



ECONOMIC STRATEGY



JUNE 2005

A Vibrant
Economy

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MESSAGE FROM REGIONAL COUNCIL

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Town of Newmarket



Mayor
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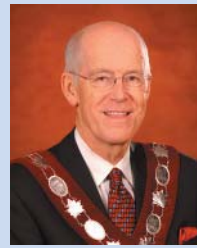
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Regional Councillor
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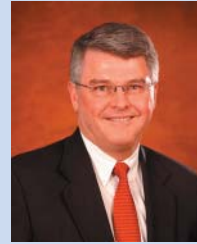
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Regional Councillor
Jack Heath
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A Message from York Regional Council

York Region has experienced tremendous growth over the last number of years. With this type of growth, we have also experienced a broadening of our economic base. Currently, York Region boasts a wide diversity of industries, from small businesses to multinational corporations.

To help ensure this economic vitality for the future, the Region has developed the York Region Economic Strategy. This strategy will act as a blueprint for action to ensure that our Region continues to be successful, both domestically and in the global marketplace.

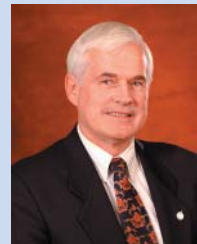
This strategy has been prepared in consultation with a number of York Region stakeholders, including: Area Municipalities; Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade; the Government of Canada; the Government of Ontario; local business owners, managers and executives; and other interested agencies.

This strategy also incorporates feedback from a number of interested parties on various issues relating to economic development, including housing, transportation, labour, technology and other items covered in the strategy.

The York Region Economic Strategy stands as a key element for long-term economic planning and is a comprehensive tool that will help ensure a healthy, prosperous economy in the years to come.



Mayor
William F. Bell
Town of Richmond Hill



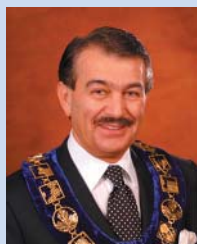
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executive

Summary

Executive Summary

The Economic Strategy is York Region's response to a globally changing economy. It is a blueprint for action that will define the Region's role to help maintain economic competitiveness, and build long term partnerships with stakeholders to achieve the Vibrant Economy goals that are set out in *Vision 2026*.

The purpose of the Economic Strategy is to position York Region in the marketplace, by identifying partnerships with other economic stakeholders to attract the best and brightest workforce. This in turn provides a climate for the growth of innovative and competitive companies that create a resilient and prosperous economy.

The economy of York Region is larger than any of the Atlantic Provinces in Canada, and boasts a growth rate that makes it one of the fastest growing regions in North America. Given the rapid pace of new population and employment growth, there are significant opportunities and challenges to ensure that economic competitiveness and future potential are maintained.

The Economic Strategy is built upon a framework that recognizes and supports the efforts of the area municipalities to promote and attract new business investment. It will also be aligned with the policy and strategic direction of senior governments, and other organizations involved with economic development such as the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance.

Based on a wide-ranging consultation process over the past 15 months and a review of the programs and services provided by other municipal and senior level government agencies, the Economic Strategy identifies five (5) major Strategic Directions that will guide the Region's efforts.

These Strategic Directions are:

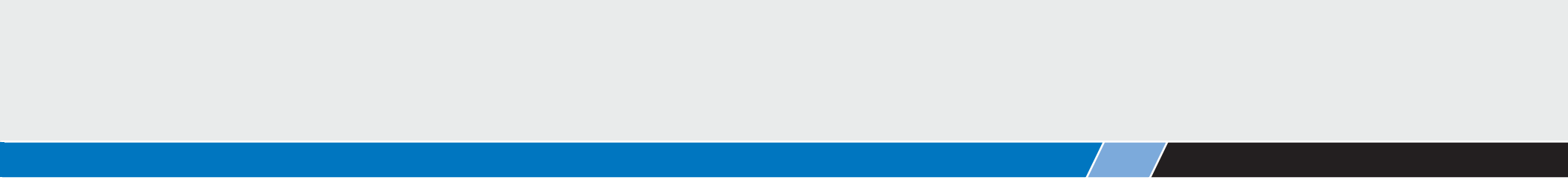
- Create an Environment to Share Information and Ideas.
- Sustain a High Quality Workforce.
- Strengthen Entrepreneurship and Industry Clusters.
- Enhance the Quality of Place.
- Encourage the Efficient Movement of Goods and People.

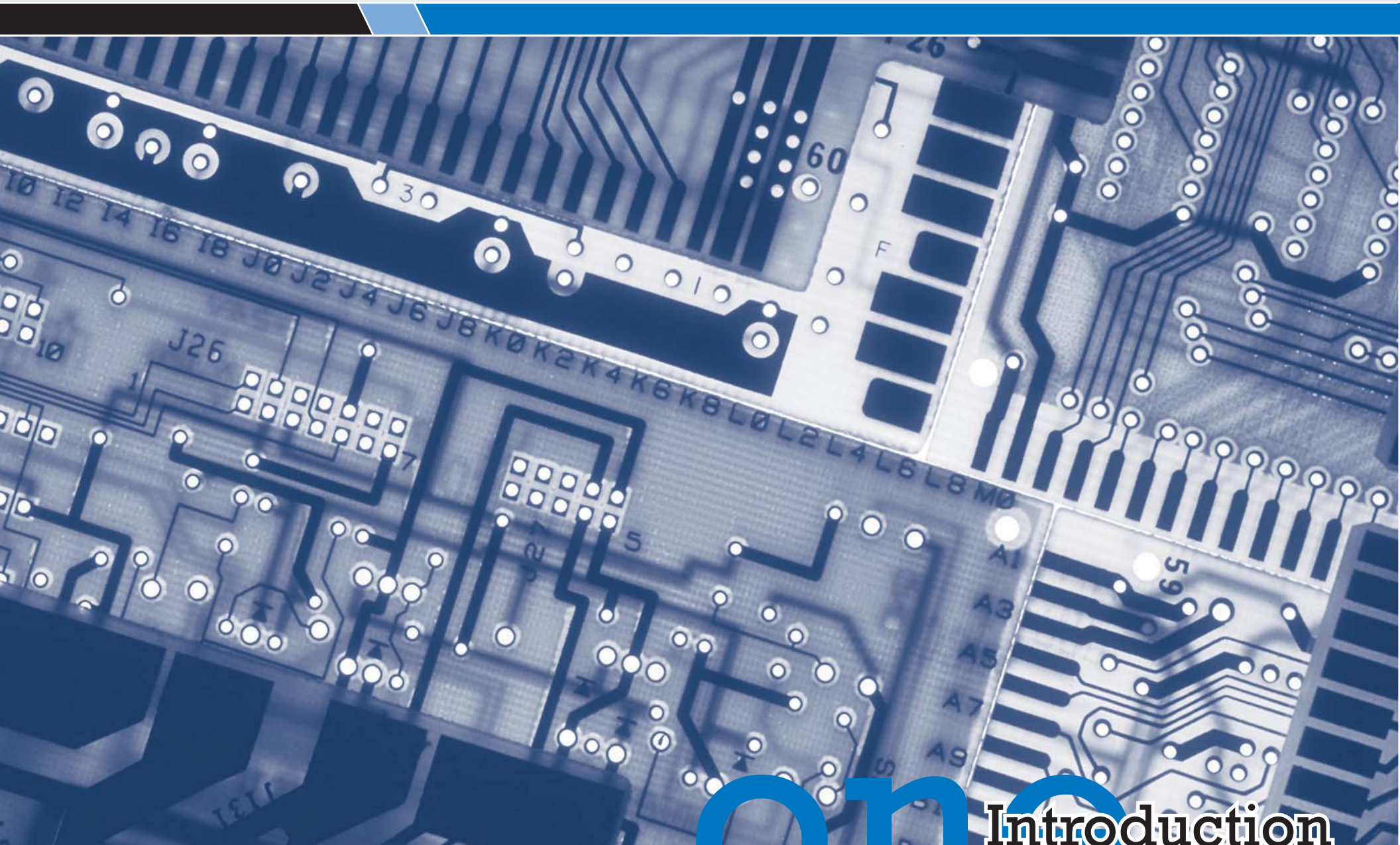
These Strategic Directions give rise to 90 Actions which are documented more fully in the following pages. It also sets out a range of partnering approaches with other levels of government and economic stakeholders.

Given the finite limits of resources, the following priority Actions have been identified based on evaluation criteria that relate to their impact and how they are aligned with the Region's current mandate and accountabilities.

- Develop a virtual information portal in collaboration with the YorkInfo Partnership to provide Regional companies access to information, business and competitive intelligence, business services, and to monitor key indicators of the Region's economic performance.
- Convene a Regional Business Roundtable of executives and owner-managers from leading public and private sector enterprises under the leadership of the Regional Chair to provide Regional Council and staff with regular feedback on economic issues affecting business.
- Facilitate the evolution of a Regional Industry Education Council to provide an opportunity for business, education, government, sectoral councils, unions and other stakeholders to leverage resources, knowledge and motivation to address common workforce development issues.
- Facilitate the establishment of a York Region Advanced Manufacturing Consortium to encourage cross-pollination of research and development expertise and opportunities for joint product and market development.
- Undertake a detailed economic structural analysis of the Region's high performance clusters.
- Develop a marketing and communications plan to promote York Region and its natural and cultural attributes.
- Undertake a major events infrastructure audit to identify capacity to host major cultural and sporting events that could be attracted to York Region.
- Engage businesses to promote, support and practise transportation demand management and to provide alternative employee journey to work choices.

As part of the implementation of the Economic Strategy, the Region will utilize performance metrics to measure its progress against other jurisdictions to assess its continued competitiveness. Success will also be evaluated relative to existing levels of services and results from the action plans. A series of key performance indicators are set out that suggests how progress can be evaluated in each Strategic Direction.





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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This Economic Strategy is York Region’s response to a changing economy. It is a blueprint for action that will enable the Regional Municipality of York to maintain competitiveness and prosperity and realize the Vibrant Economy goal of *Vision 2026*. It also complements the proposed policy framework as outlined in the Provincial *Places to Grow* Discussion Paper, which addresses the need for a comprehensive growth management strategy for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and proposes to promote the economic vitality and competitiveness of the area through innovative partnerships, supportive tools and maintaining strategic employment lands. The Strategy will guide the Regional Municipality and its partners and economic stakeholders to achieve success in the global marketplace.

In the past ten years, York Region has become one of the most robust and resilient economies in Canada. The fastest growing region in the Greater Toronto Area with a population of over 870,000, it ranked as the sixth largest municipality in Canada in terms of population size. York’s rate of population growth is outpaced by its exceptional rates of growth in employment and enterprises, which are consistently and significantly higher than that of the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) and the Province of Ontario.

Home to a diversified economic base with a mixture of traditional manufacturing and service industries as well as advanced technology driven firms, the economy of York Region is dynamic and prosperous. It is a regional economy that is exceptional by the standards of the mature industrial world. With a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimated at \$33.2 billion in 2002, York’s economy is larger than that of any of the provinces of Atlantic Canada. Its export activity is also indicative of a highly adaptive and competitive economy. With a total value of \$12.5 billion or 38% of the GDP in 2003, York Region’s total exports exceed that of six Canadian provinces.

However, the future economic health of the Region will be affected by a number of external factors that collectively will impact its ability to sustain economic prosperity and create future employment opportunities. The economic landscape is changing quickly as new firms, driven by technology and the relentless pace of global competition emerge, grow and compete with existing companies. Globalization means that products and markets have become trans-jurisdictional and trans-national in nature, and companies are finding innovative ways of doing things in order to stay competitive.

“[Innovation] means coming up with new ideas about how to do things better or faster. It is about making a product or offering a service that no one had thought of before. It is about putting new ideas to work in ... businesses and industries and having a skilled workforce that can use those new ideas. And it is about aggressively pursuing new markets for ... products and services.”¹

In the new global economy, regional strategies for economic development must focus on innovation in the use of knowledge, skills, and technology as the basis for sustained prosperity and employment.

Changes in the economy over the last few years point to the fact that York Region's past success in attracting economic growth and its current prosperity cannot be taken for granted. The impact of globalization and business outsourcing as well as the terrorists attacks in the U.S., the rapid growth in China and spiralling energy prices beg the following questions:

- How will York Region respond to changes in the economy in the next few years?
- What are the things that affect the Region's ability to encourage innovation, attract new investment and foster new job creation?
- What role should the Regional Municipality of York play in sustaining a vibrant economy?

In the development of the Economic Strategy, York Region has taken into account its strengths and past economic growth, and identified what it must do in the future. The Economic Strategy sets out:

- The role of the Region in economic development.
- The linkages and relationships with other stakeholders.
- Actions to maintain and build on the competitive strengths.
- Clear strategic directions to keep the economy competitive.

The Strategic Directions outlined in this document are based on certain guiding principles. First, the Strategy must acknowledge and respond to the needs expressed by the stakeholders. Second, the Actions within the Strategy must build upon existing Regional policy and complement the efforts and initiatives of the Region's economic partners. Third, the Strategy should lay out a framework for action that is fiscally responsible and sustainable. Finally, the actions envisaged by the Strategy should be measurable with clear accountabilities for implementation.

To achieve long-term economic success, the Region must work with others to attract and sustain a diverse range of innovative and globally competitive companies. This will require a vision for the future, and a steadfast commitment to working in partnership and sharing expertise in order to meet the expectations of future generations.

The process begins with a Vision for the future.

1.2 York Region's Economic Vision

Vision 2026 was approved by Regional Council in 2002 after extensive public consultation and research. The document outlines the key areas of focus for the Region and its partners for the future. *Vision 2026* is an overall long term plan for York Region, which sets a context and provides a framework for more detailed corporate and multi-year business that will be undertaken by the Region. The Goal of *Vision 2026* for the economy is:

“In 2026, York Region will be renowned for its advanced technology, innovative businesses, supportive business infrastructure and highly skilled workforce.”

Under the “Vibrant Economy” Goal, *Vision 2026* has set out three broad action areas:

- Attracting and Supporting Business
- Encouraging Continual Learning
- Promoting and Supporting Innovation

Vision 2026 has established an important role for the Region to act in partnership with the area municipalities, senior levels of government, as well as other public and private sector partners to seek better understanding of how York Region's economy works, and to create more detailed plans and programs to help sustain economic vitality.



1.3 Regional Official Plan: Policy Context



The Official Plan is a set of policies that guide economic, environmental and community-building decisions affecting land use in the Region. The policies establish a framework for more detailed planning by the area municipalities. The Regional Official Plan also provides the basis for co-ordinated planning with adjacent regional municipalities, as well as with other jurisdictions in the Greater Toronto Area. The Official Plan sets out a balanced approach to growth management which will ensure that the Region remains an attractive place to live and work.

Adopted by Regional Council and approved by the Province of Ontario in 1994, the Official Plan for the Regional Municipality of York has established the goal of “economic vitality” as one of its three primary cornerstone policies. The Official Plan recognizes the interdependence of the maintenance of the natural environment, the creation of healthy and secure communities, and economic development as the basis for long term planning for the Region.

The Economic Vitality Goal of the Official Plan is:

“To create a competitive and adaptable economic environment that encourages investment and a diversity of employment opportunities.”

The Official Plan has identified a role for the Regional Municipality of York to work with its municipal and other partners in creating a land use plan that sustains the Region as a location for new business investment and support business expansion and employment. The more detailed Objectives flowing from this policy goal are:

“To encourage and accommodate economic activities that contribute to the diversity of the economic base, and to the cultural, recreational and institutional opportunities within the Region, enhancing the Region as a place to work, live and visit.

“To create a range of potential locations for economic uses across the Region that support economic development.”

1.4 Supporting Policies and Initiatives

The development of the Economic Strategy is supported by a number of key Regional policies, initiatives and projects that address the complex range of issues that affect business and their ability to expand and provide jobs into the future.

Human Services Strategy

The *Human Services Strategy* adopted by Regional Council in 2000 is a long-range plan to co-ordinate human service needs required by the growth and change within the communities of York Region. Established as a result of the *Human Services Strategy*, the Human Services Planning Coalition (HSPC) is a partnership of government, service providers, agencies and corporations, non-profit agencies and consumers that oversees the implementation of the Strategy. The HSPC plays a key role in identifying gaps in human services and initiating collaborative action to close those gaps.

The Human Services Employment Action Group was established by the Human Services Planning Coalition in March 2002 to address the needs to recruit and retain trained human service professionals to meet the increase in demand for services. The goal of the project was to develop shared tools, resources and support for enhancing the recruitment and retention potential of York Region human service employers.

York Region Transportation Master Plan (TMP)

The *York Region Transportation Master Plan* recognizes that transportation has an impact on housing, job creation, human services, and the overall shape of the Region. Adopted in 2002, the purpose of the TMP is to create a transportation system that will accommodate growth for the next 30 years by doubling transit use, provide more travel choice in order to manage traffic congestion, and slow the degradation of the environment caused by excessive automobile use. The Master Plan is based on a transportation vision that foresees an integrated road and public transit network that will support growth and complement all other regional and provincial planning initiatives.

York Region Transit (YRT)

On January 1, 2001, the first phase of York Region's transit strategy took form with the creation of York Region Transit (YRT). YRT amalgamated five conventional transit services and seven specialized services operating in the Region, creating a border-less, efficient and cost-effective transportation network. Mobility Plus Transit, specialized transit for persons with special needs, was also implemented as part of the YRT five-year service plan, which includes creating new bus routes and expanding on existing service. The next phase of public transit expansion includes bus rapid transit in four key Regional corridors which includes new technologies such as off-board payment and transit signal priority. The investment in public transit services is a long term commitment to building a well balanced transportation system to meet the needs of current and future residents and business.





York Region Rapid Transit Plan (YRTP)

The York Rapid Transit Plan will link the Region's urban centres, facilitate inter-regional connectivity, and improve the speed, reliability, and overall quality of public transit. Rapid transit services will be implemented in four corridors consisting of Yonge Street, Highway 7, the Vaughan Corporate Centre to TTC's Downsview subway station connecting link, and the Markham Centre to TTC's Don Mills subway station connecting link. By attracting and sustaining higher ridership levels, the YRTP will reduce reliance on the private automobile. YRTP is already constructing the first phase of the rapid transit system, the \$150 million Quick Start Program, with equal funding from the Region, and the federal and provincial levels of government. Quick Start service is to begin in the Fall of 2005.

Smart Commute Initiative

In addition to the development of new infrastructure, York Region is taking a lead role in the implementation of the Smart Commute Initiative, a joint GTA and Hamilton transportation demand management project under the Federal Government's Urban Transportation Showcase Program. The Initiative will establish programs such as carpool and vanpool ride-sharing, cycling and pedestrian services, and a network of transportation management associations (TMA's) across GTA and Hamilton. Two TMA's, the Smart Commute Association of Black Creek and Smart Commute 404-7 Markham, Richmond Hill, are in operation.

Regional Roads Capital Program

The Region's *10 Year Capital Plan* addresses the demand for additional road capacity needed by new growth and the rehabilitation and maintenance needs of the Region's existing roads, bridges, traffic signals and other road-related infrastructure.

Centres and Corridors Strategy

The *Centres and Corridors Strategy* approved by Regional Council in 2004 will guide the development of an urban structure based on a network of higher density, mixed use regional and local centres connected by rapid transit corridors. The achievement of this planned urban structure will provide a competitive advantage for the Region due to the beneficial effects on accessibility to transit and the workplace, the quality of life enjoyed by residents and the ability to maintain and attract economic development. More density will mean a better mix of housing opportunities leading to more choices

Housing Supply Strategy

The *Housing Supply Strategy* for York Region adopted in 2002 provides a framework for planned urban structure and an action plan to meet housing challenges by increasing housing choices and addressing key issues such as affordability, diverse ownership, rental and non-profit options. The strategy focuses on practical steps that can be taken together with community partners to increase housing choices for York Region citizens. It commits the Region to developing 100 units of affordable housing through direct delivery and 100 units per year through partnership initiatives. A 10-year Affordable Housing Capital Plan is currently under development.

Long Term Water Project Master Plan and YDSS Master Plan

The availability of supply and the capacity of the Region's water and wastewater services is a determining factor in the growth and carrying capacity for its new residential, commercial and industrial users. In order to meet this demand, a *Long Term Water Project Master Plan* was adopted in 1997 which consists of a phased strategy that will meet the Region's water needs to 2023.

Approximately 95% of York Region's wastewater is collected through the York Durham Sewage System (YDSS). In 2002, the *YDSS Master Plan* was updated to reflect new population forecasts. A series of new projects will be undertaken over the next 10 years to provide additional capacity to the areas within the existing serviced area as well as projects to address the needs of growth and public health in areas currently outside the YDSS area.

Employers Opinion Survey 2004

An *Employers Opinion Survey* was conducted in 2004 with approximately 75 employers in York Region to determine the extent of the community implications (housing, transit, commute to work time) that exist for companies in their ability to both attract and retain employees. The Survey was designed to obtain the subjective assessment by employers on:

- The challenges that employees face in working within York Region, specifically related to their ability to find adequate housing and to commute to their place of work, and the provision of transit.
- The challenges that employers face in attracting and retaining suitable workers to their industries.

The findings of the Survey will help the Region to establish strategies and programs to assist employers and employees by providing a range of housing and transportation opportunities that will meet their needs.

Ontario Competitive City Regions Symposium

York Region hosted an *Ontario Competitive City Regions Symposium* in May 2002 in partnership with education, the federal and provincial levels of government and the Canadian Urban Institute. The theme of the Symposium was Building a High Performance Knowledge-Based Workforce. The Objectives of the session were to identify the needs and competitive factors affecting the supply and demand of knowledge workers, and to develop action strategies to attract and retain the knowledge workforce in the Region.

A number of key issues were identified at the Symposium:

- There is an imbalance between the supply and demand for highly skilled knowledge workers.
- Attracting and keeping knowledge workers is a major challenge to business.
- The complex interplay of demographic changes, economic trends and changing business conditions make it difficult to forecast supply and demand for workers.
- There is limited co-ordination between organizations with resources and mandates to address the issue.

A Competitive Assessment of York Region

A consulting firm was retained in the Fall of 2002 to undertake an assessment of York Region's competitive position in the marketplace relative to other comparable regional, national and international jurisdictions. The Study found that York Region compares favourably to other jurisdictions in attracting new and expanded business investment.

York Region's success was attributed primarily to the skills and availability of its labour force, the availability of land for new industries or expansions, and the competitive costs of doing business. At the same time, the Region's proximity to the GTA and its transportation and servicing infrastructure have also given it a competitive advantage.

Company executives surveyed as part of the Study have identified key factors that will impact York Region's ability to sustain its competitive position:

- Labour shortages in key skill areas that will require recruitment and retraining initiatives.
- Transit and transportation must be provided in different, more innovative ways to meet workforce needs.
- The availability of diverse and affordable housing choices will directly affect the retention of workers.
- Better information sharing networks will encourage innovation and continued business expansion.

Biotechnology Cluster Innovation Plan

The Region and the nine area municipalities are members of the York Regional Biotechnology Cluster Consortium established in 2003 to develop a Regional Biotechnology Cluster Innovation Plan. The Objective of the Innovation Plan is to support the R&D and commercialization activities within the biotechnology and related convergent industries in the Region. The Regional Innovation Profile and Analysis which were developed as part of the Biotechnology Cluster Innovation Plan will offer a better understanding of this sector and its strengths and opportunities.

Greening Strategy

Adopted by Regional Council in May 2001, the *Greening Strategy* provides York Region with a context for policy and implementation decisions that affect its natural features. A co-ordinating effort between the Region, other agencies and the private sector, this Strategy is a multi-focused initiative intended to ensure that York Region's natural heritage is maintained for future generations. Essentially, the *Greening Strategy* functions as an umbrella for other Regional initiatives including land use approvals, Regional Streetscaping, Regional Tree By-law and Property Securement.

YorkInfo Partnership

Comprised of key municipal and educational organizations, the goal of the *YorkInfo Partnership* is to create a geospatial framework to facilitate efficient integration and access to mapping technologies and information. Through co-operation, the Partnership and its members will develop an efficient information infrastructure that is requisite to manage the challenges of rapidly growing urban areas alongside vast farmlands and environmentally sensitive sites. By developing standards and facilitated by open policies and technology, the Partnership will be able to reduce duplication of efforts, avoid costs, increase access to information, and implement new business processes among member organizations and their constituents, thereby enhancing service to the residents and businesses in York Region.

GTA Agricultural Action Plan

York Region and the other three GTA regions have adopted a GTA Agricultural Action Plan which was endorsed by the GTA Federations of Agriculture. The purpose of the Action Plan is to identify actions which will keep the GTA agricultural industry competitive in the face of economic, land use and environmental pressures.

The Action Plan includes strategies that address the following four themes:

- Economic Development
- Education/Marketing
- Land Use Policy
- Accountability and Responsibility

The Region will actively participate in the establishment of a GTA Agricultural Action Committee which will oversee the implementation of the Action Plan.



two York Region's Economic Performance

2. York Region's Economic Performance

In early 2004, the consulting firm of Essential Economics Corporation was retained to undertake a research study on the Region's economy as part of the Strategy development process. The descriptive statistics were based on Statistics Canada data. Some of the data were specifically tabulated by Statistics Canada for this research study.

In addition, existing research and data that were available in the York Region Planning and Development Services Department were used to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the Region's economic performance. As well, data and information from other relevant studies and sources such as the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance and the Conference Board of Canada were also incorporated.

2.1 Overview

The economy of York Region can be characterized by five attributes: scale, rate of growth, diversity, expertise and the evolution to a knowledge economy.

These characteristics offer a useful framework to understand the changes in the Region's economy and provide a basis for developing new policies and initiatives to guide future economic development.

The primary measure of an economy's scale is Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

In 2002, York Region's GDP was \$33.2 billion. The size of the Region's economy is of provincial scale, and in fact is larger than any of the Atlantic Provinces in Canada. All aspects of the Region's economy: GDP, employment, number of enterprises, export revenues, and corporate profits, are all large by Canadian standards. The annual average growth rate of the Region's GDP between 1991 and 2002 was 6.2%, a rate considerably higher than the 4.1% of the surrounding Toronto Census Metropolitan Area, and the 3.7% growth rate for the Province of Ontario as a whole. Clearly, York Region has a very dynamic economy.

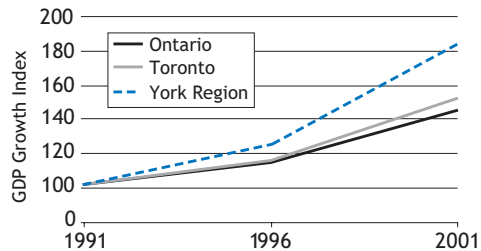
In 2003, the total of all industrial commercial and institutional (ICI) construction was more than \$872 million, while overall construction values topped \$2.72 billion, placing York Region as having the fourth largest amount of construction across Canada.

Significant employment gains have been fuelled by the growth of the population. No one sector predominates which stabilizes the Region from cyclical shifts in the national and global economies. The composition of the Region's economy also reveals a diversified base that is becoming more service oriented.

The scale of enterprise formation is significant. The number of enterprises resident in York Region has increased at a startling rate, up 43.3% between 1999 and 2003. Statistics Canada data for 2003 revealed that over 60% of York Region's enterprises were owner-managed and had no payroll employees. The growth in the number of enterprises without payroll employees was approximately 68% between 1999 and 2003, and clearly demonstrates the entrepreneurial capabilities of the Region's growing population base. At the other end of the scale, the substantial rate of growth in the number of large companies demonstrates York Region's ability to attract and sustain corporate investment and resulting job creation.

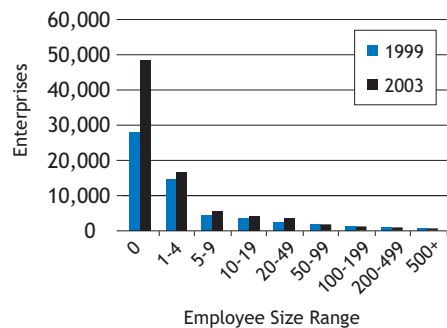
In 2003, exports accounted for \$12.5 billion or 38% of the Region's GDP, which exceeds the export sales of six Canadian provinces. The destination of York Region exports was also more diverse than Ontario as a whole, a reflection of the increasing ethnic diversity of the Region's companies.

Real GDP Growth
Ontario, Toronto CMA and York Region
1991 - 2001



Source: Statistics Canada, Essential Economic Corporation, and Community Benchmarks

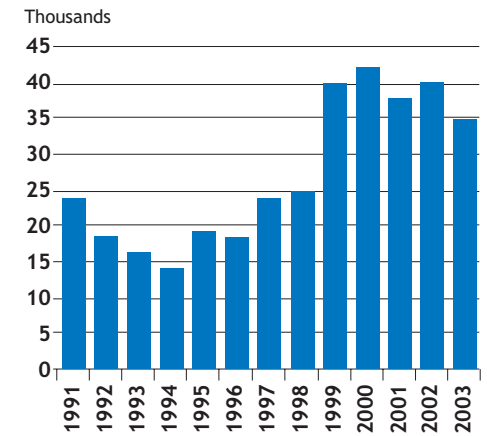
Enterprises by Employee Size Ranges
York Region
1999 and 2003



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns

The performance of York Region's companies in terms of Research and Development (R&D) is somewhat lower than expected given the scale and diversity of the Region's economy. However, this may be due to the presence of many branch plants and subsidiary operations where R&D is not a mandated activity. Given the emergence of a strong technology-driven cluster and the evolution of more service-based companies, there is reason to suspect that the Region's R&D performance will increase over time.

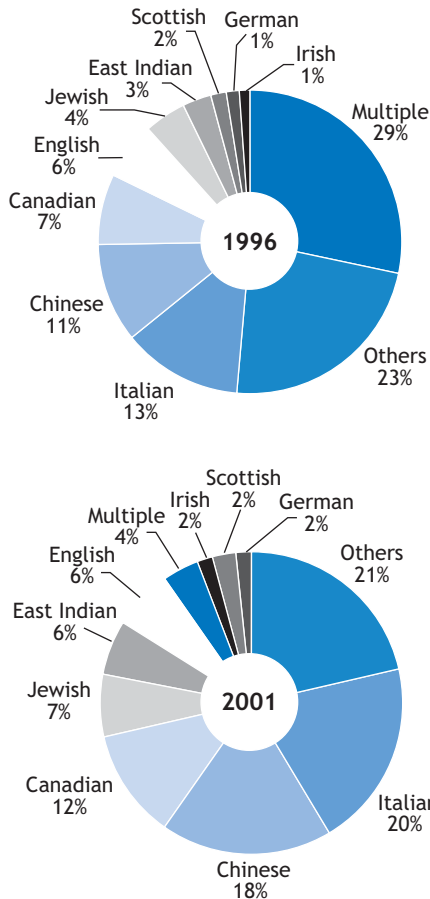
York Region Annual Population Growth
1991-2003



Source: York Region Planning and Development
Service Department, 2003

2.2 Attributes of York Region's Economy

Ethnic Composition in York Region
1996 and 2001



Source: Statistics Canada
1996 & 2001 Census Canada

Current Population and Projected Growth

During the period 1996 to 2001, York Region was the fastest growing Census Division in Canada. It continued to grow at a rapid pace throughout 2003, although slightly less than in recent years. The Region is now home to over 870,000 people, an increase of 4.1% over 2002. During 2003, 27% of GTA's population increase occurred in York Region. The Region now ranks sixth in population size compared to all urban areas across the country. This strong population growth has been a driving force behind the Region's economy, supplying consumers for products and services, contributing to the rate of increase in construction levels, and providing a skilled labour force which is the single most important factor for businesses locating in the Region. Between 1991 and 2001 Census years, York Region's resident labour force increased by almost 44%, from 270,000 to 387,000, which is approximately 14.8% of the labour force of the entire GTA.

York Region is expected to continue to grow at a rapid rate. By 2026, the population of the Region is forecast to be 1.28 million, up from 870,000 in 2004. This growth will continue to increase demands on transportation and servicing infrastructure and has also served to increase the awareness of the need to retain quality of life, to manage growth and to provide public services to meet this growth.

Changing Demographics and Diversity

As York Region's population continues to grow, the age, economic, social and ethnic composition of the Region will change. The aging and retirement of the baby boom generation continues to increase pressure on business to recruit and train workers with the necessary skills. The low birth rates in the Region and the GTA underscore the importance of immigration assimilation initiatives as the Region will be competing with other jurisdictions for skilled labour. Internationally trained workers will become a key segment of a higher-skilled labour force demanded by business and industry. These demographic impacts will also have implications for health care, education, housing and community services sectors. By 2011, Canada will depend entirely on immigration for labour force growth. This will lead to increased ethnic and cultural diversity in the Region bringing new market opportunities and will place new and different demands on service providers.

Continuing Employment Growth

York Region's employment growth has exceeded the national and provincial averages over the last five years. Between 1998 and 2003, employment in the Region has grown at an annual average rate of 7.1%, while national and provincial employment grew at annual average rates of 2.3% and 2.7% respectively.

Employment growth continues to outpace the Region's population growth. Since 1971, employment in York Region has grown at a rate faster than its population growth. The Region's employment growth is driven by immigration from within the Toronto CMA and beyond. York Region's share of total employment within the Greater Toronto Area is also increasing. In 1986, York Region had an 8% share of the total employment in the GTA. By 2001, this figure had jumped to 15% reflecting the increasing attractiveness of the Region as a location for employment.

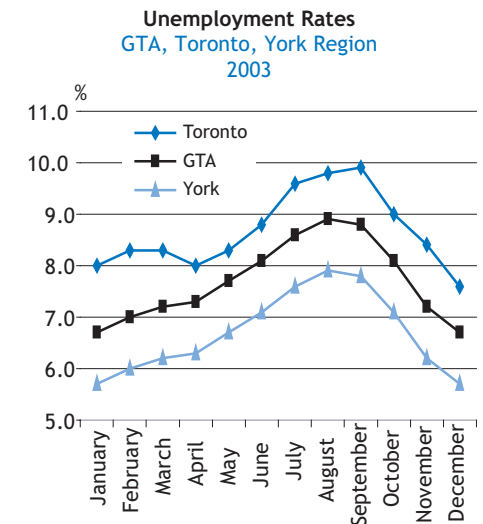
Full time employment accounted for approximately 79% of jobs in the Region in 2003, which was at about the same level as in 1998. The number of part-time jobs increased slightly as a portion of overall employment during this period, rising from 14.5% to 16.5%. Seasonal employment accounted for the remaining jobs in 2003. This reflects the overall health of the Region's labour market with full time and part time employment occurring at a similar rate.

As of December 2003, the estimated number of jobs in York Region was approximately 415,000 (excluding home and farm-based employment), an increase of 10,000 compared to the year before. The participation rate (the total number of people working as a percentage of the working age population) of 71.3% is higher than Ontario's (67.3%) and Canada's (66.4%) rates.

Due to an increased labour force participation rate, the Region's unemployment rate is approximately 5.7%, which is lower than the GTA unemployment rate as a whole.

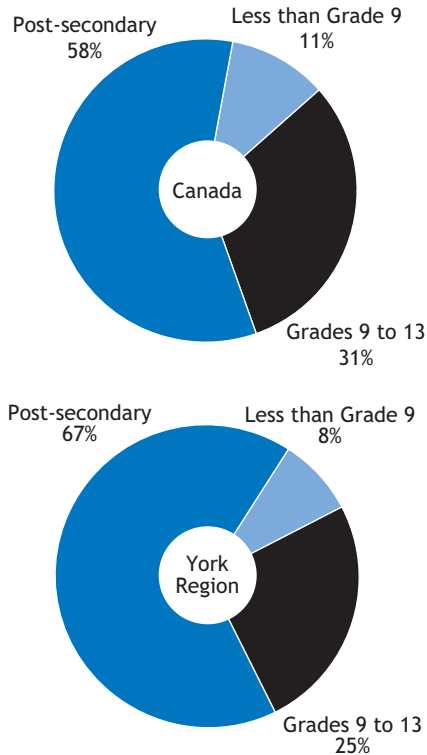
In 2001, the number of York Region's resident employed labour force was 387,700, a 43.6% increase from 1991. The live-work ratio had improved from 50.6% in 1991 to 53.8% in 2001, but it remained the lowest in the GTA.

Research suggests that there is still an imbalance between the occupational structure of the resident labour force and the places where the Region's residents work. In 2001, the number of York Region residents in the management, business and finance, social science, education, and government occupational categories was significantly larger than the number of jobs available in the Region. At the same time, the number of jobs available in the Region was significantly larger than the number of residents employed in the manufacturing and processing related occupation, as well as in construction and related trades.



Source: Toronto Economic Development Division, Toronto Economic Indicators 2003
Note: York Region unemployment figures are estimates

**Educational Attainment
Canada and York Region
2001**



Source: Statistics Canada

Highly Educated and Skilled Labour Force

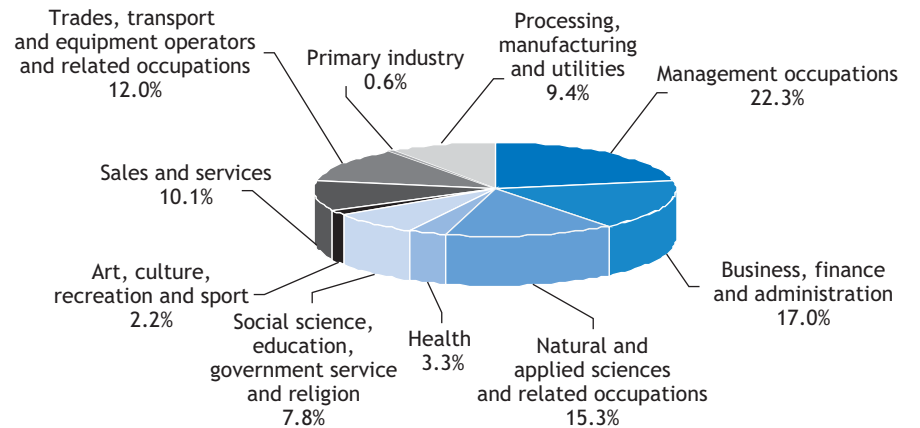
The Region's labour force consists of a higher percentage of workers with post-secondary education as compared to the rest of the GTA or the Province. This is a reflection of the emergence of a strong and diverse range of technology-based businesses in the Region. The growth in employment and enterprises within the professional, scientific and technical services speaks well for the Region's economy and indicates a growing inventory of skills and expertise which are the foundations of future prosperity.

In a knowledge-based economy, lifelong learning becomes essential to maintain skills and labour force quality which in turn supports a competitive and prosperous economy. Within York Region, a number of companies have formed partnerships with training and education organizations to provide employees with opportunities for workplace training and skills development, but more concerted efforts will be required in the future.

Transitioning to a Knowledge Economy

The composition of York Region's employment base also reflects a rapidly adapting economy. Although manufacturing remains the primary employer, the business services sector was the fastest growing segment of the economy. During the five-year period from 1998 to 2003, employment in goods-producing industries grew at an average annual rate of 2.7%, while the average annual increase of service-oriented jobs was 5.9% per year. This growth in services employment reflects the trend in the economies of the developed world. The decline in manufacturing jobs could possibly be explained by increased industry automation and/or increased productivity among workers. The growth in service-producing jobs tends to indicate a growing knowledge economy in York Region which is defined by a combination of both high technology and a highly skilled workforce.

**York Region's Employment Growth by Occupation
1996-2001**



Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 & 2001 Census Canada

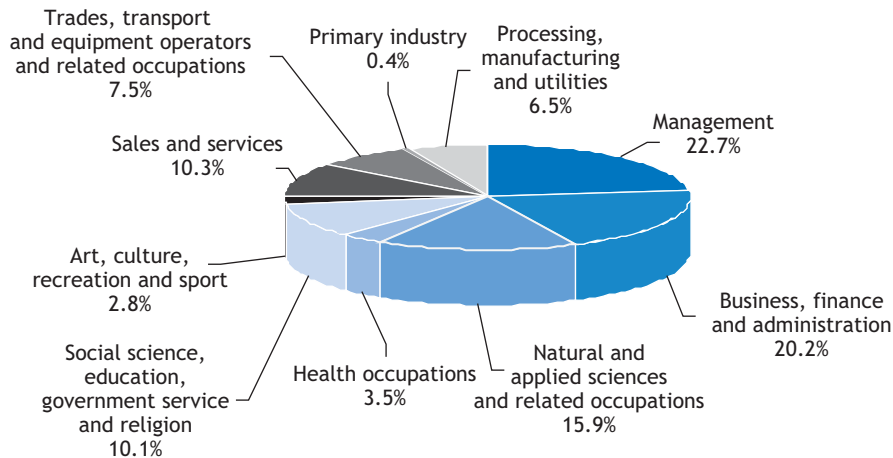
Labour Force and Housing

York Region's competitiveness to retain and attract economic investment depends on the availability of a diverse labour force. The availability of appropriate housing is one of the important factors that influence people's choice of their place of residence. A wider variety and more affordable housing will ensure that the Region's labour force continues to expand.

York Region's housing stock is diversifying as the market demands and land use policies evolve to encourage a higher density built form. However, single family detached housing is still the dominant form of new home construction. Over 72.3% of the housing built in York Region in 2003 was single family detached dwellings. Moreover, the average price of housing in York Region is high: the average resale price of a single family home in 2003 was \$336,876, 15% above the average price in the GTA. Conversely, the number of rental units in York Region has decreased to 14% of the total housing stock and is the lowest in the GTA.

Recent research by the Region reveals that a sizeable number of people engaged in manufacturing processing, construction and trades within York Region live outside the Region, and that many of these in-commuters live in rental accommodation. The need to address the supply of more affordable and rental housing will have a direct impact on the Region's ability to continue to attract and sustain jobs in these sectors. The York Region *Employers Opinion Survey 2004* confirmed that the availability of affordable rental as well as owned housing has a significant impact on the capability of employers to attract and retain their labour force.

York Region Resident Employed Labour Force
Growth by Occupation
1996-2001



Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 & 2001 Census Canada

Two: York Region's Economic Performance continued...

Top Private Sector Employers in York Region, 2003

Rank	Business Name	Location	# of Employees	Industry Description
1	Magna International Inc.	York Region	12,100*	Manufactures automotive components & systems
2	IBM Canada Ltd.	Markham	6,260	Provides information technology solutions
3	Paramount Canada's Wonderland	Vaughan	3,990	Amusement Park
4	Royal Group Technologies Ltd.	Vaughan	3,800*	Manufactures polymer-based home improvement, consumer & construction products
5	Acklands - Grainger	Richmond Hill	2,700	Trucking company
6	Amex Canada	Markham	2,300	Financial services & call centre
7	Miller Paving Limited	Markham	2,050	Road construction engineering services, paving, & manufacture asphalt
8	Con Drain Co. (1983) Ltd.	Vaughan	1,350	Sewer & water main contractors
9	Sears Canada National Service Centre	Vaughan	1,200	Distribution centre for Sears retail stores
10	ATI Technologies Inc.	Markham	1,140	Designs & manufactures innovative 3D graphics solutions
11	Progressive Moulded Products Ltd.	Vaughan	1,020	Manufactures custom injection moulds for automobiles & appliances
12	Panigas Group of Companies	Vaughan	960	General contractor, manufacturing signage & exhibits
13	Economist & Sun	Markham	910	Newspaper publisher
14	Dynatec Corporation	Richmond Hill	900	Provides contract mining, mine development & underground construction services
15	A.C. Nielsen of Canada Ltd.	Markham	850	Market research
16	Highland Transport	Markham	780	Trucking company
17	Canac Kitchens	Markham	750	Manufactures kitchen cabinets & counters
18	Steelcase Canada Ltd.	Markham	750	Manufactures office furniture
19	Nova Services Group Inc	Vaughan	720	Janitorial services contractor
20	Noma Automotive	Vaughan	700	Manufactures wiring products for vehicles & appliances
21	CGI Adjusters Inc.	Markham	680	Independent adjusters for insurance claims
22	407 ETR	Vaughan	680	Administration & Maintenance of Highway 407
23	Canadian National Railway	Vaughan	670	Rail based transportation & real estate services
24	Allstate Insurance	Markham	650	Insurance carrier
25	The Toronto Star Press Centre	Vaughan	630	Newspaper printing centre
26	Toromont Industries Ltd.	Vaughan	620	Distributes & services heavy construction equipment & engines
27	Scholastic Canada Ltd	Markham	600	Publishes & distributes children's books & educational materials in both official languages
28	Crown Metals Packaging	Vaughan	600	Manufactures metal containers
29	Novex Pharma	Richmond Hill	560	Pharmaceutical company
30	Concord Transportation Inc.	Vaughan	550	Trucking company
31	Quebecor World Aurora	Aurora	550	Commercial printer / publisher
32	Exco Technologies Ltd.	Markham	550	Manufactures die-cast moulds & extrusion tooling
33	Emerson Electric Canada	Markham	530	Manufactures climate control systems, tools, appliances & industrial automation systems
34	Robert B. Somerville	King	530	Pipeline & utility installation contractors
35	Maritimes Health	Markham	520	Insurance carrier
36	Woodbridge Foam Corp.	Vaughan	510	Manufactures automotive polyurethane foam components
37	Waterford Building Maintenance Inc	Richmond Hill	510	Janitorial services contractor
38	Hewlett Packard (Canada) Ltd.	Markham	500	Computer sales, service & corporate administration
39	Omega Direct Response	Markham	500	Call center services company
40	Sciex Division of MDS Health Group	Vaughan	500	Involved in research, design & production of mass spectrometers

Note: * Includes employees of subsidiary companies located in York Region. This table represents private-sector employers with 500 or more employees working in York Region.
Source: York Region Planning & Development Services Dept.

Enterprises in York Region

Based on data from Statistics Canada, York Region had a total of 79,600 business enterprises in 2003. The number of enterprises does not reflect those businesses that had less than \$30,000 in business revenue and therefore undercounts the total number of business enterprises within the Region. Of the total number of enterprises, over 48,000 had no recorded “payroll employees”, which implies that these were owner-managed businesses. This testifies to the tremendous degree of entrepreneurial potential that exists within York Region.

Small firms are the predominant form of enterprise in York Region, with over 93% of the firms employing less than 20 people in 2003. However, there is also substantial growth in the number of larger firms employing over 100 employees. Between 1999 and 2003, companies with 100 to 199 employees increased by 53%, between 200 and 499 employees by 92%, and those with over 500 employees increased by 42%. This rate of growth points to a dynamic and healthy economy, and suggests that the Region has both the ability to attract and accommodate new growing enterprises, as well as foster its own enterprises to expand to higher employee size ranges.

The fastest growing types of enterprises are within the Business Services sector. In particular, the substantial increase in the number of professional, scientific and technical services industries in York Region mirrors a common trend towards a services based economy in North America. Between 1999 and 2003, businesses in these industries accounted for over 25% of the total business enterprise growth within the Region.

Industry Clusters

York Region has a diverse economic base characterized by a wide variety of industry sectors and enterprise sizes. No one sector has an overwhelming dominance thereby making the Region more resistant to the effects of industry specific downturns in domestic or international markets. It also provides a continuum of job opportunities from entry level to senior management occupations.

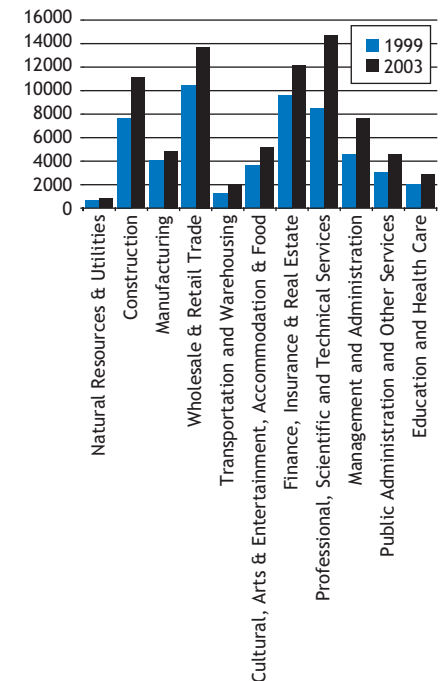
An analysis of the Region’s employment and company concentration reveals that there are established or emergent clusters of export-led companies in the following industries:

- Information technology
- Biotechnology
- Automotive parts
- Business services
- Furniture
- Materials (rubber, plastics non-metallic, aggregates)

In addition, York Region has a thriving agricultural industry which makes a significant contribution to the local economy.

Many recent industries have demonstrated that strong industrial clusters contribute to sustained regional economic growth, depending on their stages in the life cycle, the economic cycle, and the degree of maturity of the technology involved. “Clusters are typically identified where there is a geographic concentration of interrelated firms involved in a common field.”² They affect competition by increasing productivity of companies based in the area, by driving the pace of innovation, and by stimulating the formation of new businesses.

Enterprise Distribution by Industry
York Region, 1999 and 2003



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns

- **Information Technology**

The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) cluster was recently documented in a comprehensive analysis by E&B Data, commissioned by the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance to undertake the study ³. The GTA region has the largest concentration of medium and large ICT companies in Canada and ranks as the third largest technology complex in North America. Of the 3,362 ICT facilities located in the GTA, 654 or 19% are located in York Region and include industry heavyweights such as IBM, ATI, Motorola Canada, All Stream, and CGI Group.

This cluster acts as a strong propulsive influence for the Region's economy. While 24% of the ICT firms in the Region serve other ICT companies, the majority of these companies have strong ties and customer relationships with companies in other industry sectors. The study showed that 65% of the ICT companies surveyed planned new capital investments in their facilities in the coming year, and 25% of the companies expect to grow faster than the economy over the next few years.

- **Biotechnology**

A preliminary survey of biotechnology sector-related companies has identified that over 120 companies located in the Region are involved in medical device, biopharma, and medical assistive technologies. In addition, a large number of companies in the information and communications technology, digital media, software, and manufacturing sectors also contribute to this biotechnology cluster.

In 2003, the Region, its area municipalities and over 30 other members collaborated on the establishment of a York Regional Biotechnology Cluster Consortium (YRBCC) to develop a Biotechnology Cluster Innovation Plan. The mission of the YRBCC is to be a strategic catalyst that will sustain and grow the convergent life sciences industry. The comprehensive and convergent approach will result in the creation of new technologies and spur growth of companies, especially small and medium size enterprises (SME's) in the cluster. This initiative will enable members to engage in greater collaboration across identified niche sectors, catalyze the advancement of early-stage and global companies, and increase opportunities for interdisciplinary research in the area of convergent technologies. The YRBCC will play a key role in support of the Region's Economic Strategy by helping to develop a regional innovation network and expand opportunities for shared research and innovation.

- ***Automotive Cluster***

The automotive cluster is Ontario's most important export industry and is a significant feature of the manufacturing landscape of York Region. Magna International Inc. and its related companies employ over 12,000 people within York Region. In addition, there are 17 companies in the automotive parts sector that employ over 200 employees, and over 70 companies in the transportation equipment industry employ more than 100 employees. The automotive industry also embraces several hundred small supplier companies in the machinery and equipment, fabricated metal, and electrical equipment industries. Given the rapid technological advances and the changes in the way new automotive components and systems are developed, this sector will drive a significant demand for specialized labour in occupations such as research, tool and die making, and engineering skills, and will be a major catalyst for technology-based growth in the Region.

- ***Business Services***

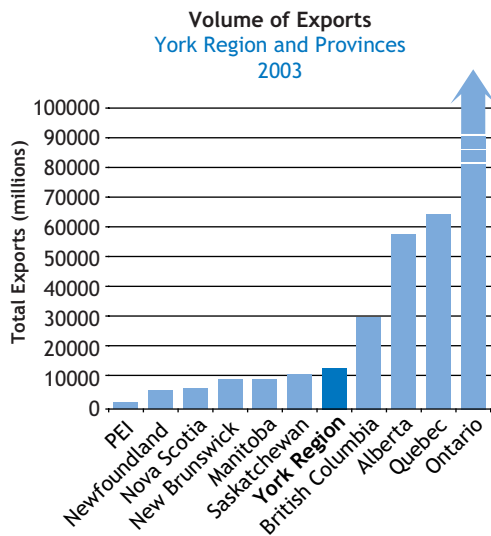
In the period 1991 to 2001, the most significant shift in York Region's employment base was the growth of the services sector. In those ten years, employment in business services rose from 9.1% of the labour force to almost 13%. Over half of this growth was accounted for by increasing numbers of jobs in occupations in management, finance and business administration, and the natural and applied sciences fields. The growth of business services reflects a rising global trend in the industrial world. Increasing global competition is forcing business to look for more efficient and effective ways to contain the costs of doing business and large scale enterprises are outsourcing non-core business functions. This has created a strong demand for sophisticated business services and appears to be a longer-term trend.

- ***Furniture***

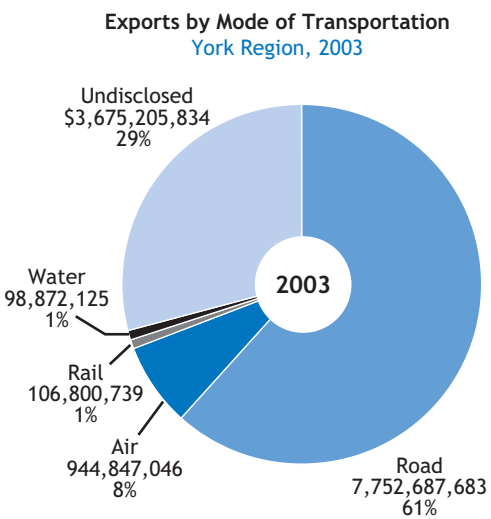
While driven in part by the significant growth in population and resultant demand in the residential and commercial sectors, the furniture cluster remains a strong part of the Region's economy owing to the availability of specialized labour and the location advantages of the Region. According to the 2003 Employment Survey, there were 146 companies involved in household and institutional furniture manufacturing in the Region. Of these, Canac Kitchens employs over 500 employees and two others, Raywall Kitchens Ltd. and Gracious Living Industries Inc., each employ more than 200 people. In addition, 63 York Region companies manufacture office furniture, the largest being Steelcase Canada Ltd. which employs more than 500 staff. There are also 23 other furniture-related product manufacturers in the Region.

- ***Materials (Rubber, Plastics, Non-metallic Mineral Product Manufacturing, Primary Metal Manufacturing, and Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing)***

The materials sector is a major supplier for the automotive parts and furniture sectors. In the period 1998 to 2003, employment in the plastics and rubber products manufacturing sector in the Region grew 44.3%. In York Region, 105 companies are involved in plastic and rubber product manufacturing. Six of these companies employ more than 200 employees while two companies, Woodbridge Foam Corp. and Progressive Moulded Products, employ more than 500 and 1,000 people respectively.



Source: Statistics Canada



Source: Statistics Canada

• **Agriculture**

The agricultural industry remains a significant component of the economy of York Region, despite the loss of farmland to development pressures. In 2001, over 40% of the land in the Region was farmland, of which 73.7% was under production. With a total of 1,020 farms, gross farm receipt at \$1,071 per acre was the third highest in the GTA. The dominant commodity groups on the basis of gross farm receipts were vegetable, followed by greenhouse products and poultry and egg. On the basis of number of farms, miscellaneous specialty was the largest category followed by cattle, dairy, grain, oilseed and vegetable. The largest groupings within the miscellaneous specialty category were horse and pony followed by nursery and greenhouse. With over 20,000 horses and a total economic impact in excess of \$450 million per year in revenues and capital investment, the Region was one of the most active equestrian industry clusters in North America.

Export Driven Economy

A key factor driving the Region’s economy is its export success. In 2003, York Region businesses exported \$12.5 billion worth of commodities. Exporting more than Manitoba, Saskatchewan or any of the Atlantic Provinces, York Region’s export performance in terms of share of GDP rivals the export performance of the Canadian economy as a whole.

The Region’s export markets are significantly more diversified than other jurisdictions. York Region exports to 117 countries with 84.3% of its exports going to the United States, while Ontario sells only 8.3% of its exports to countries outside of the United States. The next largest export destination for York Region companies is the European Union, followed by Japan and China. Within the United States, York’s exports are diversified by destination

with exports going to every state, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The Region’s international market diversification may be a reflection of its own ethnic diversity, with exporters reaching out to countries of their origin, where personal experience, family and business ties are providing access and a better understanding of market opportunities. This market diversification also offers less vulnerability to downturns in the North American market and indicates that the Region is well positioned to expand the volume of exports to these countries.

The top four exports by industry represent 55.7% of total exports. Each of the four industries - transportation equipment manufacturing, machinery and equipment, computer and electronic manufacturing, and plastics and rubber products manufacturing - serve different markets.

With \$7.7 billion of exports being transported by roads, the transportation system is indispensable to the prosperity of York Region. Approximately \$3.2 billion of York’s exports cross the border at Windsor, followed by Fort Erie at \$2.8 billion, and Sarnia at \$1.6 billion.

Given the importance of exports to the growth of the York Region economy, ensuring an efficient road and transportation infrastructure in the Region is a critical economic priority. In addition, issues such as border crossing congestion also impact York Region companies and threaten the ability to attract and retain investment in industries such as automotive parts where “just-in-time” logistics and integrated supply chain management are critical to continued businesses with U.S.-based automotive OEM’s.

Revenues & Profitability

The structure and scale of York Region's economy can also be measured by the revenue generated by its industries, by showing the extent of the financial flows into the Region's enterprises. In 2001, York Region enterprises generated an estimated \$118 billion in revenue. Enterprises in the Finance and Insurance industries ranked highest, contributing over \$16 billion in revenue. The next top six industries which include Service, Manufacturing and Construction generated over \$5.7 billion each. The revenue generated by these top ranked industries clearly indicates the diversity of the Region's economy.

One of the best indicators of industry performance is a measure of profitability. While some industries may generate significant revenue, the Region's economic interests are best served by having profitable industries. York's enterprises generated an estimated \$4.8 billion in profit in 2001, led by Finance and Insurance industries and Management of Companies and Enterprises industries, each generating over \$1 billion. The third ranked industry by profit was Real Estate industries accounting for \$397 million of the Region's profits.

Research & Development

The Region's enterprises reported only 0.8% of Canada's R&D expenditures, and this level of activity appears to be low compared to the rest of Canada. However, it should be noted that R&D spending are affected by a wide variety of factors, and that various kinds of R&D activity may not be captured in the statistics. An analysis of the trend over time and a more detailed analysis by industry offer more positive insights. From 1994 to 2001, the Region's total R&D spending increased by 208%, with Machinery up 557%, other Electronic Products 161%, total Manufacturing 666%, Computer and Related Services 211%, and Engineering and Scientific Services up 393%. If these rates continue into the future, the total level of R&D spending will improve significantly. The challenge will be to provide the conditions to attract companies and highly skilled technical workers to sustain research and development activities within the Region. Closer linkages to the universities and colleges to stimulate contract research and commercialization potential is an important component of the Region's long-term strategy.



three

York Region's Role in Context

3. York Region's Role in Context

3.1 Past Regional Economic Development Efforts

Economic development services have been assigned to York Region and its areas municipalities as part of their spheres of jurisdiction under the Ontario Municipal Act.

In 1992, Regional Council approved an expanded economic development function at the Regional level. Economic promotion activities were undertaken under the auspices of the Region's Information Officer, and focused on general "industrial" attraction and the support of tourism promotion through annual funding for the York Region Tourism Marketing Agency.

In support of the Regional Official Plan, Seneca College made a proposal to the Region for a joint economic development planning initiative in 1994. Subsequently, Dr. Michael Cox, Professor of International Business, was seconded on a six-month basis to direct the joint Seneca-York partnership. Extensive meetings and forums were held with all levels of government, business, education and other community agencies to determine the appropriate role for the Regional Municipality of York in economic development. The model and workplan developed by Dr. Cox identified the need for a strategic Economic Development function at the Regional level.

In 1995, the Economic Development function was consolidated within the Planning and Development Services Department. Since then, the program was expanded and many key initiatives have been undertaken. An Economic Development Branch was established in 1998 headed by a Director of Economic Development, and in 2000, the tourism promotion function was brought internal to the Region to replace the Tourism Marketing Agency.

Some of the major initiatives undertaken since 1995 include the development of a Tourism Strategy, development of a promotional logo, launch of a Strategic Alliance initiative, establishment of a partnership with the National Research Council/Industrial Research Assistance Program, launch of an Export Development Initiative, establishment of a Small Business Enterprise Centre, and partnership in the York Regional Biotechnology Cluster Consortium.

3.2 Municipal Roles in Economic Development

York Region understands the importance of integrating the collective strengths of all the area municipalities to gain a competitive edge in the global marketplace. Working in partnership and complementary to each other, the Region and the area municipalities are both undertaking activities which support a healthy business environment. Periodic municipal economic partners meetings are held to exchange information and provide feedback. The Region's programs such as the Export Development and Tourism initiatives are supported by the area municipalities, although both Georgina and Vaughan have an interest in developing tourism programs at the local level. In the past, there have been opportunities for partnerships between the two levels on initiatives such as the Strategic Alliance project and the Employment Database project.

While the Region and the municipalities operate at a different scale, there are also variations among the municipalities on the intensity and focus of their economic development activities. Aurora, Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan have dedicated economic development offices and staff, while the function is supported by planning and other staff in the other five municipalities. Operating at the local level, the focus of most of the area municipalities is on promotion and retention/expansion of existing businesses. The array of activities they are engaged in ranges from downtown/mainstreet revitalization to new business attraction, and some of them are also devoting their efforts on attracting international investment. A number of municipalities are also engaged in corporate calling and business leader/ambassador programs.

Small business support services are provided by Small Business Enterprise Centres in Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill, with the northern municipalities being served by the Region's Centre in Newmarket. Funded in part by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, these four centres operate independently but collaborate on occasion on major events and activities. The Innovation Synergy Centre in Markham (ISCM) supports and assists early stage high growth companies in realizing their growth potential in both the domestic and international marketplace. Founded by a partnership between the Town of Markham, York University, National Research Council and Royal Bank, the ISCM is located in Markham but serves companies throughout the Greater Toronto Area.

All the area municipalities have established local economic development committees and are involved with their local Chambers of Commerce/Board of Trade to varying degrees. A number of area municipalities have completed or are in the process of developing updated economic development strategies, while economic development goals are embodied in the corporate strategic plan/vision documents of most municipalities.

In the development of the Region's Economic Strategy, the Region has consulted area municipal staff and reviewed related municipal strategic plans, vision documents, economic development strategy, and marketing plans in order to better focus the Region's efforts to support local municipal efforts.

3.3 Senior Government Involvement

An Economic Strategy at the Regional level must build on the policy framework set out by senior level governments, including:

- The Federal Government's *Innovation Strategy* which addresses the Federal Government's responsibility to support community initiatives to provide equality of opportunity and measures to stimulate innovation in a knowledge-based economy.
- The National Research Council Vision 2026 Document, *Science at Work for Canada*.
- The Ontario Government's *Road Map to Prosperity* which set out a long-term economic strategy for the Province in 1999. More recently, the Ontario Government Task Force on Competitiveness, Productivity and Economic Progress has released three Annual Reports and five Working Papers by the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity. These documents provide a framework to better understand the economic performance and future competitive position of regional economies within Ontario.
- The Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal's *Places to Grow* Discussion Paper which addresses the need for comprehensive, long-range strategic growth planning for the Greater Golden Horseshoe communities. In the Discussion Paper, the Province is proposing five main objectives to maximize existing opportunities to accommodate growth. This growth plan will promote economic development in the Greater Golden Horseshoe by removing disincentives to development in urban centres, establishing urban economic development tools to attract investment, improving transportation efficiency for workers and goods, improving the efficiency of key infrastructure by making strategic investments across the region, and ensuring that a diversity for employment land is available and can be readily serviced. At the same time, the Province is proposing to implement economic development strategies through innovative partnerships, undertake cluster development initiatives, and implement Ontario's commercialization strategy to link public research institutions with companies to bring research into market.

York Region's actions to strengthen its economy need to be integrated with the programs of senior levels of government and other economic development agencies. This will also establish a basis for partnerships to access funding and support for economic initiatives.

The following are some of the Federal and Provincial government departments and agencies that have a complementary economic development role and related functions.

"A growth plan for this region's future must and will focus on making it a more attractive place for businesses and workers to invest their skills and capital. It will do so by enhancing the high quality of life, by lowering the costs of working and doing business in the area, and by maintaining the diverse character of the Greater Golden Horseshoe"

Place to Grow

Three: York Region's Role in Context continued...

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Federal Ministry and Agency	Mandate and Responsibilities
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	Provides information, research and technology, and policies and programs to assist the agriculture and agri-food sector to meet the challenges and opportunities for continued prosperity.
Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC)	Focusing on the emerging and exporting sectors of the economy, it provides small and medium-sized businesses with flexible financing, affordable consulting services and venture capital.
Canadian Commercial Corporation (CCC)	As Canada's export contracting agency, the Corporation brings buyers and Canadian exporters together through contracts built on the best possible terms and conditions.
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	One of the department's mandates is to admit immigrants, foreign students, visitors and temporary workers who enhance Canada's social and economic growth.
Export Development Canada (EDC)	A Canadian financial institution devoted exclusively to providing trade finance services to support Canadian exporters and investors.
International Trade Canada (ITCan)	Responsible for positioning Canada as a world business leader, by helping large and small Canadian companies expand and succeed internationally, by promoting Canada as a dynamic place to do business, and by negotiating and administering trade agreements.
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)	Responsible for providing all Canadians with the tools they need to thrive and prosper in the workplace and community. The department supports human capital development, labour market development, and is dedicated to establishing a culture of lifelong learning for Canadians.

Federal Ministry and Agency	Mandate and Responsibilities
Industry Canada	The department's mission is to foster a growing competitive, knowledge-based Canadian economy. It works with Canadians through the economy and in all parts of the country to improve conditions for investment, improve Canada's innovation performance, increase Canada's share of global trade and build a fair, efficient and competitive marketplace.
Technology Partnerships Canada (TPC)	A special operating agency of Industry Canada with a mandate to provide funding support for strategic research and development, and demonstration projects that will produce economic, social and environmental benefits to Canadians.
National Research Council (NRC) and Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP)	Canada's premier organization for research and development, one of NRC's mandates is to provide vital scientific and technological services to the research and industrial communities. Its Industrial Research Assistance Program provides small and medium-sized enterprises with value-added technological and business advice, financial assistance and a range of other innovation assistance.
Transport Canada	Works to ensure that Canadians have a safe, efficient and environmentally friendly transportation system by developing and administering policies, regulations and programs which contributes to Canada's economic growth and social development.

Three: York Region's Role in Context continued...

Some of these ministries and agencies at the federal level are key partners in the delivery of a number of the Region's economic development programs. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada has been a major funder for some of the Region's initiatives including the Export Development Initiative, the Strategic Alliance project, the GTA Agricultural Action Plan, and the SARS Recovery program. The Region is a NRC network member

and a host for two of the Industrial Technology Advisors who deliver the IRAP Program in York Region. Industry Canada was instrumental in the launching of the York Region Export Development Initiative, and has provided valuable support to the program, together with the Ministry of International Trade and Export Development Canada.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Provincial Ministry and Agency	Mandate and Responsibilities
Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF)	Provides programs and services to the agri-food sector which is integral to Ontario's economy.
Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration	Responsible for co-ordinating the development of provincial strategies to further Ontario's goals in immigration and settlement.
Ministry of Culture	Encourages the arts and cultural industries, and implements strategies to promote and market Ontario's cultural and heritage attractions to realize their full economic potential.
Ministry of Economic Development and Trade	The lead ministry responsible for promoting economic growth within Ontario. Its mandate is to act as a catalyst for innovation, promote investment, and encourage trade development and exports to world markets. The Ministry promotes entrepreneurship and small business, supports innovation, and takes a leadership role on urban and regional economic development issues through research and co-ordination of efforts.
Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities	Provide leadership, sets the direction for education policy, and support excellence in Ontario's postsecondary education and training system.

Provincial Ministry and Agency	Mandate and Responsibilities
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing	Responsible for managing six major areas: local government, Smart Growth, land use planning, housing market, building regulation and rural development.
Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal	Manages infrastructure planning to achieve maximum leverage for taxpayer dollars in the key areas of education, health, transportation, economic development, housing and the environment.
Ministry of Tourism and Recreation	Responsible for advancing Ontario’s competitive advantage in tourism; and encouraging involvement in sport, recreation and physical activity for the health, social, and economic benefits of Ontarians.
Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership (OTMP)	A collaborative private/public sector partnership that works strategically with the tourism industry to enhance the growth of Ontario’s tourism sector and establish Ontario as a pre-eminent four-season destination.
Ministry of Transportation	Responsible for ensuring a safe and efficient transportation system for Ontario.

The Region has received funding support from the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade for the operation of the York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre and for the development of a Biotechnology Cluster Innovation Plan. It has also collaborated with Ontario Exports Inc. on some of the Export Development initiatives. In the implementation of the tourism programs, the Region has established close working relationships with the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, OTMP, and the Ministry of Culture. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Education were engaged in the Ontario Competitive City Regions (OCCR) Symposium process and other skills development initiatives.

Staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food are involved with the Region’s agricultural initiatives and are represented on the Agricultural Advisory Liaison Group in an advisory capacity, while the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal play a strong role in the Region’s growth management strategy.

Throughout the Strategy consultation process, meetings and workshops have been held with senior government staff to seek their comments and identify their priorities. Their feedback is reflected in the Strategic Directions and proposed Actions.

3.4 Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance

The Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance (GTMA) is a public-private partnership between the 29 municipalities and regions in the Greater Toronto Area, the Provincial and Federal governments, other non-profit organizations and a broad cross section of private sector corporations. A key point of contact for investors seeking to explore business opportunities in the Greater Toronto Area, the objective of the GTMA is to expand the economy of the area by raising the profile of the region internationally to attract new investment and employment. With the resources of its public and private sector partners, the GTMA provides essential business information and site selection services to facilitate investment. York Region and its area municipalities are members of the GTMA, and support the Alliance on investment attraction initiatives. The Region has been providing an annual operating grant to the GTMA on behalf of the area municipalities.

3.5 The Evolving Role for the Region to Address Future Economic Competitiveness

The focus of past initiatives by York Region has been to complement the economic development efforts of the local municipalities through ensuring the provision of adequate servicing infrastructure, export promotion, tourism attraction and development, and a variety of small enterprise development initiatives in both the rural and the urban communities.

The evolving role of the Region will be to identify and facilitate new partnerships and shared resources that can be brought to bear on the ever more complex and competitive nature of economic development. It will be just as important to focus on human resources development and training as it will be to ensure that new employment lands are brought on stream.

In the 21st century, in a marketplace where investment capital and markets are now globally available, it will be important to compete, not against each other within the Region, but as partners against the competition from other parts of the world. A recurring theme that surfaced through the consultations and from the research undertaken as part of the Strategy development process was that the Region must seek out new and more meaningful ways to be competitive. It cannot compete solely on the basis of “cost of doing business”, it has to compete on the basis of “value created”.

The differences in the old and new approaches to economic development are illustrated in the following table.

Three: York Region's Role in Context continued...

OLD AND NEW APPROACHES TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		
	Conventional Approach	Present Day Approach
Responsibilities	Driven through “top down” government policies and incentives	Collaborative process involving multiple levels of government, research and collaborative institutions and companies
Objectives	Business attraction and retention	Attract educated people and high quality jobs, add value, compete globally
Basis for competition	Offer lowest costs for standard inputs of production (i.e. land, taxes, labour)	Offer a skilled labour force, quality of life, R&D technology, and global connections
Location of competition	Regional, national	National, global, clusters
Competitive advantage	Low land and operating costs, low wages, location	Skilled labour, quality of life, cultural amenities, R&D technology, openness to change
Business model	Single entity, taxpayer funded	Clusters, strategic alliances, networks and global mandates, shared resources
Actions	Tax incentives, marketing	Skills development, innovation, entrepreneurship, partnerships, supportive business environment

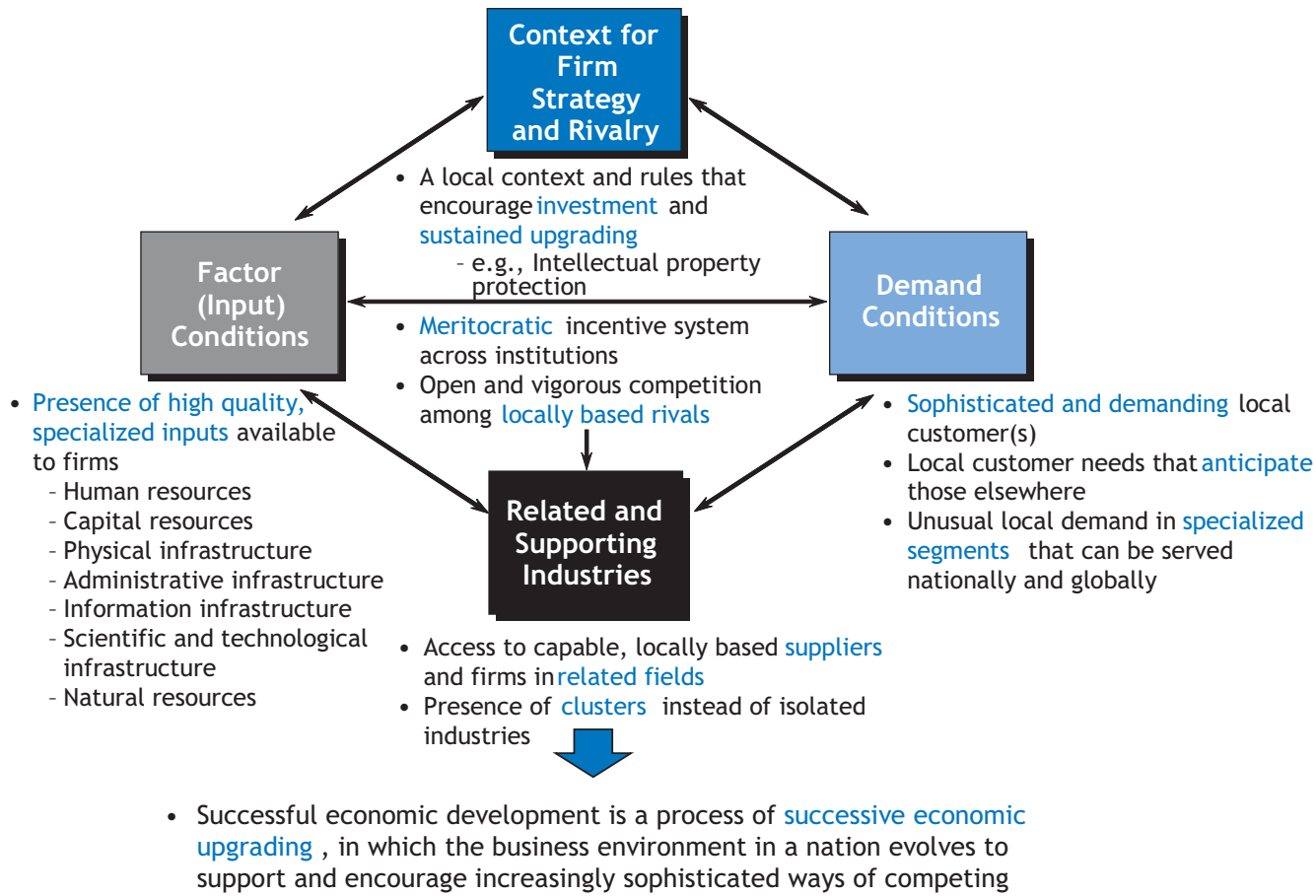
There are many factors that affect the future course of a regional economy. Professor Michael Porter, the Harvard economist who has pioneered research into cluster-based economic development distills the observations from hundreds of regional economies into this simple relationship:

*“Prosperous economies are based in competitive places to do business. What makes a place competitive is its productivity and continuing ability to produce new goods and services for which demand exists.”*⁴

Moving to embrace the new model of economic development means thinking more about factors that affect the economy from outside the Region, such as the demand side, rather than internal or supply side factors.

