

Clause No. 16 in Report No. 1 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on January 23, 2014.

## **16**

### **2013 YORK REGION BUSINESS DIRECTORY**

**Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendations contained in the report dated December 13, 2013 from the Executive Director, Corporate and Strategic Planning:**

#### **1. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council receive this report for information.

#### **2. PURPOSE**

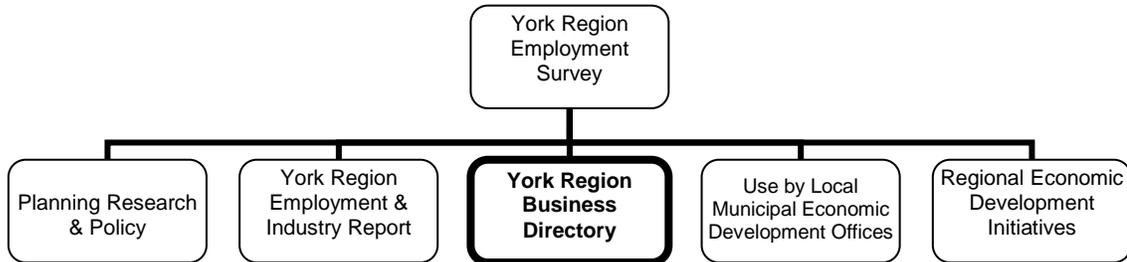
This report provides a summary of the information contained in the York Region Business Directory and outlines the methodology for collection of data through the annual York Region Employment Survey.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

The York Region annual Employment Survey is used to monitor the Regional economy and analyze industry and employment trends. The survey has been conducted in partnership with all nine local municipalities since 2002. The 2013 York Region Business Directory is based on information collected from the 2013 York Region Employment Survey. The Employment Survey is conducted annually between May and August by a team of university student employment surveyors retained by York Region. The primary method of data collection in 2013 was through door-to-door interviews with supplemental information obtained through e-mail, phone and fax submissions. Where data could not be updated for a particular business, data was supplemented with the most recent information available from previous surveys and information from the local and regional economic development offices.

*Figure 1* illustrates a number of different products and initiatives that use the information collected from the York Region Employment Survey.

**Figure 1**  
York Region Employment Survey Uses



The 2013 York Region Business Directory is an annual electronic publication that provides basic business information for York Region residents, businesses and local municipalities. The Directory is made available online through the York Region website.

The Business Directory is a valuable resource guide for business-to-business contact, a convenient research tool for the general public and a showcase for the diverse nature of York Region's economy.

#### **4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

##### **Staff surveyed over 29,000 businesses in the 2013 Region-wide employment survey**

For the seventh consecutive year, the Region conducted a comprehensive survey of business locations in the Region's nine local municipalities. At an aggregated level, this analysis offers an indication of how the York Region economy is performing and helps to determine whether the economic development goals of York Region are being met.

The 2013 database and directory includes information about approximately 29,300 of the Region's local businesses (excluding home and farm-based businesses). According to the Statistics Canada Canadian Business Patterns (CBP) database, there were approximately 42,000 businesses in York Region that submitted payroll data in 2012. This number represents businesses that register with the Canadian Business Register and includes home-based businesses that have employees and submit payroll.

The York Region Employment Survey collects information including company name, business activity and number of employees. *Figure 2* is a fictitious example illustrating the basic business information collected through the 2013 York Region Employment Survey.

**Figure 2**  
**Sample of Collected Business Information**

<b>General Business Contact Information</b>	
<b>Business Name:</b> Smith Enterprise	<b>Website:</b> www.smithenterprises.ca
<b>Business Phone:</b> (905)123-4567	<b>General Business Email:</b> info@smithenterprises.ca
<b>Business Fax:</b> (905) 555-5555	<b>Street Address:</b> 123 Main St. New market, ON A1B 2C3
<b>Business Activity Information</b>	
<b>Primary Business Activity:</b> Lessors of Residential Buildings and Dwellings	
<b>Secondary Business Activity:</b> Real Estate Property Managers	
<b>Is this a Canadian Head office?</b> No	
<b>Does this location currently export goods/services outside of Canada?</b> No	
<b>Employment Information</b>	
<b>Total Number of Employees:</b> 100	
<b>Does your business intend on hiring in the next 6 months?:</b> Yes	
<b>Additional Information</b>	
<b>What is the square footage of this location?</b> 1,000 sq.ft	
<b>Year business was established in York Region?</b> 2001	
<b>Year business moved to current location?</b> 2010	
<b>Survey Contact Information</b>	
<b>Survey Contact:</b> John Smith, Office Manager Phone: (905) 555-8219 ext. 21 Email: John@smithenterprises.ca	<b>Corporate Contact:</b> Joe Smith, President Phone: (905) 555-8219 ext. 20 Email: Joe@smithenterprises.ca
<b>Information Last Updated:</b> 7/24/2013 10:32:04 AM	

Source: York Region Long Range Planning, Office of the CAO, 2013

## **York Region is working in collaboration with local Chambers of Commerce to increase survey participation from home-based businesses**

Historically, the Region has not surveyed home-based businesses. It is difficult to conduct a comprehensive survey of these businesses due to their wide geographic distribution. In an effort to obtain more detailed business information on the Region's home-based businesses, York Region began surveying home-based businesses on a voluntary basis in 2012.

Approximately 200 home-based businesses were successfully surveyed in 2013. It is important to note that the number of surveyed home-based businesses is not reflective of the total number of home-based businesses in the Region. According to the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), there were approximately 40,000 home-based jobs in York Region in 2011. A number of home-based businesses, according to the NHS, are self-employed operations and small business establishments that cover all industry sectors. The largest proportion of these businesses is within the professional scientific and technical sector, including jobs in accounting, IT services, engineering, architecture and law.

Currently, businesses can voluntarily submit their business information through the Region's business directory website. To further encourage participation in the survey and grow the Region's employment database, the Region is working with the local Chambers of Commerce to collect and track Chamber members and identify them as such on the business directory website. It is anticipated that the Chambers will provide the Region regular updates of their membership list for inclusion in the business directory beginning in 2014.

### **Farm-based businesses to be surveyed on a voluntary basis in 2014**

Farm-based businesses are captured every five years through the Census of Agriculture conducted by Statistics Canada. Based on the 2011 Census of Agriculture, there were 828 farm-based operations in the Region. York Region, in collaboration with the York Region Agricultural Advisory Liaison group and the York Federation of Agriculture are working together to determine the best method of surveying farm-based businesses. Due to the nature of these businesses, a mail-out of a letter describing the purpose of the survey and a survey form distributed during the off-season farming months is likely the best way to contact farm-based businesses. York Region staff will continue to work with the York Federation of Agriculture to encourage local farmers to participate in the survey. The Region is expected to begin contacting farm-based businesses in early 2014.

### **York Region interactive business directory to be made available on mobile devices in February 2014**

York Region launched its new Business Directory website in October 2012. The Business Directory website had been previously hosted by an external provider (since 2007). In addition to hosting the York Region Directory, the Region also hosts a business directory site for seven of the nine local municipalities. These sites have the same functionality as the York Region site and can be accessed through each local municipality's respective home page.

The Business Directory website enables the public to search for businesses using a variety of search criteria including company name, business activity, address, number of employees or keywords on an interactive map of the Region.

A second phase of the website is expected to be completed by February 2014. Regional staff organized a series of focus groups with economic development staff from the local municipalities to gather user feedback on the directory. Much of the feedback was incorporated into the second phase of the directory which further enhances the user-friendliness, usefulness, and overall accuracy. The website was developed in-house and will continue to be maintained by Regional staff.

The most significant change in the second phase is that the business directory will be available on mobile applications such as smartphones and tablets. The upgraded website will also include a number of new analysis and report features for end users including:

- Mark-up tools
- Ability to export user search results
- Search by business sector
- Employment lands layer, including vacant employment lands
- Chamber of Commerce logo identifying business members

### **Web traffic to the new business directory website has grown by 58% since its 2012 launch date**

Since the launch of the new interactive Business Directory in 2012, traffic to the [www.york.ca/businessdirectory](http://www.york.ca/businessdirectory) webpage has grown by 58%. Between October 2012 and October 2013 there were 8,400 visits to the webpage, compared to 3,500 visits between October 2011 and 2012. The number of dataset downloads increased by 56%, where the dataset was downloaded nearly 1,500 times during the same 12-month period between 2012 and 2013. Web traffic is typically at its highest during the survey months and the increased popularity in the webpage can likely be attributed to the new interactive directory map.

The York Region interactive Business Directory will be updated with 2013 survey data in January 2014 and can be accessed through the [www.york.ca/businessdirectory](http://www.york.ca/businessdirectory) webpage as well as the York Region homepage.

### **The Business Directory is a useful tool for residents, businesses and local and regional economic development offices to make connections and foster economic growth**

The York Region Business Directory is a useful business-to-business resource guide, providing points of contact to businesses across the Region. The Directory also serves as a Regional marketing tool, promoting York Region and its many diverse business sectors.

In addition to promoting local businesses, the database also provides local and Regional economic development offices with a contact management system enabling them to facilitate strategic business introductions and build linkages between regional businesses; identify clients for advisory service corporate calls; profiling growing industry clusters and targeting sectors for economic development business trade missions to identify international business development opportunities.

### **York Region grew by an estimated 22,800 jobs in 2013**

Through the Employment Survey and further analysis, the following business and employment trends were observed for mid-year 2013:

- There were an estimated 547,400 jobs in York Region.
- There was a net increase of 22,800 jobs from mid-year 2012 to mid-year 2013.
- The total number of surveyed businesses in the Region increased to approximately 29,300 from 28,100 in 2012.
- The four largest industry sectors by size in York Region were manufacturing, retail, professional scientific and technical services, and wholesale trade.
- Approximately 74% of York Region employment is full-time.

The 2013 *Employment and Industry Report*, to be presented to Council early in 2014, will provide further analysis of the information gathered in the 2013 York Region Employment Survey. A detailed overview of industry and employment trends in York Region, including sector breakdowns and local municipal profiles will be included. Economic outlook and trends at the national and provincial levels will also be examined.

### **Survey of businesses to continue with additional improvements to the survey process expected in 2014**

Another comprehensive employment survey is planned for May 2014. In an effort to improve efficiencies in the employment survey process, the Region, in collaboration with local municipalities, undertook a consultation process in 2013 to determine specific re-design elements. It was concluded that the best way to meet the needs of all users, including economic development staff and planning staff is to have survey data stored in a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

The 2013 survey was conducted using a web-based mapping application designed by Regional GIS staff. The application allowed for the information to be collected in real-time using Blackberry Playbooks. A second phase of improvements will commence in 2014, when a consultant will be retained to design the CRM system. The CRM will allow the employment survey process to become more interconnected with the new business directory website, local municipal partners and the public. It is expected that the employment survey re-design process will be completed in 2014.

### **Link to key Council-approved plans**

The 2013 *York Region Business Directory* supports the 2011 to 2015 *Strategic Plan* action area of “Increase the Economic Vitality of the Region” and the *Vision 2051* goal area of fostering “An Innovation Economy.” This will be accomplished by creating “An Economy that Facilitates Creativity and Fosters Innovation.”

The business directory strengthens these goals by providing local businesses with a source of free advertising via the York Region Business Directory, enhancing business-to-business contact. Further, the provision of these directories to local business development centres will help to develop and attract businesses from a broad array of sectors.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The collection of employment and business data plays a fundamental role in monitoring changes in the Region's economy. Estimating the Regional assessment base and forecasting of future infrastructure and service requirements are also obtained through the use of the data. The 2013 Employment Survey and business directory website were provided for in the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer's 2013 budget. The budget for the 2013 York Region Employment Survey, including staff time was \$210,000. This also includes a \$79,200 contribution from the nine local municipalities. In addition, the budget for the phase two enhancements to the business directory website is \$15,000.

## **6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT**

All local municipalities have contributed to the Directory through their guidance and financial contributions associated with the Employment Database Working Group. Regional staff continue to work with all nine local municipalities to address their data needs as well as to assist in the gradual transition to the newly developed business directory website over time.

The 2013 York Region Business Directory makes business data, including sectoral and contact information, available at the local municipal level. The York Region Employment Survey and the information gathered for the York Region Business Directory is an essential component of the Employment and Industry Report 2013, which will be presented to Committee early in 2014. That report will provide a summary of York Region's economy at the regional and local municipal level, which can be used as a basis for decision making, strategic planning and attracting new business.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

In partnership with the nine local municipalities, a survey of 29,300 businesses in York Region was completed for 2013, providing data for the 2013 York Region Business Directory. Survey information collected includes company name, business activity, number of employees and business contact information. This Directory acts as an important resource by assisting business marketing efforts, sourcing local trades and

suppliers, and analyzing the Regional economy. It is also useful in targeted job searches and assisting citizens in locating specific products/services within York Region.

The 2013 York Region Business Directory can be viewed on the online interactive directory and is available for download in electronic formats at [www.york.ca/businessdirectory](http://www.york.ca/businessdirectory). More detailed analysis will be provided in the forthcoming 2013 Employment and Industry Report, which is anticipated to be presented to Committee of the Whole in early 2014.

For more information on this report, please contact Paul Bottomley, Manager, Growth Management at 905 830-4444, Ext 71530 or Valerie Shuttleworth, Director, Long Range Planning at Ext. 71525.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.