



QUALITY of Life in YORK REGION

What is QUALITY of LIFE?

Quality of life is our overall well-being, in other words, our economic, social, physical, political, and environmental health.

What affects our QUALITY of LIFE?

Quality of life is affected by:

- appropriate housing
- community involvement
- personal safety
- education
- employment
- the economy
- the natural environment
- personal and community health
- personal financial security
- community and social infrastructure

Measuring QUALITY of LIFE

The Quality of Life Reporting System (QOLRS) is a database that was developed to measure, monitor, compare and report on the quality of life in Canadian urban municipalities. There are 20 participating municipalities, including York Region, from seven provinces. These municipalities are a mix of large urban centres, suburban communities, and small and medium-sized communities.



York Region Councillor
Brenda Hogg, Chair,
Quality of Life Technical Team,
comments on the quality of life
in York Region:

“York Region’s high quality of life is a key factor in the high rate of growth the Region is experiencing.

The Quality of Life Reporting System provides us with another tool to monitor how well we are doing so we can continue to respond to the needs of our changing communities and maintain our high quality of life.”



QUALITY of Life REPORTS

Three reports have recently been released describing quality of life in the 20 QOLRS municipalities.

The reports are:

- Incomes, Shelter and Necessities
- Dynamic Societies and Social Change
- Growth, the Economy and the Urban Environment

York Region generally compares well in relation to the other QOLRS municipalities. This result is consistent with a 2004 survey which found that 30% of residents surveyed rated quality of life in York Region as excellent and 61% rated it good - an overall 91% approval rating.

INCOMES, SHELTER *and* Necessities REPORT

This report focuses on personal incomes, shelter, and the affordability of basic needs.

Amongst the 20 QOLRS municipalities, York Region has the second lowest percentage of children living in low income families at 9.8%. Chart 1 shows the proportion of children living in low income families according to their age.

York Region has the second least diversified housing mix in terms of rental, homeowner, condo, and cooperative housing. As shown in Chart 2, the percentage of housing starts for rental units dropped from 20% to 0% between 1991 and 2001.

DYNAMIC SOCIETIES *and* Social Change REPORT

This report focuses on population characteristics, changing demographics and community involvement.

Compared to the other QOLRS municipalities, as shown in Chart 3, York Region has the second lowest supply of subsidized child care spaces for children in low income families. The wait list for fee assistance grew steadily between 2000 and 2003, and then dropped in 2004, as shown in Chart 4. This is a result of recent funding received from the Province which enabled York Region to provide child care fee assistance for an additional 236 spaces. However, this level of Provincial child care fee subsidy funding still leaves five out of six children in low income families without access to child care fee assistance.

Chart 5 shows that York Region has one of the lowest crime rates amongst the QOLRS municipalities.

GROWTH, THE ECONOMY, *and the* Urban Environment REPORT

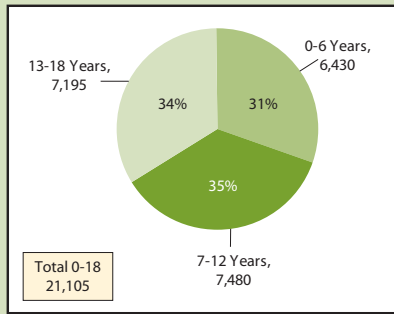
This report explores the parallels between a relatively strong population and economic growth which occurred in York Region between 1996 and 2001, and the corresponding pressures on the environment.

Between 1991 and 2001, York Region experienced the highest population and employment growth rates amongst the QOLRS municipalities, as shown in Charts 6 and 7.

Although public transit usage in York Region is lower than the QOLRS average, as shown in Chart 8, York Region Transit served approximately 13.8 million trips in 2004, which is a 14.3% increase over 2003. In 2004, York Region launched Viva, a 20 year rapid transit program.