In Porter's view, which is the basis for most advanced economic development strategies, the foundation for productivity is the interplay of factors as shown in Porter's now famous "factor diamond".

Productivity and the Business Environment



Source: Porter, Cluster Mapping Project

Three: York Region's Role in Context continued...

The first factor is high quality input conditions such as labour skills and the quality of the physical and intellectual infrastructure of a region. Porter's second condition is a supportive business environment that encourages investment not only in physical assets and technology but in people. In his view, this relates to tax policy and other regulations that impact investment and innovation decisions. The third factor relates to what Porter calls "demand conditions" or the presence of sophisticated and demanding local customers and governments who raise the bar for local companies by demanding better quality, faster delivery, safer products and cleaner processes. Porter's fourth factor is the presence of developed clusters of companies where tight linkages to suppliers and intermediaries support the needs of the core group of export led industries, and in turn provide investment capital and employment opportunities that drive the region's economy.

Not all of these factors can be influenced solely by a region or any other individual organization or level of government. The lessons from other successful regions such as Silicon Valley, Boston or Austin indicate that the development of a network of linkages and partnerships that share information are critical to success. They also build upon the local talent pool to attract new people thus reducing the barriers to social interaction between various groups within the community laying the basis for fresh ideas and innovation.

A recent research paper published by the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance entitled "Innovative Regions: The Importance of Place and Networks in the Innovative Economy" looked at the most prosperous economic regions across North America. The paper focussed on what regional factors most affect the ability to speed up the transmission of ideas into results, leading to economic prosperity. The research found that the mere presence of regional resources or economic assets is not enough. The difference is leadership. In successful regions, business and civic leaders set the stage for entrepreneurs to what they do best. They build the basic infrastructure. They connect entrepreneurs and companies to assets, they promote a culture of innovation and success and finally, regional leaders make sustainability and quality of life an economic priority.

While the economic base of York Region has always been diverse, a majority of the employment has tended to converge around the manufacturing industries. However, the manufacturing sector is increasingly facing challenges imposed by internal and external forces. The challenges include

*"the emergence of China as an industrial powerhouse, the intensification of competition in international markets, the appreciation of the Canadian dollar, escalating business costs, increasing constraints on the supply of energy, an erosion in the quality of ... infrastructure..."*⁵

In order to face up to these challenges and to compete in the emerging global markets, the manufacturing sector has to undergo a major shift, and move towards high valued activities. The key to increasing the sector's competitive edge is to advance the production process towards innovation and knowledge-based activities. Skills, training and education, research and shared knowledge, a high tech infrastructure, and strategic alliances are becoming increasingly important in the process.

Moreover, York Region competes not only with other areas in the Greater Toronto Area, but nationally and internationally for jobs and investment. Companies in York Region are constantly being aggressively pursued to relocate their plants and offices to other parts of the world. The increasing frequency and sophistication of this competition from other countries, regions, and "city-states" makes a review of how to attract and retain companies that much more important. Increasingly, it is the "quality of place" as evidenced by the abilities of the Region's labour force and the availability of technology infrastructure that will influence the Region's competitive success.

Senior levels of government are increasingly focusing their support at encouraging regional scale initiatives rather than local projects. The Regional Municipality of York has already taken a leadership role in a number of strategic initiatives related to health care and social services funding, transit and transportation planning, human services planning, environmental stewardship, housing, export development, and agriculture planning. Given this tradition of leadership in various areas, it is appropriate to focus on how a Regional Economic Strategy should evolve.

In order to sustain and build on the current level of prosperity, the Region should embark on strategic regional scale initiatives that will encourage and cultivate a creative environment based on the AIMS framework developed by the Task Force on Competitiveness, Productivity and Economic Progress⁶. According to the Task Force, AIMS represents an integration of the following four factors:

- **Attitudes** towards competitiveness, growth, creativity and global excellence.
- **Investments** in education, machinery and equipment, research and development, and commercialization.
- **Motivations** for hiring, working and upgrading as a result of tax policies and government policies and programs.
- **Structures** of markets and institutions that encourage and assist upgrading and innovation.

These four factors interact to drive an economy's capacity for innovation and in turn strengthen its prosperity.

At the same time, the Region should create a positive environment for cluster building to enhance its productivity and competitiveness. It has been demonstrated that clusters are a key driver of regional and national prosperity:

“In a regional economy, the presence of strong traded clusters drives employment across the region. City regions with a higher percentage of employment in traded clusters tend to have a higher average earnings across all industries.”⁷

Economic development initiatives also have to be integrated with growth management strategies in order to provide a quality environment for business, as suggested in the Provincial Government’s Discussion Paper, *Places to Grow*:

“A growth plan for this region’s future must and will focus on making it a more attractive place for businesses and workers to invest their skills and capital. It will do so by enhancing the high quality of life, by lowering the costs of working and doing business in the area”⁸

The goal of the Economic Strategy will therefore be to position York Region in the marketplace to attract the best and brightest workforce, which in turn drive the most innovative and competitive companies that create a resilient and prosperous economy.

As its role in economic development evolves, it is important that the Region maintain and nurture its partnerships with the area municipalities and senior levels of government. At the same time, it should foster new collaborative relationships with other public and private sector partners as well as colleges and universities as it takes on new roles and embarks on new ventures. Innovative funding and program resources will have to be leveraged in order to support new programs and initiatives.





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Strategy Development Process

4. Strategy Development Process

4.1 The Process

In November 2001, Regional Council adopted the broad parameters and elements of the process to develop an Economic Strategy for York Region.

The development of the Strategy is comprised of three phases:

- Phase One: Analysis
- Phase Two: Consultation
- Phase Three: Action Plan Development

4.1.1 Phase One: Analysis

Phase One involved the assembly and analysis of a broad range of information related to the Region's past and recent economic performance. This phase included the following elements:

- Analyzing economic data to assess York Region's competitive position in the investment marketplace.
- Evaluating the physical and social infrastructure within the Region that supports economic development.
- Assessing the economic development roles of the area municipalities, the business community, other economic partners and the senior levels of government.

A consultant study, *A Competitive Assessment of York Region*, was undertaken and completed in 2002. The study was initiated to assess York Region's competitive position in the investment marketplace relative to other comparable regional, national and international jurisdictions. As part of the study, company executives were also surveyed to identify key factors that will influence the Region's ability to sustain its competitive position.

In 2003 and 2004, meetings were held with various Regional departments to better understand the major initiatives that may have an impact on business and their ability to expand and provide jobs into the future. At the same time, area municipal economic development and corporate strategies were reviewed to assess their economic development goals and objectives. Interviews were also held with municipal economic development and other staff to obtain a detailed perspective of their roles and functions.

A literature review of relevant economic development strategies from other jurisdictions was undertaken to examine the approach and practices of various cities and regions.

A statistical study, *The Economy of York Region*, was completed in 2004 to evaluate the performance of the Region's economy and benchmark it against Ontario and the rest of Canada.



4.1.2 Phase Two: Consultation

The consultation phase took place from November 2003 to May 2004. A Discussion Paper was prepared and circulated to all stakeholders as the basis of discussion at consultation sessions.

Beginning in the fall of 2003, meetings were convened with representatives of the area municipalities, Chambers of Commerce/Board of Trade, provincial and federal ministry staff, education and other economic development partners such as the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance.

A series of stakeholder workshops were held in January and February 2004 with business owners, managers and executives from the following industry and interest groups:

- Agriculture
- Retail
- Business Services
- Manufacturing
- Technology
- Multi-Cultural
- Tourism

The industry sessions were followed by a Council Workshop in April 2004 where the preliminary findings were presented and discussed.

The results of all consultations were compiled and a Workbook was developed for discussion at an Economic Strategy Forum held in May 2004.

4.1.3. Phase Three: Action Plan Development

The Analysis findings from Phase One and the results of the Consultations in Phase Two have formed the basis for arriving at the Strategic Directions and Objectives as well as the Priority Actions identified in this Draft Strategy. The Draft document will be presented to Regional Council and circulated to economic development stakeholders involved in the consultation process for their comments. Their feedback will be incorporated in a Final Economic Strategy for adoption by Regional Council in the spring of 2005.

4.2 Implementation

The next step will be the development of a detailed Implementation Plan with tactical action steps to address the Strategic Objectives of the overall plan. Many of these actions will require resources and time to implement. Some will show results over a short time span, while others will take longer to yield success. In addition to outlining the timeline and resources required, the Implementation Plan will also identify in more detail the area municipal partnerships, and the accountability and responsibility of the Region and its partners to undertake the proposed actions.

4.3 Summary of Consultations

The consultation sessions provided an opportunity for participants to engage in discussions on issues and identify some of the economic initiatives that need to be undertaken to enhance the business climate in the Region.

All participants agree that the economy of York Region is growing, diversified, and highly competitive. However, its economic success has also led to a number of issues which were identified at the consultation sessions. These issues cover a broad spectrum ranging from sign by-laws to the quality and responsiveness of the educational system. A recurring theme was the impact of growth as it relates to transportation, housing affordability, and the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce.

There were a number of parallel themes and issues that arose during the consultations and workshops sessions. While not all of these issues are squarely within the Region's mandate to address, there was broad consensus that the Regional Municipality of York can play a key role in bringing together stakeholders to deal with common issues. Here is a list of some of the most common themes and issues raised.

Information Issues

- There was consensus that in a growing complex environment, communication and sharing of information is increasingly important but at the same time more challenging.
- York Region's role as a co-ordinator was acknowledged as essential, and some participants have expressed the need for the Region to act as a central information source to provide access to resources such as employment and outsourcing opportunities, supply chains, available talent pool, and business support and immigrant services.

- It was suggested that the Region should assume a greater co-ordinating role to facilitate networking among businesses, and to communicate the evolving needs of business to other levels of government.
- The overall perception was that improving the electronic infrastructure will not only increase the Region's competitive advantage, it will also enhance small and home-based business, and facilitate telecommuting thereby reducing congestion on the roads.

Workforce Issues

- The quality of the labour force and the range of issues surrounding the supply, access and training of employees was a persistent theme in the consultations.
- The complex interplay of demographic changes, economic trends and changing business conditions is making it difficult to forecast supply and demand for workers.
- There is a growing concern over skills shortages and skills imbalance in the Region, and some participants have indicated that the skills and human resources needs of business should be identified and addressed.
- It was indicated that some regional businesses have turned to the immigrant labour supply and outsourcing as alternatives to address shortages within the labour market, and the attraction and accommodation of immigrants into the workforce have taken on increasing significance.
- The impact of live-work balance on employee attraction particularly for younger workers.
- The lack of affordable housing has hampered the ability of newly hired and young employees as well as new immigrants to move into the Region and live close to their place of work.

- The need to attract workers in certain occupational groups from outside York Region and the difficulty in retaining them due to long commute times was often raised.

Business Support

- There was general agreement that the need to encourage, retain and grow jobs and new business enterprise is a cornerstone of all economic development programs.
- Many of the participants in the consultation sessions believed that to remain competitive they must accelerate the integration of new technology. It was suggested that the Region should ensure that innovation is a focus of the Economic Strategy and facilitate opportunities for business to leverage technology to maintain their competitiveness.
- Some businesses have expressed the need for new collaboration and partnerships, and that the Region should encourage industry clusters to create new opportunities for business development.
- There were also indications that the Region should take advantage of its diverse economy, and encourage businesses to expand their reach to global markets.
- Some companies have identified a need for assistance in sourcing and accessing capital as another issue that is critical to their growth.

Promotion

- Promoting York Region's success and assets was another theme that was consistent in many of the consultation sessions.
- Many participants have suggested that the Region should develop a new identifiable brand, and assertively promote its image, its historical legacies and its uniqueness.

- The Region's quality of life should be aggressively promoted as an economic development focus, and tourism should be seen as an important component of its focus.
- Advocating and promoting a balanced quality of life will play a key role in employee attraction and retention.

Transportation Infrastructure

- Traffic congestion was one of the pre-eminent concerns among businesses, and transportation infrastructure was seen as critical to ensure the efficient movement of goods and people. A recurrent theme during the consultations, it was emphasized that traffic congestion is having a serious impact on productivity and the cost of doing business.
- At the same time, the geographic spread of employment opportunities throughout the Region has exacerbated the difficulties of attracting employees particularly from longer distance.
- There is the perception that the transit system is not currently meeting the needs of business to attract and retain employees, and the under-service in the transit system in parts of the Region is making it difficult for employees to get to their place of work.
- The consensus was that more efforts should be made at better co-ordinating and planning the development of road and transit infrastructure within the Region.

"...the industries we have here now are the same as they have in Toronto and we need people from Toronto to work for us. We need transit just like Toronto needs transit."

Employers Opinion Survey 2004



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Strategic Directions and Objectives

5. Strategic Directions and Objectives

It is the goal of the Economic Strategy to guide the efforts of the Region, together with its economic stakeholders, to realize the Vibrant Economy goal as stated in *Vision 2026* and the Regional Official Plan. As such it sets out a series of major strategic directions which provide the basis for a multi-year program to address the foundations of economic prosperity: people, skills, and technology.

The Region will have to build strategic alliances, rely on the support of all its municipal partners, and work together with the private sector, not-for-profit associations, public sector institutions such as universities and colleges, and senior levels of government.

Consultations with the community during the preparation of the Strategy identified five Strategic Directions which were further validated during the Economic Strategy Forum in May of 2004. These Strategic Directions are:

- Create an Environment to Share Information and Ideas
- Sustain a High Quality Workforce
- Strengthen Entrepreneurship and Industry Clusters
- Enhance the Quality of Place
- Encourage the Efficient Movement of Goods and People

These Strategic Directions give rise to 90 Actions which are documented in the following pages. Some of these Actions are already part of the ongoing functions of Regional departments, and they have been identified during the consultation process as initiatives that should be continued in order to enhance the business climate in the Region.

Since the Region by itself cannot undertake all of the actions needed to address the range of issues that affect the competitiveness of the economy, the Objectives within the Economic Strategy have identified a range of actions and partnering approaches that can be undertaken with other levels of government and other economic stakeholders, to sustain the long term economic vitality of the Region.

“The most innovative and thriving economies emerge in places where there is a rich diversity of people, skills and knowledge and a high quality of life”

Places to Grow

5.1 Strategic Direction: Create an Environment to Share Information and Ideas

In a knowledge-based economy, information has become the single most important raw material, and the ability to access and use information to drive innovation is the basis for sustained economic competitiveness. In virtually all of the studies and research of regional and community economic development, reference is made to the importance of building networks and partnerships to share information and ideas.

A recent paper by the Canadian Policy Research Networks on “Cities that Work: Innovative Practices, Enabling Policies” states that “the very process of convening multi-stakeholder networks at the municipal level where different players have the opportunity to learn from one another generates its own economic synergies and momentum...”

The lessons from other successful economic regions are well documented. In places like Silicon Valley or Austin or the Research Triangle in the Carolina’s, economic success can be traced to a dense flexible network of tight relationships amongst entrepreneurs, investors, researchers, legal and accounting firms, suppliers, schools and government which can quickly translate new ideas into products or services. These networks continually connect people with ideas and provide an opportunity to test the market for what works.

The transformation of ideas into new goods and services that lead to job creation and prosperity is the foundation of the Region’s future growth. During the consultations on this Strategy, it was heard that the Region has a role to play in actively nurturing collaboration between stakeholder groups and to help build bridges between the knowledge institutions like universities, colleges, hospitals and schools, to help develop a critical mass of shared knowledge. New linkages and networks must also be formed with the business community to foster the conditions where innovation and new product development can take place.

It will be critical for the Region to understand the economy and to monitor how it is changing to be able to attract and support the industries of the future. The Regional Municipality of York already enjoys a reputation and has expertise in the collection and analysis of economic and geo-spatial data, and that role will be increasingly important in the future.

The Region’s role should be to help create an environment for sharing and collaboration. Part of this effort should involve the Region championing efforts to promote Region-wide access to broadband telecommunications. This should also include the development of new broadband applications and on-line services to demonstrate that the Region can attract and support new knowledge-based workers and companies. It was also stated during the consultations that the Region could spearhead the development of new and more efficient ways of creating access to business and economic information through a new virtual information portal.

Objective

Better understand the growth and change in the Region's economy

Actions:

- Produce an annual comprehensive economic profile to monitor key indicators and establish benchmarks on the state of York Region's economy.
- Develop a virtual information portal in collaboration with the *YorkInfo Partnership* to provide Regional companies access to information, business and competitive intelligence, business services, and to monitor key indicators of the Region's economic performance.

Objective

Foster ongoing opportunities for sharing information and ideas

Actions:

- Convene an annual Region-wide business wisdom exchange and economic summit to engage business, share information and identify future opportunities.
- Establish a Regional Business Roundtable of executives and owner-managers from leading public and private sector enterprises under the leadership of the Regional Chair to provide Regional Council and staff with regular feedback on economic issues affecting business.
- Identify and encourage the involvement of voluntary and non-profit organizations to participate in new partnerships with business.
- Maintain the Region's membership and involvement with the Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade throughout the Region.
- Re-initiate the York North Economic Development Partnership to provide an opportunity for rural municipalities to discuss and find solutions to address their common challenges and concerns.

- Support and celebrate new partnership initiatives by individuals and/or groups within the Region by creating a new Award to recognize their achievements.

Objective

Expand broadband telecommunications

Actions:

- Collaborate with non-profit, public and private sector enterprises to identify gaps and encourage access to high quality, equitable broadband telecommunications from all areas of the Region.
- Facilitate business participation and involvement with the E-Government Committee.

