

YRP to begin wearing body-worn cameras in New Year

Regional Council approves 12.7% Police budget increase

The New Year will see a significant shift in local policing.

York Regional Police will begin donning body cameras in 2026, following a decision made last week by the York Regional Police Services Board.

While Police are expecting the body-worn cameras to be operational in the spring, they say further public consultations on how they are used will take place in the intervening months.

The cameras will "deliver transparency and accountability, while enhancing the safety of both citizens and police," says the YRP.

"York Regional Police is proud to be leveraging modern technology to increase transparency and help foster trust between our community, our organization, and our partner police agencies," said Constable Kevin Nebrija in a statement. "The cameras also assist by supporting fair and impartial policing. The implementation follows many partner police services who have implemented body-worn camera technology, including Toronto Police Service, Peel Regional Police, Durham Regional Police, Waterloo Regional Police, and more across Canada.

"The use of body-worn cameras [has] proven to deliver increased accuracy and quality of evidence, and support effective and efficient investigations and prosecutions. The cameras help to enhance accountability for YRP members and contribute to the effectiveness of the police service and member wellness by supporting enhanced training and debriefings. Content captured by the cameras also supports policy and procedure compliance, performance management and supervision."

The rollout decision came as the Region of York approved a 12.7 per cent budget increase to the York Regional police, greenlighting a 2026 Capital Budget of \$38.3 million and an Operating Budget of \$499 million.

The increase will see the hiring of 150 new YRP members in the year ahead, enhancing frontline service.

"For our community, this budget invests in what matters most: preventing and reducing violent crime, enhancing police presence regionwide, and strengthening partnerships that make our region safer," said York Regional Police Chief Jim MacSween. "For our people, this budget ensures we have the right staff in place to meet the growing operational demand of an evolving region. It funds critical staffing increases, provides new technology and tools to modernize our work, and expands training and wellness programs that allow our members to serve safely and effectively."

The 2026 Budget will also include the construction of a new helicopter hangar in East Gwillimbury, improvements to the YRP's Aurora headquarters on Don Hillock Drive and its Community Safety Village in Whitchurch-Stouffville, and more.

The expanding team will also allow for a dedicated patrol in Aurora.

"With crime and community safety top of mind for many residents, I'm glad to share that with the approval of the York Region Budget, Aurora will be receiving an additional dedicated York Regional Police patrol car for our Town," said Mayor Mrakas, who serves as Aurora's representative at the Regional table.

"This means more visibility, quicker response times, and added support for the officers who work every day to keep our neighbourhoods safe. Community safety is a priority, and this is another step forward as we continue working to ensure Aurora

remains one of the safest communities in the Region and Province.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter