

Additionally, a study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Centre for Real Estate looked at large, mixed-income buildings developed in single family neighbourhoods – particularly those where concerns about property devaluation were greatest. Results showed that these developments had no negative impact on property values.

## **HOW WILL THIS PROJECT BE FUNDED?**

York Region is committed to increasing the supply of affordable rental housing. Investments from provincial and federal government will help fund this new development.

In 2021, York Region applied for funding under the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI), a federal housing program, to support the development at 14th Avenue and Donald Cousens Parkway. Although York Region did not receive this funding in the first rounds of applications, other funding opportunities are currently being explored.

As part of York Region's commitment to responsible fiscal stewardship, consultants and contractors brought on throughout the redevelopment are procured in line with the Region's purchasing by-law.

## **WHAT IS A COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE?**

A Community Liaison Committee is made up of residents, business owners and local community agencies and meets to provide frequent and detailed updates and get feedback. Members of the Committee work closely to address community considerations throughout the planning and construction phases of the redevelopment.

The Box Grove Community Liaison Committee is working with York Region staff to give ideas and support during the planning and construction for this project. The Community Liaison Committee also looks for ways to integrate the new building into the neighbourhood. The Community Liaison Committee includes local residents, businesses and community groups.

We are not currently recruiting for the Community Liaison Committee at this time.

For information about the Community Liaison Committee, please email [HousingDevelopment@york.ca](mailto:HousingDevelopment@york.ca)

## **HOW CAN I STAY CONNECTED?**

We want to hear from nearby neighbours, businesses, community agencies and the broader community as public input plays an important role in the project and helps ensure our plans respond to community needs. Thank you for your interest.

Stay connected by visiting [york.ca/BoxGroveHYI](https://york.ca/BoxGroveHYI) for:

- Project information and updates
- Past public consultation presentations
- Frequently asked questions



[Subscribe to the project e-newsletter](#) for updates. Please note, the frequency of updates changes throughout planning and construction.

## **COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS?**

If you have questions or would like to learn more about this future community housing development, please call 289-338-8063 or email [HousingDevelopment@york.ca](mailto:HousingDevelopment@york.ca)

If you have general inquiries, please contact Access York:

Phone: 1-877-464-9675

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