Objective

Improve co-ordination with other levels of government

Actions:

- Host regular meetings with area municipal Economic Development staff and provincial and federal government ministries and departments involved in economic development.
- Identify available funding and other resources from senior level governments that could support economic development initiatives within the Region.
- Undertake a review of the optimal service delivery model and organization of the Region's economic development services in light of new provincial and federal government initiatives and policies.

5.2 Strategic Direction: Sustain a High Quality Workforce

Vision 2026 identifies the embrace of continual learning as a key element in realizing the Region's future economic vision.

In today's economy, economic growth is driven by knowledge, skills, innovation and entrepreneurship. All of these characteristics derive from the quality of the labour force which a region possesses. Ensuring that there is a proper balance of labour force skills to enable local firms to meet the challenges of global competition is an essential element for sustained economic vitality.

In an earlier study, *A Competitive Analysis of York Region*, the findings confirm that industry felt that new Regional initiatives to address skills shortages and encourage apprenticeships were needed. Again, during the consultations for this Strategy, it was repeatedly stressed that there were critical skills gaps that were affecting the ability of Regional companies to grow.

Notwithstanding the robust population growth and job creation over the last several years within the Region, the future supply and the quality of the labour force should not be taken for granted. Recent work by Regional staff confirms an imbalance between the skills of the resident labour force, and the jobs which are being created within the Region.

Participants in the consultations stressed the need to align workforce development efforts with the needs of existing and new business clusters, and that the Region has a role to facilitate that objective.

At the same time, the Region is becoming home to an increasing number of immigrants who bring skills and experience that are valued by local companies. Further, Statistics Canada has projected that by 2016, the bulk of York Region's growth will be driven by the influx of new immigrants. It stands to reason that the Region should capitalize on the knowledge and skills of immigrants to a greater degree than presently.

Recent research by the Conference Board of Canada and the Canadian Centre for the Study of Living Standards point to the critical need to link economic development strategies with broader human resource and social policies to include and assimilate immigrants. This view was echoed in a recent study commissioned by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada on accreditation and employment issues relating to internationally trained professions and trades in York Region.

York Region recognizes the talents that foreign trained professionals bring to York Region. Initiatives like the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) need to be more broadly promoted and supported by local businesses. Opportunities for continuous learning must be created for individuals at all points along the skills continuum, and need to be tailored to encourage more inclusivity within the broader community. The Region's recently launched Inclusivity Action Plan represents a major step in this direction.

There was also much concern voiced about the degree of engagement of the Region's youth in workforce development initiatives and the need to ensure that young people stay in school to secure post secondary education.

Attracting new institutions of advanced learning, research and training was also identified as a key priority that needed to be included in the Region's Economic Strategy. One of the key recommendations of the Ontario Competitive City Regions Symposium hosted in 2002 by York Region was that the development and construction of a Management of Technology Institute should be pursued by the Region in partnership with industry, education and senior levels of government. This recommendation was reinforced during the recent consultations on the Economic Strategy.

Given the evolving needs of business and industry and the rapidly increasing diversity of the workforce within the Region, workforce development is not a role that can be solely addressed by one level of government or the education sector. The previous Strategic Direction speaks to forming new partnerships and linkages to share information. Similarly, governments at all levels, business, labour, education and the training community must form stronger partnerships to affect a learning climate and a training culture within the Region.

During the consultations on the Strategy, it was learned that the intentions of new business to invest in York Region are closely related to labour force availability which in turn hinges upon housing supply and ease of getting employees to the workplace. Numerous employers have indicated during the *Employers Opinion Survey 2004* that one of the Region's strengths is its wealth of talented residents who commute south to jobs but are eager for job opportunities closer to home. It was suggested that the Region should promote York as a place where businesses can reduce the commuting time of employees and business owners.

Participants have called for an integration of labour force development policies with long range transportation, transit, land use, and housing initiatives to support decreased commuting and time lost in a long journey to work. There were also strongly voiced opinions that the Region could provide more opportunities for business to participate in the development of policies that encourage a range of housing options, and land use planning that encourages compact communities and close live-work relationships supported by a quality urban transit system.

Objective

Align workforce development efforts with the needs of industry clusters in York Region

Actions

- Facilitate the evolution of a Regional Industry Education Council to provide an opportunity for business, education, government, sectoral councils, unions and other stakeholders to leverage resources, knowledge and motivation to address common workforce development issues.
- Facilitate better forecasting of industry requirements, skills shortages and deficiencies within the Region.
- Advocate for more apprenticeship and skilled trades training and education.
- Identify opportunities to attract and support new institutions of higher learning, research, management development and training.
- Compile a comprehensive resource guide of employment, education and training resources for employers in the Region in collaboration with public and private sector education, training, and workforce service providers.
- Improve efforts to maintain effective and adequate human service infrastructure to meet the needs of the labour force.

Objective

Support immigrant mentoring and integration

Actions

- Assist in the compilation of a directory of immigrant support and training resources within the Region.
- Foster the awareness and support of the employer community for the development and delivery of programs that accelerate professional recognition and skills upgrading of internationally trained workers.

- Advocate for training and immigration policies that are attuned to the needs of the employer community and provide resources needed to support a new immigrant labour force.

Objective

Involve the Region's youth in workforce development planning

Actions

- Examine options to better engage the Region's youth in workforce development initiatives.
- In partnership with other agencies and industry, support a broader program of internships, plant visits, job shadowing and co-op work terms for high school students in the Region.
- Promote and support *Summer Company* and *My Company* programs offered by the Small Business Enterprise Centres within the Region.

Objective

Integrate land use, transit and housing policies to encourage closer live-work opportunities and improved accessibility by employers and employees

Actions

- Promote the awareness of the Region's Centres and Corridors strategy.
- Undertake a marketing and communications program to promote the economic and environmental benefits of intensification within existing urban areas.
- Facilitate meetings with the ICI realtor/developer community to identify how future employment areas can be designed to encourage closer live-work opportunities.
- Facilitate meetings between developers/homebuilders and the York Region employer community to discuss ways to promote and create closer live-work opportunities.

5.3 Strategic Direction: Strengthen Entrepreneurship and Industry Clusters

Supporting the emergence and growth of business enterprise is a cornerstone of the Region's Economic Strategy.

The growth and diversity of business enterprise in York Region is a testament to the positive business climate and the favourable policies of the Region and its area municipalities to support new business investment.

The Region already works in partnership with the area municipalities and senior level governments to deliver support services for entrepreneurs. As the Region grows and changes, new ways of delivering these services will be needed. Future enterprise growth and job creation depends on a strong entrepreneurial culture. Promoting and expanding the reach of entrepreneurial training programs, developing ways to identify future entrepreneurs, and recognizing success will be essential.

Peter Drucker, the well-known business author maintains that innovation and entrepreneurship go together. Entrepreneurs innovate, and innovation is the process by which ideas get transformed into new products and services. The Region has a role to play in fostering the conditions for innovation that build upon its efforts to support entrepreneurship. The Region's membership as a founding partner of the York Regional Biotechnology Cluster Consortium can be used as a model for the Region's role in future cluster building and technology transfer initiatives. The recently announced Commercialization Strategy and the investment of \$63 million by the Province of Ontario will link research institutes with companies that can move research to the markets and make promising research more "investor-ready". The Region can help to champion this Provincial objective as part of its Economic Strategy.

As global demand for the range of goods and services expands, an appropriate role for the Regional Municipality of York is to create a business environment to help firms expand, adapt and diversify. The future performance of the Region's economy will be driven in part by how successful Regional companies perform in the export market. The Export Development Initiative has been well-received by local companies and has been responsible for documented sales increases and employment creation. However, as global conditions become more complex, new ways to deliver the service and provide more value-added are required.

The Region can also take a role in the identification and evolution of industry specific cluster groups to help link the outputs and demands of these clusters to the inputs or supply side factors like infrastructure and skills provided by the community. Industry cluster development initiatives are also identified as part of the Province's growth management strategy, and are a key focus of the Region's Economic Strategy.

If enterprise formation is the economic engine of the Region, then financial capital can be seen as the primary fuel for that engine. During the consultations, there was clear expression of demand for additional actions to address the availability and access to capital for business expansion.

It was also clear that the continued viability and attractiveness of the Region's employment areas and enterprise "incubator areas" need to be strengthened. Improved goods movement, transit service and other incentives and opportunities to encourage more diverse employment uses and live-work opportunities could be explored. Efforts to revitalize and promote new employment opportunities in transit-serviced urban centres, in collaboration with the area municipalities of the Region, are also a priority.

During the consultations, many business participants revealed a desire to try new ways of doing business but bridled at what they consider to be "bureaucratic" barriers to competitiveness. The Region was encouraged to work with the local municipalities to broker common solutions across the Region to deal with regulations affecting things like signage and home-based business.

Efforts should also be focussed on improving energy efficiency and decreasing waste generation within the business community. More promotion of existing and new energy and waste-reduction programs should be undertaken.

Objective

Support the growth and creation of business enterprise

Actions:

- Improve the visibility and services of the York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre.
- Increase the range of co-operative programs and services between the Small Business Enterprise Centres and other business support agencies within the Region.
- Work with local municipalities to harmonize home-based business policies.
- Develop a business recovery contingency plan to deal with economic crises and emergencies.

Objective

Encourage technological innovation and commercialization

Actions:

- Convene regular briefings with the Industrial Technology Advisors of the National Research Council providing services within York Region.
- Partner with the Innovation Synergy Centre in Markham to identify, encourage, and support technology-based business within the Region.
- Facilitate the establishment of a York Region Advanced Manufacturing Consortium to encourage cross-pollination of research and development expertise and opportunities for joint product and market development.
- Explore opportunities to improve linkages with York University and Seneca College to promote research, commercialization and technology transfer to York Region businesses.
- Continue to support the evolution of the York Regional Biotechnology Cluster Consortium and other agencies to develop a regional innovation network.
- Identify areas that could be developed as science and innovation parks in collaboration with owners of employment lands.
- Work with the Province of Ontario to help implement the Commercialization Strategy.

Objective

Enhance the export capabilities of Regional companies

Actions:

- Undertake a review of the business model of the York Region Export Development Initiative.
- Expand the Region's global contact network in partnership with local municipalities and senior levels of government through participation in trade missions and working collaboratively with other agencies to host incoming trade delegations.
- Undertake a feasibility study to establish a free trade, duty free zone within the Region.
- Identify opportunities to provide support to York Region-based companies engaged in export activity such as establishing a "Trading House" and other collaborative export financing initiatives.

Objective

Strengthen the Region's industry clusters

Actions:

- Undertake a detailed economic structural analysis of the Region's high performance clusters (i.e. automotive, biotechnology, materials, furniture, information technology and business services).
- Initiate a Region-led multi-year business cluster building initiative for each of the Region's major manufacturing and service industry clusters by establishing working groups that include lead firms, suppliers, education and training providers, local and senior level government representatives, capital providers and others as appropriate.
- Participate in broader GTA industry sector research and support initiatives undertaken by the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance and other economic development and senior government agencies.
- Partner with the agricultural industry to promote and develop the agri-food industry sector.
- Promote agri-business and support the implementation of the GTA Agriculture Action Plan.
- Collaborate with area municipalities and senior governments to explore options to reduce the operating cost environment for businesses in the Region.

Objective

Facilitate access to capital

Actions:

- Improve access to financial capital for small and early stage growth firms in York Region by enhancing networks to link angel investors, venture capitalists and other sources of financing to new entrepreneurs and small businesses.
- Examine the opportunity for the creation of additional small business investment fund corporations and the expansion of the geographic service areas of existing Community Futures Corporations in the Region.
- Provide opportunities to host meetings of groups like the Toronto Venture Group in York Region.
- Encourage banks and other financial institutions to sponsor and participate in a “Capital for Business” event in York Region.

Objective

Strengthen the economic vitality and business diversity of employment areas and urban centres

Actions:

- Identify specific tax policy and other incentives that would be effective to attract business investment and employment to the region’s urban centres.
- Assess opportunities for special purpose economic development corporations to act as catalysts for supporting intensification and live-work opportunities in the Region’s urban centres.
- Monitor the adequacy of employment land supply and strengthen land use policies to discourage the conversion of lands in employment areas.
- Promote energy conservation and waste reduction initiatives to the employer community.
- Work with the area municipalities to expedite key industrial/commercial developments through the Regional approval process.

5.4 Strategic Direction: Enhance the Quality of Place

An essential part of York Region's efforts to sustain a competitive and prosperous economy is increasing its visibility as a unique and desirable location for new business investment and tourism. A key principle of the Region's efforts should be to promote a balance of economic vitality, quality of life and environmental sustainability.

The Economic Goal of *Vision 2026* states that "In 2026 York Region will be renowned..." and it will be, if the Region pursues an aggressive strategy to enhance and promote the quality and advantages of York Region as a place to invest, to work and to live.

Each community within York Region has unique attributes and assets. The Region has some of the most diverse physical as well as cultural landscapes in the Greater Toronto Area. All of these give York Region a competitive advantage in positioning itself as having what noted economist Richard Florida calls "quality of place".

In a global marketplace, the competition for new talent, business investment and discretionary spending by tourists and visitors is ever increasing. York Region needs to advance and promote its record of preserving and enhancing environmental quality and social diversity to help sustain its economic base.

As part of the Greater Toronto Area, York Region can capitalize on the spin-offs and benefits that accrue through the success of the broader city-region. During the consultations, however, it was repeatedly heard that York can and should reposition its own identity in terms of the unique advantages that exists in the communities that make up York Region.

It will be increasingly important for the Region to develop and communicate to its business community what the Region has to offer: an acknowledged quality of life that is rivalled in few other locations, a thriving economy and a welcoming business climate. Companies will relocate and expand in a region that attracts a quality labour force and allows its residents a diverse range of leisure pursuits and opportunities for social and educational upgrading.

The Region needs to reposition itself both in the eyes of its internal market - the residents and businesses already here, and the external market - those whom it wishes to attract, to better promote its strengths. More effort should be made to build the Region's capacity to host major sports and cultural events that can help to build a legacy of improved infrastructure and facilities for future generations. Another way to increase the Region's profile is to more actively encourage on-site film and television production within the area.

"To compete successfully in the age of talent, regions must make quality-of-place a central element of their economic development efforts"

Richard Florida

Objective

Develop and promote York Region's attributes

Actions:

- Promote a balanced approach to economic development that enhances quality of life, environmental sustainability and economic vitality.
- Develop and promote Arts and Culture in York Region.
- Promote the integration of amenities in community planning to encourage recreational and lifestyle activities.
- Embrace diversity in the community.
- Develop a marketing and communications plan to promote York Region and its natural and cultural attributes.
- Produce a high quality lure brochure and accompanying CD/DVD that identifies and promotes the unique attributes of the Region's communities, cultures and environment.
- Enhance and expand the Region's economic development website with graphic and linguistic functionality to more easily search, evaluate and map businesses and tourism opportunities.
- Investigate opportunities to host Canadian trade representatives and consular officials to familiarize them with the cultural and business diversity of York Region.
- Improve York Region's presence in the Ontario Investors Service.

Objective

Attract tourism and special events

Actions:

- Develop an updated strategic tourism marketing action plan in collaboration with tourism industry partners to identify tourism "experiences" in York Region, attract new tourism visitation and generate sustainable financial support for tourism promotion initiatives.
- Identify locations to establish new York Tourism information kiosks and virtual information centres.
- Work with Tourism Toronto and other major industry associations and senior government tourism agencies to position York Region in the international tourism marketplace.
- Undertake a major events infrastructure audit to identify capacity to host major cultural and sporting events that could be attracted to York Region.
- Collaborate with the Region's various cultural communities to host large scale ethnic events in partnership with local municipalities.
- Work with the media to promote the Region.
- Encourage new on-location film and television production throughout the Region in collaboration with area municipalities.

5.5 Strategic Direction: Encourage the Efficient Movement of Goods and People

Improving the efficiency of the transportation network within and beyond York Region is a key objective of the Region's long-term growth management strategy and the Official Plan. It is also in line with the Province's strategic growth planning policy, and the new deal for cities announced by the Federal Government. The Economic Strategy supports these broader policies.

A healthy transportation system is a key factor in the attraction and growth of the Region's economy. However, it was heard repeatedly during the consultation, and again in the *Employers Opinion Survey 2004*, that traffic congestion was the single most pressing concern facing businesses in York Region. Easing congestion on the roads will have a positive impact on the cost of doing business, by improving delivery times of goods and services, shortening commuting times, saving on fuel cost from idling and stop-and-start movements of vehicles, and increasing the efficiency of the mobile workforce. Although much improved, the transit system was not perceived as meeting the needs of many employers, including those in industrial areas and smaller settlements. There was strong support for the expansion of transit service within the Region and better integration between York Region Transit, GO Transit, and the TTC.

At the same time, the expansion of transit is not seen as the sole alternative to road improvements for the purpose of resolving the traffic congestion issue. Interviews with companies have confirmed that access to the 400 series highway was a key factor in their decision to locate in York Region. However, there is a strong sense among businesses and employers that large-scale upgrading of the transportation infrastructure is overdue, in order for the Region to retain an attractive business environment and to catch up with the traffic demands of existing developments. The research study on the Region's economy has also confirmed that a well-maintained road network is indispensable to the Region's sustained prosperity, especially given the volume of export trade transported via the road system.

The impact of employee commuting patterns on the overall operation of a company is considered a major issue by many employers and companies consulted. It was heard that the stress of daily commute on congested roads negatively affects a worker's quality of life and the quality of their work. Offering commuting options will make it easier for employers to recruit and retain employees, increase employee morale and productivity, reduce commuting stress and time lost due to illness, reduce parking requirements, improve traffic flow, and lower facility costs.

“Traffic congestion has had a huge impact on our deliveries. Even though we pay to use the 407, it now takes a half-hour longer to deliver to Vaughan than it did eight years ago. Yonge Street is impossible. Getting truck drivers is our biggest problem,”

Employers Opinion Survey, 2004

“Whether it’s moving people or getting goods to market, transportation is the vital link to prosperity.”

Canadian Business

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is a comprehensive program of initiatives aimed at providing travel choices while at the same time reducing congestion. As part of the Smart Commute Initiative, the Region is already undertaking TDM measures which are aimed at changing commuters’ behaviour through encouraging them to make fewer and shorter vehicle trips, thereby reducing congestion, energy consumption and air pollution. Typical TDM measures include:

- Carpool/vanpool ride-sharing and preferential parking.
- Promotion of public transit and incentives to use transit.
- Parking supply and parking management.
- Establishment of transportation management associations.
- Construction of a network of commuter parking lots.
- Implementing a network of high-occupant vehicle lanes.
- Cycling and pedestrian programs.