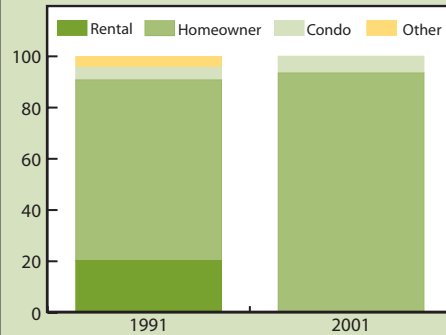


CHART 1: Number of Children Living Below the Low Income Cut-Off, by Age Group, York Region



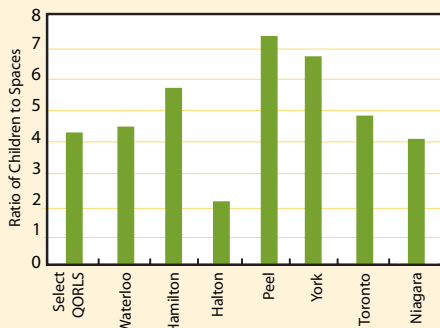
Source: 2001 Census, Custom Tabulations, Statistics Canada

CHART 2: Housing Starts, by Type, as a Percentage of All Starts, York Region, 1991-2001



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Starts and Completions Survey, 1991, 1996-2001

CHART 3 CHILD CARE: Ratio of Children Aged 0-12 in Families with Income below LICO to Subsidized Child Care Spaces, Greater Golden Horseshoe Area, 2001



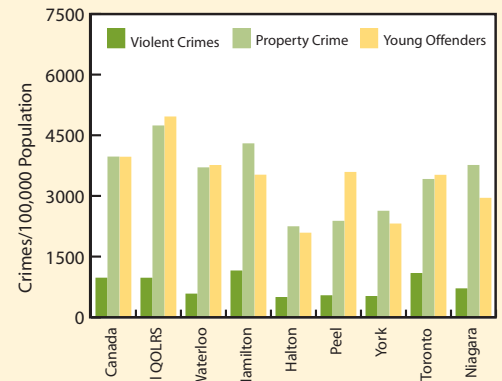
Source: FCM Municipal Survey Database, 2003; 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

CHART 4: Year-End Wait List for Child Care Fee Assistance, by Type of Space, York Region, 2001-2003

	2001	2002	2003	2004
Infant	145	209	281	238
Toddler	104	141	262	233
Pre-School	290	434	683	615
School-Age	198	293	455	376
Other	10	6	13	17
TOTAL	747	1,083	1,694	1,479

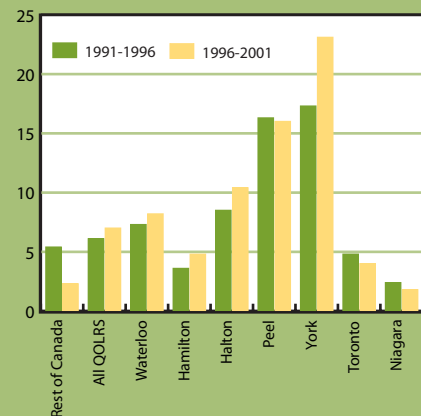
Source: Family and Children's Services Division, Community Services and Housing Department, York Region

CHART 5: CRIME: Young Offenders, Property and Violent Crimes by Population per 100,000, Greater Golden Horseshoe Area, 2002



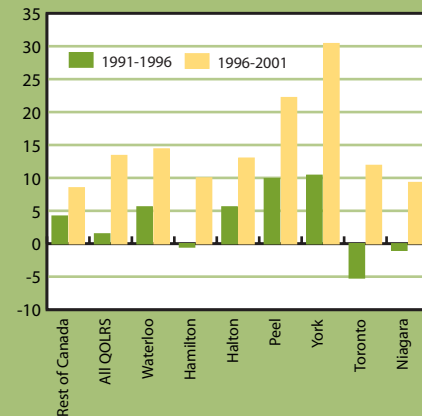
Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Starts and Completions Survey, 1991, 1996-2001

CHART 6: POPULATION GROWTH: Total Population Growth, QOLRS Municipalities in Greater Golden Horseshoe Area, 1991-1996, 1996-2001



