

# Committee of the Whole (1) Report

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**DATE:** Wednesday, March 4, 2026

**WARD(S):** ALL

**TITLE:** 2025 ANNUAL DRINKING WATER SYSTEM REPORT

**FROM:**

Emilie Alderman, Deputy City Manager, Public Works  
Andy Lee, Director, Environmental Services

**ACTION:** FOR INFORMATION

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**Purpose**

The purpose of this Report is to provide information regarding the performance of the City's Drinking Water System and associated Operational Plan during 2025 based on the Drinking Water Quality Management Standard. This Report and its attachments support Council, as the System Owner, in meeting its statutory standard of care under the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002* by providing information on water quality and the operational performance of the drinking water system. This Report to Council satisfies the annual reporting requirements under *Ontario Regulation 170/03 – Drinking Water Systems*.

**Report Highlights**

- The City's Drinking Water System achieved a 100 per cent inspection rating in the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks 2024-2025 Chief Drinking Water Inspector's Report.
- In 2025, 99.8 per cent of the 4,054 annual drinking water samples met regulatory standards. Prompt and decisive action was taken, in collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and York Region Public Health, to address any Adverse Water Quality Incidents which upheld the City's commitment to ensure public safety and facilitated continuous delivery of safe drinking water throughout 2025.
- Two Management Reviews were completed during 2025 to evaluate the continued suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness of the City's Quality Management System, as required under Element 20 of the Drinking Water Quality Management Standard.

## **Recommendations**

1. That this Report be received for information.

## **Background**

***An annual Summary Report on the City's Drinking Water System is required to satisfy the statutory annual reporting requirement under Ontario Regulation 170/03 – Drinking Water Systems***

Drinking water and Drinking Water Systems are regulated by the Province through the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

The *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002 (the Act)*, mandates owners and operating authorities of the municipal Drinking Water System to produce an Annual Summary Report containing information on the System's operation, management, sampling, testing, certification of staff, and water quality and quantity. The Summary Report must be completed and made available to the public by Mar. 31 of each year and is included in Attachment 1.

***Annual reporting and regular information sharing assists Council in exercising the due diligence required to meet the statutory standard of care under the Act***

*The Act* imposes a standard of care upon individuals with decision making authority over municipal Drinking Water Systems. Council, through its decision-making role, protects the City's residents and businesses by demonstrating diligence and prudent oversight of the supply and distribution of drinking water.

Council's commitment to the provision of safe drinking water ensures responsible action is taken to manage risk and increase efficiency through sustainable financial planning, proactive asset management, and systematic continuous improvement.

***Drinking water protection is a vital responsibility shared by many partners as safe drinking water is one of the key pillars of public health in Ontario***

York Region's Medical Officer of Health has a key role in protecting public health by assessing potential health impacts from adverse water quality test results. The Medical Officer of Health may direct the owner of a Drinking Water System to take corrective actions exceeding regulatory mandates and/or the City's Standard Operating Procedures. For the 2025 reporting period, there were no additional corrective actions or restrictions (e.g. boil water or drinking water advisories) imposed on the City by the Medical Officer of Health.

Should an adverse water quality event or water emergency occur, procedures are in place to protect public health by ensuring close communication and cooperation between the Medical Officer of Health, York Region, and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

***Ontario has an integrated system of procedures, processes, and tools that collectively prevent or reduce the risk of contamination in drinking water to protect public health***

This multi-faceted approach to protecting drinking water in Ontario was a key recommendation in Justice O'Connor's report on the Walkerton tragedy in 2000.

Elements of this approach include source water protection, health-based standards, regular and reliable testing, strong legislative and regulatory framework, mandatory certification and training of drinking water operators, a Provincial inspection and enforcement program, and implementation of an Operational Plan documenting the City's Drinking Water System's Quality Management System.

Multiple barriers protect the public and ensure that preventative and corrective actions are taken to address potential risks.

***Drinking Water System Operators play a vital operational role in providing safe drinking water. The province established requirements for the training and certification of Drinking Water System Operators under Ontario Regulation 128/04 – Certification of Drinking Water System Operators and Water Quality Analysts***

The City continues to participate in high quality Operator training through Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks - approved training providers and training courses. Drinking Water System Operators must complete annual in-class and on-the-job training to maintain certification. All City Operators and contractors responsible for operating any component of the City's Drinking Water System are required to hold current Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks issued Drinking Water Certificates.

***Every municipal residential Drinking Water System is inspected at least once a year by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to assess compliance with the Act***

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks requires Owners of municipal drinking water systems to obtain a Municipal Drinking Water License to operate their

drinking water systems. Municipal Drinking Water Licenses are valid for five years provided the Operating Authority remains accredited, there is a council-approved long-term financial plan in place, and the drinking water system has been operated in accordance with the conditions in the license. The City's Municipal Drinking Water License was renewed on May 15, 2024.

The Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks' Provincial Officers conduct on-site inspections to assess compliance with regulatory requirements including those detailed in the City's Municipal Drinking Water License and Drinking Water Works Permit. The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks' Provincial Officers conduct on-site inspections to assess compliance with regulatory requirements including those detailed in the City's Municipal Drinking Water License and Drinking Water Works Permit. Inspections include a review of the Drinking Water System's source, treatment, and distribution components, as well as water quality monitoring results and procedures to evaluate system management and operations. One inspection is conducted by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks annually, including at least one unannounced inspection every three years. If Provincial Officers uncover significant findings that may affect public health, System Owners and Operators are informed immediately during the inspection.

The City participated in one announced Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks inspection on Sep. 4, 2025, spanning the Aug. 30, 2024 to Sep. 3, 2025 inspection period. The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks inspection included a site visit to the Maplewood Booster Station and Woodland Acres Pressure Elevating station followed by a comprehensive review of the City's operational documents and records. The City received a 100 per cent inspection rating following the inspection that took place on Sep. 4, 2025.

***Annual internal and external audits of the City's Operational Plan and Quality Management System are mandated and are used to facilitate continuous improvement***

The original full scope Drinking Water Quality Management System accreditation certificate was formally issued by the Canadian General Standards Board to the Corporation of the City of Vaughan on Jul. 7, 2009. The City's Drinking Water Quality Management System is re-accredited every three years, with the most recent re-accreditation having taken place on Jun. 18, 2024. Re-accreditation is a requirement under *the Act* for the City to continue to operate the Drinking Water System.

A surveillance audit was undertaken on May 5, 2025, to verify the City's conformance with the Drinking Water Quality Management Standard. The surveillance audit identified zero instances of non-conformance and zero opportunities for improvement.

As a best management practice, two internal Drinking Water Quality Management System audits were completed in 2025 by a third-party auditing company. The first internal Drinking Water Quality Management System audit took place on May 12 and 13, 2025. The audit identified zero instances of non-conformance and two opportunities for improvement. The opportunities for improvement have been reviewed and incorporated into the Operational Plan. The second internal audit took place on Nov. 6 and 7, 2025. The audit identified zero instances of non-conformance and one opportunity for improvement. The opportunity for improvement identified in the second internal audit have been reviewed and incorporated into the Operational Plan.

Two Management Reviews were held to update Top Management, as defined in the Drinking Water Quality Management Standard, on the status of the Drinking Water System, actions taken in the current calendar year, and actions planned for the next calendar year. The Management Reviews took place on Jul. 17, 2025, and Dec. 3 and 8, 2025. A summary of the Management Reviews is provided in Attachment 2.

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

[2024 Annual Drinking Water System Report](#)

## **Analysis and Options**

***In 2025, 99.8 per cent of laboratory samples were within regulatory limits which reaffirms the City's commitment to supplying safe drinking water***

The York-Durham Environmental Laboratory, a Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks accredited drinking water laboratory, and the City's certified Drinking Water Operators performed 4,054 water quality tests during 2025. Of these tests, only 9 were tested outside of the regulatory limits. These incidents are called Adverse Water Quality Incidents.

Staff responded to each Adverse Water Quality Incident in accordance with City's Standard Operating Procedures, performing corrective actions as required under *Ontario Regulation 170/03 – Drinking Water Systems of the Act* and as directed by York Region's Medical Office of Health. Prompt and decisive action to address Adverse Water Quality Incidents and their causes maintained continuous delivery of safe drinking water and ensured public safety.

***Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks’ inspections show the City is achieving strong and consistent performance levels and highlight opportunities for the City to improve the Drinking Water System***

Continual improvement is a cornerstone of the Drinking Water Quality Management System and is an operational approach that is embraced by the City. In 2025, the City adopted Compliance365, a digital compliance and quality management software platform used to manage drinking water sample data. Compliance365 helped streamline sample result data management—reducing manual input, improving data consistency, simplifying how trends are monitored, and demonstrating regulatory compliance with clear, auditable records.

***The City received a 100 per cent inspection rating on the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks’ 2024-2025 Chief Drinking Water Inspector’s Report***

Ontario’s Chief Drinking Water Inspector releases an Annual Report rating Drinking Water Systems across the Province. The 2024-2025 Chief Drinking Water Inspector’s Annual Report includes in-depth information on the performance of Ontario’s drinking water systems and licensed laboratories.

The 2024-2025 Chief Drinking Water Inspector Report gave the City the highest possible inspection rating of 100 per cent. Of the 653 municipal residential Drinking Water Systems in Ontario, 76 per cent received an inspection rating of 100 per cent. This illustrates that the operation and management of the City’s Drinking Water System is amongst the best in the province.

**Financial Impact**

In November 2023, Council approved the [Long-Term Drinking Water System Financial Plan \(2024-2035\)](#), committing to the long-term financial sustainability of the City’s Drinking Water System and ensuring continuous delivery of safe drinking water. The Plan identifies the financial support required to operate, maintain, and perform asset management planning on the Drinking Water System and was a component in the City’s Municipal Drinking Water License renewal submission to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Under Section 11 of *Ontario Regulation 170/03 – Drinking Water Systems*, Owners are required to describe “any major expenses incurred during the period covered by the report to install, repair or replace required equipment.”

In 2025, the City invested \$14,668,683 to install, repair, and/or replace equipment required to deliver safe drinking water. Costs were funded through the City's water rates, associated reserves, and the approved capital and operating budgets.

### **Operational Impact**

No operational impact is expected as a result of receiving this Report for information.

### **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

There is no impact to the Region.

### **Conclusion**

This report and its attachments are provided to support Council's statutory standard of care under Provincial drinking water regulations and allows Council to demonstrate its due diligence in performing informed decision making.

The City's Drinking Water System is subject to strict regulations implemented by the province to keep drinking water safe. The audit and inspection results from both internal and external parties for the 2025 reporting year confirm the City's Drinking Water System is performing well.

These results are attributed to Council's commitment to providing safe drinking water to the City's residents and businesses.

As part of the City's regulatory requirements, links to this report and its attachments will be posted on the City's external website.

**For more information**, please contact:

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### **Attachments**

1. 2025 Annual Summary Report
2. Drinking Water Quality Management System – Summary of Management Reviews

### **Prepared by**

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