Objective

Ensure that the transportation system meets the ongoing needs of business for goods movement

Actions:

- Engage in discussions with major shippers and exporters to understand evolving challenges in the logistics industry.
- Establish a task force involving small shippers, rail carriers and other transportation carriers to look at ways of enhancing the use of inter-modal service by small and less than truckload lot (LTL) shippers.
- Ensure representative participation by the business and employer community in transportation system planning.
- Lobby the Ontario Government for continued expansion of 400 series and other provincial highways in York Region.
- Disseminate the Region’s transportation planning reports widely to the broader business community in the Region.
- Promote the use of the Region’s transportation data among shippers to assist in scheduling shipments to optimize shipping efficiency.
- Engage in discussions with CN Rail regarding the long-term viability of the CN Intermodal site in Vaughan.

Objective

Encourage Regional businesses to support and promote transit and alternatives to the single occupant vehicle for journey to work

Action:

- Promote the current efforts of Transportation Management Associations and identify clusters of employers who could benefit from shared transportation services for employees.
- Engage York Region businesses to identify efficiencies and incentives for alternative employee journey to work systems.
- Encourage businesses to promote, support and practise transportation demand management and to provide alternative employee journey to work choices.
- Work with senior levels of government to explore the feasibility of offering tax incentives for employers who practise transportation demand management.
- Develop a working partnership with York Region Transit (YRT) staff to assist in the promotion of public transit and heighten awareness of existing and future services to both existing and prospective businesses.
- Identify and promote new business development opportunities in transit-serviced urban centres and corridors in the Region.
- Encourage business support for public transit investment in terms of seeking out public-private partnership opportunities for joint development, locating new business or relocating existing business to transit corridors, and encouraging general transit supportive business activities.
- Advocate the Provincial and Federal governments for increased public transit funding for capital infrastructure and sustained operating subsidies.



six Implementation

6. Implementation

6.1 Partnerships and Accountability

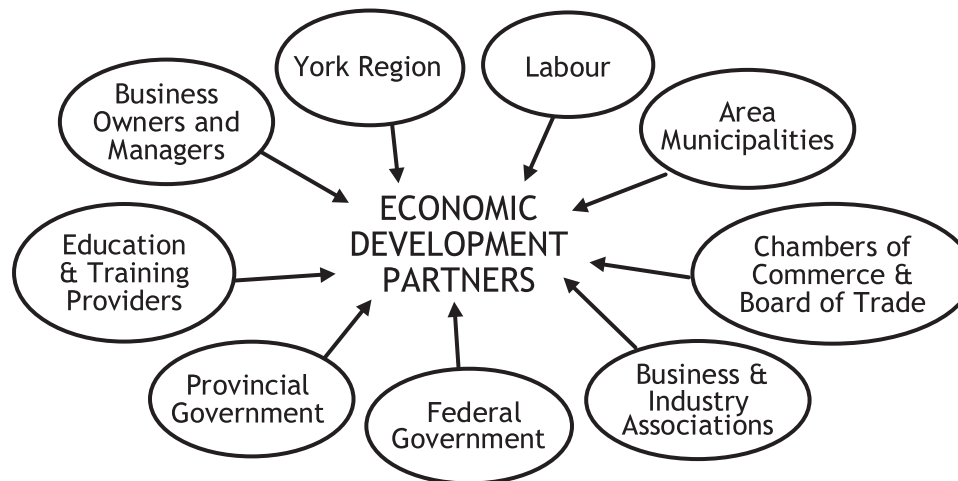
Business and government at all levels are facing a series of driving forces that include the increased expectations of customers and constituents, the pace of technological change and the regulatory environment, unrelenting financial pressures, and unpredictable threats from geopolitical events and terrorism. All of these factors drive the need for strategic collaboration and sharing of resources.

A number of different organizations play key roles in the Region's economy and have been involved in economic development at the neighbourhood, municipal, regional, provincial and federal levels. There are a number of benefits that accrue from working in partnership:

- Business, labour, education and government bring a range of experience to help implement economic development programs.
- Broadly based community partnerships stand a better chance of securing senior level government support for new initiatives.
- The interrelationship between economic, social, and environmental issues can best be met through cross-sectoral collaboration.
- The continuing growth and diversity of the Region's population provides opportunities for new market access and cultural enrichment.

Creating successful and sustainable partnerships requires clear accountability and responsibilities for program funding, program delivery, and program evaluation and management.

The Accountability Framework in Appendix 1 sets out the proposed Actions, Partners and Implementation for all of the Strategic Objectives in the Economic Strategy. Where the actions are best undertaken by organizations working in partnership, clearly defined expectations and performance metrics will need to be put in place. This will be undertaken as part of the detailed Implementation Plan that will be produced after further consultation with stakeholders and final adoption of the Economic Strategy by Regional Council.



6.2 Priority Action Areas

The five Strategic Directions within the Economic Strategy establish the framework that will guide the Regional Municipality of York and its economic partners towards the Vibrant Economy goal of *Vision 2026*. All of the Actions contained in the Economic Strategy reflect the needs expressed by a broad range of stakeholders in York Region and all will help the Region become more competitive. However, implementing the Strategy does not imply that every one of the Actions within the Strategy will need to be addressed at once.

The realities of finite staff and budget resources mean that not all of these actions can be implemented solely by the Regional Municipality of York.

York Region's role will range from facilitation and support, to initiating and sustaining some of these actions. Other stakeholders and levels of government will also need to collaborate and take ownership, either to initiate, support, or assist in carrying out specific actions and tasks identified in the Strategy.

An Evaluation Matrix was used to determine where the Region needs to place its priorities for implementation, and where to encourage partnerships to share responsibility for execution.

The Actions in the Economic Strategy was evaluated relative to their position on the Matrix in terms of their "Dimension of Impact" and their "Dimension of Alignment".

"Impact" ranks Actions which beneficially impact a broader geographical, economic or social segment of the Region. "Alignment" ranks Actions based on those which can be implemented more quickly, where existing resources or expertise already exists, or where current Regional mandates or accountabilities already exist.

The following list identifies the priority areas of implementation for the Economic Strategy. When implemented, these Actions form a foundation for continued progress in achieving the Strategic Objectives and serve as a catalyst for the creation of further alliances and partnerships.

- Develop a virtual information portal in collaboration with the *YorkInfo Partnership* to provide Regional companies access to information, business and competitive intelligence, business services, and to monitor key indicators of the Region's economic performance.
- Convene a Regional Business Roundtable of executives and owner-managers from leading public and private sector enterprises under the leadership of the Regional Chair to provide Regional Council and staff with regular feedback on economic issues affecting business.
- Facilitate the evolution of a Regional Industry Education Council to provide an opportunity for business, education, government, sectoral councils, unions and other stakeholders to leverage resources, knowledge and motivation to address common workforce development issues.

- Facilitate the establishment of a York Region Advanced Manufacturing Consortium to encourage cross-pollination of research and development expertise and opportunities for joint product and market development.
- Undertake a detailed economic structural analysis of the Region's high performance clusters.
- Develop a marketing and communications plan to promote York Region and its natural and cultural attributes.
- Undertake a major events infrastructure audit to identify capacity to host major cultural and sporting events that could be attracted to York Region.
- Engage businesses to promote, support and practise transportation demand management and to provide alternative employee journey to work choices.

This list is a beginning, and not an end unto itself. These Actions represent ones that the Region can undertake utilizing existing staff and budget resources and which are intended to lay the groundwork to increase the innovation and competitiveness of the Region's firms, attract and retain high quality jobs, reinforce the quality of life, and ensure sustained economic prosperity. The next step will be to encourage partnerships and alliances to address the other elements of the Economic Strategy.

6.3 Key Performance Indicators

As part of the implementation of the Economic Strategy, the Region will need to measure its progress against other jurisdictions to ensure its continued competitiveness. Success also needs to be measured against existing levels of service and results to date. An annual assessment and “report card” on the activities under the Economic Strategy will be essential. The following key performance indicators set out possible measures that can be used to measure progress in each of the five Strategic Directions of the Strategy

Strategic Direction: Creating an Environment to Share Information and Ideas

Progress will be measured in terms of how well the Region has been able to make the information available to the business community, how many new collaborative opportunities to share information have been established, and how effective they have been at attracting funding and stimulating economic success. This may entail the undertaking of a satisfaction survey to gauge responses from the business community.

Suggested Measures:

- Value of research and development performed within York Region.
- The extent of broadband telecommunications coverage within the Region.
- Amount of financial support from senior governments to economic development projects in the Region.

Strategic Direction: Sustain a High Quality Workforce

Progress will be measured by benchmarking the Region against other similar Regions in the GTA and elsewhere in North America. Measures need to address both the quality and the quantity of the Region’s workforce.

Suggested Measures:

- Measures of prosperity: average wages and benefits, income per household, full-time/part-time employment, number and types of occupation in the workforce.
- Measures of equity: labour force participation rate, unemployment rate amongst immigrant workers, youth unemployment rate, number of foreign trained professionals in full-time employment for which they are trained.
- Live-work ratio.
- Reductions of gaps between resident labour force occupation and types of jobs available in the Region.
- Educational attainment.

Strategic Direction: Strengthen Entrepreneurship and Industry Clusters

Progress will be assessed relative to the growth and diversification of the Region's economic base through the creation of new enterprise, technological innovation, the retention of current employment, and the expansion or growth of local firms into global exporters. The Region could compile a series of economic performance measures from existing Statistics Canada databases as well as initiatives such as the yearly Employment Survey conducted.

Suggested Measures:

- New business start-ups.
- Volume and value of new ICI building permits.
- Volume of exports sales and growth.
- Measures of Productivity.
- Measures of energy efficiency and waste reduction.

Strategic Direction: Enhance the Quality of Place

Progress can be measured in terms of how well the Region is attracting new visitors, and how well York Region performs relative to other GTA and provincial destinations. New performance indicators and data sources, such as regular visitor satisfaction surveys will need to be developed.

Suggested Measures:

- Numbers of tourist visits to the Region.
- Economic impact of tourism spending.
- Numbers of room-nights booked in Regional accommodations.
- Number of major sporting/cultural/ethnic events/ hosted in the Region.

Strategic Direction: Encourage the Efficient Movement of Goods and People

Progress will be assessed in terms of how improvements to the transportation system has eased traffic congestion, and how effective the TDM measures have been in changing people's commuting behaviour. Detail performance indicators will have to be further developed with York Region Transit and as part of the Transportation Master Plan initiative.

Suggested Measures

- Number of transportation data requests received and disseminated.
- Number of businesses recruited to the Transportation Management Associations (TMA's).
- Number of employees of TMA members utilizing the shared transportation services.
- Ridership on YRT as a measure of service utilization.
- Number of revenue service hours (i.e. number of actual service hours on the road) provided by YRT as a measure of service provision.
- Number of transit trips/capita.
- Expenditure on transit/capita.

6.4 Conclusion and Next Steps

The Economic Strategy is a guide for the Regional Municipality of York to continue the path towards an economic future defined in *Vision 2026*.

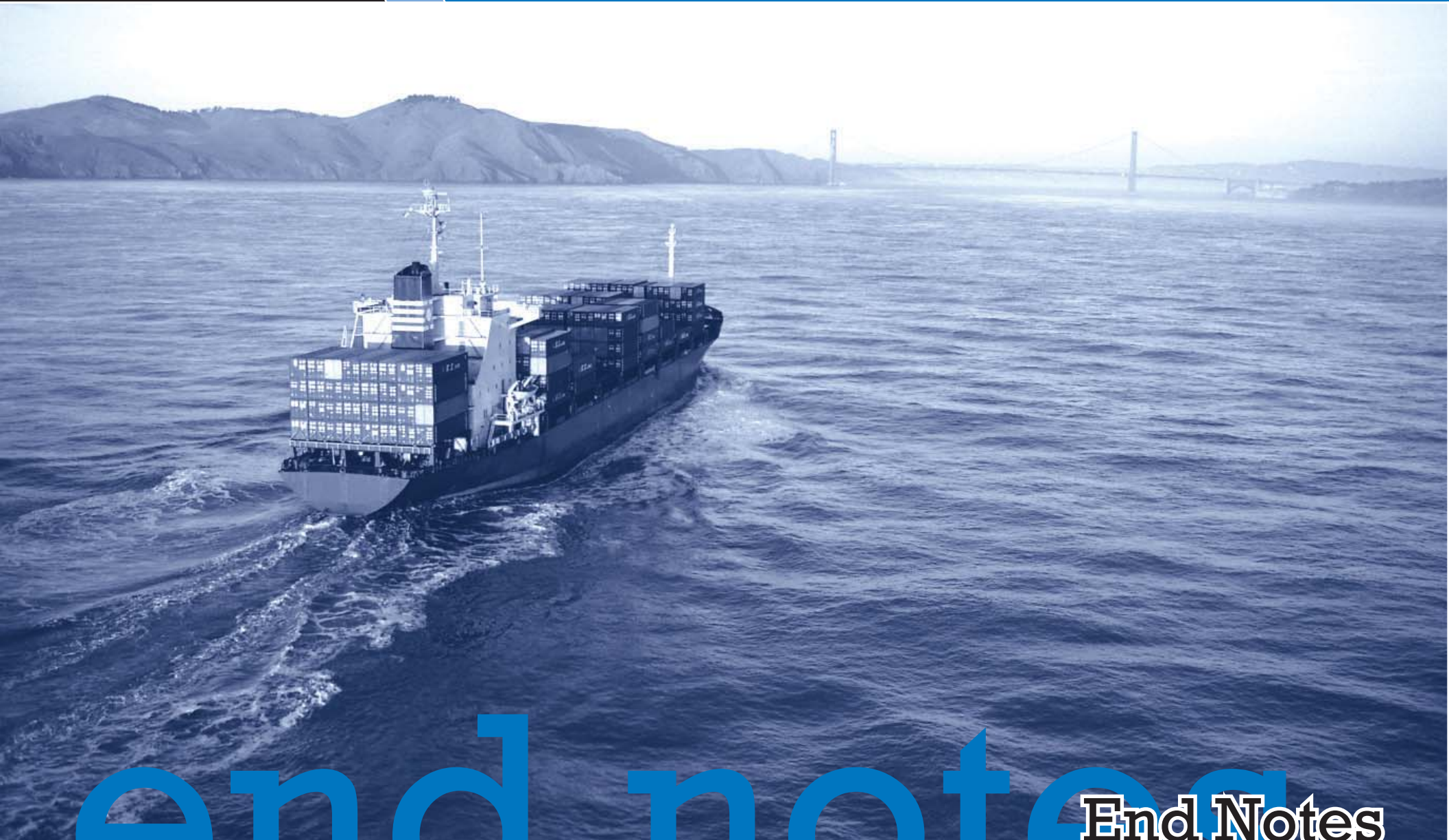
The research that has been undertaken as part of this project makes clear that the economy of York Region is diverse, resilient and very dynamic. However, as the consultations with business and community stakeholders have shown, this economic success cannot be taken for granted given the increasing expectations, competition, and uncertainties of a global market.

Success in the future will be based on building communities with a high quality of place that nurture and sustain specialized skills, entrepreneurship and innovation. The actions in the Economic Strategy establish a framework which will accomplish that.

After circulation for comments and upon adoption by Regional Council, the Economic Strategy will be implemented in accordance with a detailed Implementation Plan that sets out the timelines, accountabilities and performance indicators to measure success.

Review of the Economic Strategy will be undertaken on an annual basis to reflect shifts in the micro or macro economic climate.





end notes

End Notes

End Notes

- 1 *Canada's Innovation Strategy, Achieving Excellence*, Executive Summary, 2001, pg. 3
- 2 The Conference Board of Canada, *Clusters of Opportunity, Clusters of Risk*, August 2004
- 3 E&B Data, *Greater Toronto Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) Industry Profile*, 2004
- 4 Anne Habiby, "Michael Porter on Essential Elements for Regional Competitiveness and the Role of the Inner City", *Economic Development America*, Spring 2004
- 5 Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters as quoted in "Manufacturers must adapt to changing world" by David Crane, *Toronto Star*, May 15, 2004.
- 6 Task Force on Competitiveness, Productivity and Economic Progress, *Closing the prosperity gap*, First Annual Report, November 2002, pg. 30
- 7 The Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity, Working Paper 5, *Strengthening structures: Upgrading specialized support and competitive pressure*, July 2004, pg. 20
- 8 Ontario Government, *Places to Grow, Better Choices, Brighter Future*, A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe Discussion Paper, Summer 2004, pg. 23



appendix

Accountability Matrix

PROPOSED ACTION	WHO WILL BE INVOLVED	HOW WILL IT BE DONE
Strategic Direction: Create an Environment to Share Information and Ideas		
<i>Objective: Better understand the growth and change in the Region's economy</i>		
Produce an annual comprehensive economic profile to monitor key indicators	York Region, area municipalities, Federal and Provincial governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection and analysis • Publish in print and electronic formats • Circulate broadly to stakeholders, industry and business community
Develop a virtual information portal to provide Regional companies with access to information	York Region, <i>YorkInfo Partnership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a new GIS-enabled Economic Development website • Provide linkages to area municipalities and other internet resources • Promote broadly to the business community
<i>Objective: Foster ongoing opportunities for sharing information and ideas</i>		
Convene an annual Region-wide business wisdom exchange and economic summit	York Region, industry and business, education, area municipalities, Chambers of Commerce/ Board of Trade, interest groups, non-profit agencies and other economic stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an opportunity for business and stakeholders to network and exchange ideas, and for the Region to receive feedback on its performance • Encourage participation from the business community
Establish a Regional Business Roundtable to provide regular feedback on economic issues affecting business	York Region, business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit business leaders to the Business Roundtable • Organize quarterly meetings
Identify and encourage the involvement of voluntary and non-profit organizations to participate in new partnerships with business	Voluntary and non-profit organizations, businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out mutually beneficial new partnership opportunities
Maintain the Region's membership and involvement with the Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade	York Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing

Appendix: Accountability Matrix continued...