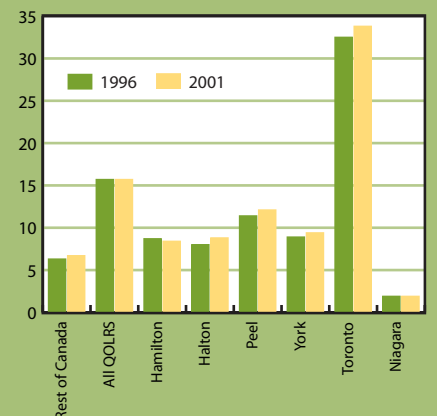
Source: FCM Municipal Survey Database, 2003; 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

CHART 7: EMPLOYMENT: Change in Total Number of Employed Persons, QOLRS Municipalities in Greater Golden Horseshoe Area, 1991-1996, 1996-2001



Source: Family and Children's Services Division, Community Services and Housing Department, York Region

CHART 8: URBAN TRANSPORTATION: Proportion of Commuters Using Public Transit, QOLRS Municipalities in Greater Golden Horseshoe Area, 1996, 2001



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Starts and Completions Survey, 1991, 1996-2001

WHAT *the* Three Reports ADD UP TO

Table 1 shows how York Region compares to the other QOLRS municipalities for selected indicators. The bottom line is:

- We compare favourably in terms of education, employment, health, crime, income, and water consumption.
- We face challenges with respect to income gap, housing diversity, social housing availability, rental vacancy rate/affordability, voter participation, volunteerism, waste diversion, and use of public transit.
- Our population is generally ageing and becoming more ethno-culturally diverse.

TABLE 1: York Region Ranking in Relation to Other QOLRS Municipalities for Selected Indicators

Higher	Lower	Other QOLRS Municipalities for Selected Indicators
		Income gap
		Children in low income families
		Percentage of lone parent families
		Diversity of housing starts
		Social housing wait time
		Rental vacancy rate
		Rental affordability gap
		Increase in seniors population
		Increase in 0-14, 15-24 and 25-34 age groups
		Post secondary education attainment
		Immigrant unemployment rate
		Non-immigrant unemployment rate
		Voter participation
		Volunteerism rate
		Supply of subsidized child care spaces for low income families
		Student-teacher ratio
		Population age 15 + with less than Grade 9 education
		Pemature mortality rate
		Teen mothers
		Suicide rate
		Young offenders/property/violent crime
		Growth rate
		Low density housing starts
		Employment growth
		Average household income
		Decrease in bankruptcy rate
		Decrease in solid waste collection
		Solid waste recycling
		Use of public transit
		Walking/cycling commuters
		Commuting distance
		Ozone level
		Water consumption
		Water body closures due to health concerns

WHAT ARE WE DOING to Improve York Region's Quality of LIFE?

York Region is leading a number of initiatives that will improve our quality of life including:

- Transit Plan
- Annual Accessibility Plan
- Greening Strategy
- Early Learning and Child Care Service Plan
- Centres and Corridors Strategy
- Energy Efficient Management
- Homelessness Prevention Program
- Water for Tomorrow Programs
- Smart Commute Initiative
- Inclusivity Strategy
- Corporate Clean Air Initiative
- Wind Feasibility Study
- Community Development and Investment Funding Strategy
- York Regional Police Youth Strategy
- Mental Health Resource Model
- Draft Economic Strategy
- Residential Intensification Study
- Household Hazardous Waste Depot site purchase
- Solid Waste Management Promotion and Education Plan
- Family Strengthening Programs

For more information regarding York Region's initiatives to improve quality of life please visit www.york.ca

WHAT CAN YOU DO to Improve York Region's Quality of LIFE?

- Use alternate forms of transportation (walk, cycle, take the bus)
- Reduce water and energy consumption
- Volunteer
- Exercise your right to vote
- Compost
- Reduce, reuse and recycle
- Make charitable donations
- Learn about crime prevention at www.police.york.on.ca

For more information regarding the Quality of Life Reporting System visit www.fcm.ca/qol3