Re-initiate the York North Economic Development Partnership	York Region, area municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Federal and Provincial governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate meeting with representatives of the northern municipalities and Chambers of Commerce to discuss common challenges and concerns Identify opportunities for support that may be available through senior government programs
Create a new Achievement Award to recognize the achievements of individuals or groups	York Region, area municipalities, York Region Business Roundtable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote best practices in economic development Establish criteria and guidelines for the Awards Form an Awards Committee
<i>Objective: Expand broadband telecommunications</i>		
Identify gaps and encourage access to high quality, equitable broadband telecommunications	E-Government Committee, York Region, <i>YorkInfo Partnership</i> , utility companies, Public and Separate School Boards, business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in a joint review of broadband access across the Region
Facilitate business participation with the E-Government Committee	E-Government Committee, business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the mandate and functions of the E-Government Committee to the business community
<i>Objective: Improve co-ordination with other levels of government</i>		
Host regular meetings with area municipal Economic Development staff and provincial and federal government ministries and departments	York Region, area municipalities, Federal and Provincial government ministries and departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
Identify funding and other sources from senior level governments in support of economic development initiatives	York Region, Federal and Provincial government ministries, departments and agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current funding sources Develop a strategy to secure funding and support
Undertake a review of the optimal service delivery model and organization of the Region's economic development services	York Region, Federal and Provincial government ministries, departments and agencies, area municipalities, non-profit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review staffing, resources and business model of the Economic Development Branch Assess and address the efficiency and effectiveness of the Region's economic development programs and services against other government initiatives and policies

Strategic Direction: Sustain a High Quality Workforce

Objective: Align workforce development efforts with the needs of industry clusters in York Region

Facilitate the evolution of an Industry Education Council to address common workforce development issues that may impact business and industry	York Region, industry, universities, colleges, school boards, associations, and other non-government agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft terms of reference • Identify candidate members and appropriate government resources • Secure senior government funding support for this initiative
Facilitate better forecasting of industry requirements, skills shortages and deficiencies	Education Sector (school boards and colleges and universities), York Region, Federal and Provincial governments, industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate information on population and demographic projections to industry and education • Facilitate initial meeting between industry and the education sector to discuss industry requirements and areas of skills deficiencies
Advocate for more apprenticeship and skilled trades training and education	Industry, school boards, colleges, non-profit agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate discussions with the education sector to support the reinstatement of trades education in the school curriculum
Identify opportunities to attract and support new institutions of higher learning, research, management and training	York Region, area municipalities, industry and business, school boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop business case and identify potential locations • Develop a strategy and establish partnerships • Secure support and funding from Provincial Government
Compile a comprehensive resource guide of employment, education and training resources for employers in the Region	York South Simcoe Training Adjustment Board, public and private sector training, education and workforce service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review available resources • Consult with service providers • Develop the resource guide and disseminate to employers • Update on a regular basis
Improve efforts to maintain effective and adequate human service infrastructure to meet the needs of the labour force	Human Services Planning Coalition, York Region, area municipalities, Federal and Provincial governments, non-government agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby for increased social service funding from senior levels of government

Appendix: Accountability Matrix continued...

<i>Objective: Support immigrant mentoring and integration</i>		
Assist in the compilation of a directory of immigrant support and training resources	Non-profit immigrant support agencies, York Region, Federal and Provincial governments, training providers, education sector, professional associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in discussions with non-profit immigrant support agencies
Support the development and delivery of programs that accelerate professional recognition and skills upgrading of internationally trained workers	Professional associations, York Region, Federal and Provincial governments, training providers, education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in discussions with senior levels of government and professional associations Lobby for funding for retraining or skills upgrading of internationally trained workers
Advocate for training, immigration policies, and resources that are attuned to the needs of the employer community	Business community, York Region, Federal and Provincial governments, non-profit agencies, training providers, education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate meeting with businesses to establish the needs of the employer community Develop long term strategies to deal with the issue
<i>Objective: Involve the Region's youth in workforce development planning</i>		
Examine options to better engage the Region's youth in workforce development initiatives	Education Sector (school boards, colleges and universities), York Region, Federal and Provincial governments, non-profit agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize a youth forum on workforce issues Re-convene a youth advisory group Work with partners to develop a long-term strategy to encourage youth participation in workforce development initiatives
Support a broader program of internships, plant visits, job shadowing and co-op work terms for high school students	School boards, York Region, area municipalities, industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist school boards to promote the co-op program to the business community Promote the advantages of the programs and encourage industry participation
Promote and support <i>Summer Company</i> and <i>My Company</i> programs	Small Business Enterprise Centres, Provincial Government, school boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote programs to all schools within the Region and encourage participation from students
<i>Objective: Integrate land use, transit and housing policies to encourage closer live-work opportunities and improved accessibility by employers and employees</i>		
Promote awareness of the Centres and Corridors Strategy	York Region, area municipalities, realtors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate information on the Strategy broadly to the real estate industry

Undertake a marketing and communications program to promote the economic and environmental benefits of intensification within existing urban areas	York Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene working group to bring public/private partnerships together
Facilitate meetings with ICI realtors/developer community to identify how future employment areas can be designed to encourage closer live-work opportunities	York Region, realtors, development industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a review of international best practices • Identify possible pilot projects
Facilitate meetings between developer/homebuilders and the York Region employer community to discuss ways to promote and create closer live-work opportunities	York Region, area municipalities, Ontario Home Builders Association, development industry, York Region Business Roundtable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a small working group with homebuilders and York Region Business Roundtable

Strategic Direction: Strengthen Entrepreneurship and Industry Clusters

Objective: Support the growth and creation of business enterprise

Improve the visibility and services of the York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre	York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocate the Small Business Enterprise Centre to a prominent area to increase visibility and traffic • Develop a communications strategy to promote the centre • Establish a business registration kiosk • Increase the range of services provided at the centre
Increase the range of co-operative programs and services between the Small Business Enterprise Centres and other business support agencies	York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre, Small Business Enterprise Centres in Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan; other business support agencies such as Job Skills and Community Futures Development Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a Small Business Summit of small business support agencies.
Work with local municipalities to harmonize home-based business policies	Area municipalities, York Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in a review of home-based business policies across all local municipalities

Appendix: Accountability Matrix continued...

Develop a business recovery contingency plan to deal with economic crises and emergencies	Business community, York Region, area municipalities, Federal and Provincial governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in discussions with senior levels of government on contingency measures Convene a forum with the business community to discuss potential risks and proposed responses
<i>Objective: Encourage technological innovation and commercialization</i>		
Convene regular briefings with the Industrial Technology Advisors	Industrial Technology Advisors, NRC/IRAP, York Region, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing
Partner with the Innovation Synergy Centre in Markham to identify, encourage and support technology-based business within the Region	Innovation Synergy Centre in Markham, York Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold regular meetings with the ISCM Continue with membership in the York Technology Association Explore opportunities for joint venture activities
Facilitate the establishment of a York Region Advanced Manufacturing Consortium for manufacturers	Excellence-in-Manufacturing Consortium, York Region, manufacturers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Briefing held in Oct. 2004 First Strategic Interest Group sessions held in Nov. 2004
Explore opportunities to improve linkages with York University and Seneca College to promote research, commercialization and technology transfer	York Region, York University, Seneca College, area municipalities, Federal and Provincial governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue membership in York Regional Biotechnology Cluster Consortium Partner with York University and Seneca College to explore funding opportunities to support research and commercialization activities
Continue to support the evolution of the York Regional Biotechnology Cluster Consortium	YRBCC partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of the Biotechnology Profile Funding application to the Province for Phase 2 of BCIP Program
Identify areas that could be developed as science and innovation parks	York Region, development industry, landowners, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update vacant employment land inventory Review municipal zoning by-laws
Work with the Province to help implement the Commercialization Strategy	Provincial Government, York Region, area municipalities, York University, Seneca College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing

Undertake a review of the business model of the York Region Export Development Initiative	York Region, export companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey export companies to evaluate the effectiveness of the current business model • Develop a new approach and funding model for the program
Expand the Region's global contact network in partnership with local municipalities and senior levels of government	York Region Export Development Initiative, York Export Alliance, area municipalities, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, cultural organizations and associations, other agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize an International Trade Day • Participate in trade missions • Host incoming delegations • Explore twinning opportunities
Undertake a feasibility study to establish a free trade, duty free zone within the Region	Federal and Provincial governments, York Region, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review senior level government policies • Engage in discussions with senior level governments to explore options
Identify opportunities to provide support to York Region-based companies engaged in export activities	York Region, Federal and Provincial governments, area municipalities, financial institutions and other export service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and expand the range of services offered to export companies • Explore the concepts of a "Trading House" and other collaborative export financing initiatives • Host business meetings between exporters and incoming delegations
<i>Objective: Strengthen the Region's industry clusters</i>		
Undertake an economic structural analysis of the Region's high performance clusters	York Region, area municipalities, Federal and Provincial government, universities and colleges, industry and business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing cluster studies • Explore opportunities of participating in other ongoing cluster studies • Conduct a SWOT analysis of the Region's industry trends and determine the clusters to be included in the study
Initiate a Region-led multi-year business cluster building initiative for each of the Region's major manufacturing and service industry clusters	York Region, area municipalities, industry, education, training providers, Federal and Provincial governments, capital and other service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish working groups • Organize a forum for the working group to report on their findings and determine the approach to proceed with the cluster building initiative

Appendix: Accountability Matrix continued...

Participate in broader GTA industry sector research and support initiatives undertaken by the GTMA and other economic development and senior government agencies	GTMA, other economic development and senior government agencies, York Region, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
Promote and develop the agri-food industry sector	Agricultural industry, York Region, Federal and Provincial governments, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate discussion with the agricultural industry and senior levels of government to identify opportunities which will enhance the growth and development of the agri-food industry • Continue to support the Agricultural Advisory Liaison Group • Continue to support the Farm Fresh Association
Promote agri-business and support the implementation of the GTA Agricultural Action Plan	GTA Agricultural Working Group, York Region, Federal and Provincial governments, GTA Regions, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to participate in the GTA Agricultural Working Group
Explore options to reduce the operating cost environment for businesses in the Region	York Region, area municipalities, Federal and Provincial governments, local Chambers of Commerce/Board of Trade, business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a business working group to determine the elements of operating costs that are impacting business growth • Develop options in partnership with senior and local governments
<i>Objective: Facilitate access to capital</i>		
Improve access to financial capital for small and early stage growth firms in York Region	Financial institutions, angel investors, venture capitalists, Innovation Synergy Centre in Markham, York Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile an inventory of capital providers funding resources for small and early stage growth firms in York Region • Enhance networks to link angel investors, venture capitalists and other sources of financing to new entrepreneurs and small businesses
Examine the opportunity for the creation of additional small business investment fund corporations	Federal and Provincial governments, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the option of expanding the geographic service areas of existing Community Futures Corporations

Provide opportunities to host meetings of groups such as the Toronto Venture Group	Toronto Venture Group and other venture capital groups, York Region, Innovation Synergy Centre in Markham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile a list of venture capitalists • Provide a forum for groups to meet with local entrepreneurs
Encourage banks and other financial institutions to sponsor and participate in a “Capital for Business” event in York Region	York Region, venture capital groups, banks and other financial institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure sponsorships from banks and financial institutions • Form a working group to explore the opportunity of hosting the event in York Region • Encourage participation by local entrepreneurs
<i>Objective: Strengthen the economic vitality and business diversity of employment areas and urban centres</i>		
Identify specific tax policy and other incentives that would be effective to attract business investment and employment to the Region	Area municipalities, Federal and Provincial governments, York Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing tax policy and other incentives of local and senior levels of government • Propose changes or amendments that would facilitate investment attraction
Assess opportunities for special purpose economic development corporations to act as catalysts for supporting intensification and live-work opportunities in the Region’s urban centres	York Region, Provincial government, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities that will support intensification and live-work opportunities in urban centres • Engage in discussions with local and senior levels of government on the mechanism involved in creating special purpose corporations
Monitor the adequacy of employment land supply and strengthen land use policies to discourage the conversion of lands in employment areas	York Region, area municipalities, Provincial government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update vacant employment land inventory • Update Regional and Local Official Plans to strengthen land use policies
Promote energy conservation and waste reduction initiatives to the employer community	Utilities, Provincial government, York Region, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold regular information sessions to promote the benefits of energy conservation and waste reduction to the business community • Identify resources and incentives that may encourage energy conservation and waste reduction

Appendix: Accountability Matrix continued...

Work with area municipalities to expedite key industrial/commercial developments through the Regional approval process	York Region, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
Strategic Direction: Enhance the Quality of Place		
<i>Objective: Develop and promote York Region's attributes</i>		
Promote a balanced approach to economic development that enhances quality of life, environmental sustainability and economic vitality	York Region, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage environmental stewardship and sustainable development across the Region • Improve co-ordination to ensure that economic development programs and services are aligned with land use and environmental policies • Support the implementation of the Province's <i>Places to Grow</i> framework
Develop and promote Arts and Culture in York Region	York Region, arts and culture sector, Artslink, area municipalities, Federal and Provincial governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the establishment of an Arts and Culture Council • Create an Arts and Culture brochure • Continue to support Artslink • Continue to support <i>Celebration of the Arts</i>
Promote the integration of amenities in community planning to encourage recreational and lifestyle activities	Area municipalities, York Region, development industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with area municipalities to include outdoor and recreation amenities in the streetscape and urban design criteria • Encourage the development industry to integrate lifestyle and recreational amenities in their design
Embrace diversity in the community	Human Services Planning Coalition, York Region, area municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of the Inclusivity Action Plan
Develop a marketing and communications plan to promote York Region and its natural and cultural attributes	York Region, GTMA, Federal and Provincial government, area municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review best practices of other jurisdictions • Secure funding support from senior levels of government • Develop a marketing and communications strategy in consultation with local and senior levels of government

Produce a high quality lure brochure and accompanying CD/DVD that identifies and promotes the unique attributes of the Region's communities, cultures and environment	York Region, area municipalities, Federal and Provincial government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding support from senior levels of government Incorporate the new brand in the promotional material Engage a creative agency to design and produce the lure brochure and CD/DVD
Enhance and expand the Region's economic development website with graphic and linguistic functionality	York Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review best practices of other jurisdictions Determine required functionalities of the enhanced website Secure funding support from senior levels of government Re-design the website to include the new functionalities
Investigate opportunities to host Canadian trade representatives and consular officials to familiarize them with the cultural and business diversity of York Region	York Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the Region's cultural and business diversity through the International Trade Day Host incoming trade missions and delegations
Improve York Region's presence in the Ontario Investors Service	York Region, Ontario Investors Service, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host investment tours for representatives of the Ontario Investors Service Post York Region's profile on the OIS website
<i>Objective: Attract tourism and special events</i>		
Develop an updated strategic tourism marketing action plan	York Region Tourism, area municipalities, York Region Tourism Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify tourism "experiences" in York Region Attract new tourism visitation Generate sustainable financial support for tourism promotion initiatives
Identify locations to establish new <i>York Tourism</i> information kiosks and virtual information centres	York Region Tourism, area municipalities, Chambers of Commerce/Board of Trade, York Region Tourism Advisory Group, retail outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify strategic locations Establish partnership opportunities

Appendix: Accountability Matrix continued...

Work with Tourism Toronto and other major industry associations and senior government tourism agencies to position York Region in the international tourism marketplace	York Region Tourism, Tourism Toronto, Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership, York Region Tourism Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue membership in Tourism Toronto and other major industry associations • Participate in industry trade shows and other partnership opportunities
Undertake a major events infrastructure audit to identify capacity to host major cultural and sporting events that could be attracted to York Region	York Region Tourism, area municipalities, tourism industry, Federal and Provincial government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a Premier Ranked Tourism Destination Research Project • Identify the major cultural and sporting events that could be hosted in York Region • Assess the Region's capacity to host these events • Develop a strategy to attract the events
Collaborate with the Region's various cultural communities to host large scale ethnic events	York Region Tourism, area municipalities, cultural associations, Federal and Provincial government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the major cultural groups in the Region • Identify types of events and locations • Secure funding support from senior levels of government
Work with the media to promote the Region	York Region, media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize familiarization tours for media • Disseminate promotional materials
Encourage new on-location film and television production throughout the Region	York Region, Ontario Media Development Corporation, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a media location guide • Streamline approval process in partnership with area municipalities • Promote the Region's locations through the Ontario Media Development Corporation
Strategic Direction: Encourage the Efficient Movement of Goods and People		
<i>Objective: Ensure that the transportation system meets the ongoing needs of business for goods movement</i>		
Engage in discussions with major shippers and exporters to understand evolving challenges in the logistics industry	York Region, exporters, shipper and the logistics industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold meetings with major exporters, shippers and trucking companies to obtain feedback
Look at ways to enhance the use of inter-modal service by small and less than truckload lot shippers	York Region, trucking industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a task force of small and less than truckload lot shippers

Ensure representative participation by the business and employer community in transportation system planning	York Region, business and employer community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make presentations to Chambers of Commerce/Board of Trade and other business groups and associations on the Transportation Master Plan and other related transportation issues
Lobby the Ontario Government for continued expansion of 400 series and other provincial highways in York Region	York Region, area municipalities, Provincial Government, Chambers of Commerce/Board of Trade, business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make joint submissions to the Province to reinforce the collective benefits of extending the provincial highways
Disseminate the Region's transportation reports widely to the broader business community	York Region, area municipalities, business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of the availability and usefulness of transportation reports • Ensure clarity and ease of comprehension • Prompt response and delivery
Promote the use of the Region's transportation data among shippers to assist in scheduling shipments to optimize shipping efficiency	York Region, area municipalities, Ontario Trucking Association, shippers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the Ontario Trucking Association and other groups on the circulation list • Include transportation news on the economic development website
Engage in discussions with CN Rail regarding the long-term viability of the CN Intermodal site in Vaughan	CN Rail, York Region, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate meeting with CN Rail and area municipalities
<i>Objective: Encourage Regional businesses to support and promote transit and alternatives to the single occupant vehicle for journey to work</i>		
Promote the current efforts of Transportation Management Associations and identify clusters of employers who could benefit from shared transportation services for employees	Transportation Management Associations, York Region, area municipalities, business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
Engage York Region businesses to identify efficiencies and incentives for alternative employee journey to work systems	Transportation Management Association, York Region, area municipalities, business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review best practices in other jurisdictions • Hold workshops with the business community to brainstorm ideas • Make presentations to Chambers of Commerce/Board of Trade and major employer groups on transportation demand management

Appendix: Accountability Matrix continued...

Encourage businesses to promote, support and practise transportation demand management and to provide alternative employee journey to work choices	Business community, York Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate discussions with the business community to promote the benefits of providing employees with alternative journey to work
Work with senior levels of government to explore the feasibility of offering tax incentives for employers who practise transportation demand management	York Region, YRT, Federal and Provincial governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review best practices of other jurisdictions • Explore options with senior levels of government
Develop a working partnership with YRT to assist in the promotion of public transit and heighten awareness of existing and future services to both existing and prospective businesses	York Region, YRT, area municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make presentations to Chambers of Commerce/Board of Trade and other business associations • Work with area municipalities to ensure that prospective employers are aware of the range of services offered by YRT
Identify and promote new business development opportunities in transit-serviced urban centres and corridors in the Region	York Region, YRT, land development and real estate industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the promotion of transit information through industry newsletters
Encourage business support for public transit investment in terms of seeking out public-private partnership opportunities for joint development, locating new business or relocating existing business to transit corridors, and encouraging general transit supportive business activities	YRT and YRPT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote transit information to the business community
Advocate the Provincial and Federal governments for increased public transit funding for capital infrastructure and sustained operating subsidies	YRT, Federal and Provincial governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcase YRT's success through increase in ridership and revenue service hours • Secure business support for increased Provincial funding





reference

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