

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities Quality of Life in Canadian Communities “Income, Shelter and Necessities” Report¹

Comparator municipalities:

Vancouver
Calgary
Edmonton
Saskatoon
Regina
Winnipeg
Windsor
London
Sudbury
Waterloo
Hamilton
Halton
Peel
York
Toronto
Niagara
Kingston
Ottawa
Quebec (Metropolitan Community)
Halifax

Income and Unemployment

- Growing income gap for individuals and families in York and most other municipalities
- York Region experienced one of largest growing gaps amongst QOLRS municipalities in terms of ratio of the 90th Percentile Individual Income to the 10th Percentile Individual Income between 1990 and 2000

Trends in Poverty

- Percentage of children in families living below the Low Income Cut Off as a Percentage of All Children is second lowest amongst QOLRS municipalities, next to Halton
- This percentage has increased by about 2% between 1991 and 2001. Proportionately this appears at first glance to be the highest percentage increase amongst the municipalities (a more detailed analysis of the data would be required to confirm. Observation is based on review of graph provided)

¹ Source: “Income, Shelter and Necessities”, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2004

Trends in Housing Supply

- Amongst the QOLRS municipalities, York Region is the second least diversified municipality, next to Sudbury, in terms of its mix of rental, homeowner, condo, and coop housing and other types. Between 1991 and 2001 most of the housing starts (over 90%) were homeowner types
- Consistent with the national trend, the proportion of all households living in rented dwellings decreased between 1991 and 2001. The decrease was greater than the average decrease for all QOLRS municipalities
- York was one of 4 municipalities (the others being Peel, Halton and Niagara) that had renter populations accounting for less than 30% of all households
- York Region had the highest percentage of households on social housing waiting lists as a % of all renter households, next to Toronto, at around 12%
- York Region had the 3rd highest minimum wait time for social housing at about 3 years, and the highest maximum wait time at about 8 years in 2002

Housing Affordability

- The proportion of all private households living in rental dwellings spending 30% or more on shelter costs has increased between 1990 and 2000 at a rate consistent with the average. In 2000 it was just over 40%
- Average reported rental vacancy rate for York Region was just over 1%, the 3rd lowest next to Halton and Vancouver
- Toronto experienced the greatest percentage change in average monthly rent between 1991 and 2001, with York Region being 2nd highest
- The rental affordability gap for York was the 3rd highest next to Vancouver and Toronto in 2001 for individuals, and 4th highest for families. These gaps more than doubled between 1991 and 2001

Dynamic Societies and Social Change²

York Region's Demographic Changes

Older Adults and Seniors

- York Region had highest percentage increase in population amongst older adults and seniors (35-44, 45-64, 65+) between 1991 and 2001.
- Greatest population change in York Region was in 65+ group at 86.4%, while on average the QOLRS communities experienced greatest change in 45-64 age category.
- In all age categories the percentage change was at least twice that of the QOLRS average.

Children, Youth and Young Adults

- Amongst all QOLRS communities York Region experienced the highest percentage change in the 15-24 and 25-34 age categories.
- York Region had the 2nd highest percentage increase (28.5%) in the 0-14 age group, next to Peel Region.

Immigration-led Population Growth

- In 2001, York Region had the 4th highest foreign born population as a percentage of total population, next to Toronto, Vancouver and Peel. At 38.9%, this is more than twice the rate prevailing in Canada.

Aboriginal Population

- The Aboriginal population under age 15 has only changed by 0.1% between 1991 and 2001 in York Region, while the average change for all QOLRS communities was 0.3%. The Aboriginal children population as a percentage of all children in York Region is 0.5%, tied with Peel and Quebec City as having the lowest rate amongst all QOLRS communities.

The Changing Workforce

Labour Force Participation Rate

- 6.2% decline in Labour Force Participation rate for males amongst QOLRS communities is 2nd greatest decline next to Kingston.
- Greatest percentage point decline in Labour Force Participation rate for females amongst QOLRS communities tied with Kingston at - 2.9%.
- As per national trend, Labour Force Participation Rate amongst Women with Young Children (0-12) has increased between 1991 and 2001, but at a lower rate (2.3%) than the national average (3.4%).

² Source: "Dynamic Societies and Social Change", Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2005

Education Levels

- Only Ottawa, Vancouver, and Halton, have higher level of Post-Secondary Educational Attainment, ages 25-34. York Region has 80.7% level of Post-Secondary Educational Attainment.

Unemployment

- York Region's Unemployment Rate for recent immigrants is 7.8%, 3rd lowest amongst QOLRS communities next to Winnipeg, and Calgary and Edmonton, which are tied for 2nd
- For immigrants, York's Unemployment Rate is 4.8% - the 2nd lowest amongst QOLRS communities next to Halton and equal to Regina.
- Amongst non-immigrants York has the 2nd lowest Unemployment Rate at 4.2% next to Halton.

Civic Engagement

- York Region Voter Participation in Federal elections dropped from 67.1% in 1993 to 57.9% in 2000 in keeping with the downward national trend. Voter participation is about 3 percentage points less than national average.
- 20.0% of municipal councillors are women in York while 24.8% is the average for all QOLRS communities.
- York Region has 5th lowest rate of volunteerism amongst all QOLRS communities at 21.6%, and experienced the 2nd highest decrease next to Kingston at 34.3%. Only two municipalities did not show a decrease.
- Between 1990 and 2000, York Region experienced greatest percentage increase in total charitable donations amongst QOLRS communities at 132.0% - more than double the national average.
- The number of donors in York Region decreased by 14.9%. On average, the number of donors decreased by 16.3% for QOLRS communities.

Community & Social Infrastructure – Education & Child Care

- Amongst all QOLRS communities, York Region has the 3rd highest ratio of Children Aged 0-12 in Families with Incomes below LICO to Subsidized Childcare Spaces at 6.7.
- Similar to the rest of the country, the student-teacher ratio improved between 1991 and 2001 and is significantly higher (71.7 education occupations per 1000 population) than the national average (62.5 education occupations per 1000 population) and the average of all QOLRS communities (63.8 education occupations per 1000 population).
- Average elementary and secondary class size of 22.7 was consistent with average for QOLRS communities.
- Between 1991 and 2001, Percentage of Population Aged 15+ with Less than a Grade 9 Education has decreased in accordance with trend for all QOLRS communities. In 2001, 7.6% of York Region's population aged 15+ had less than Grade 9 education, which is below the national and QOLRS averages.

Community Health, Stress and Safety

- Premature Mortality rate has fallen as per national trend and is considerably lower, at 189 deaths under 75 years of age, than the QOLRS average of 271 deaths under 75 years of age per 100,000 population.
- Number of Live Births to Teen Mothers (15-19) years) per 1000 Females is lowest of all QOLRS communities at 4.2. Rate has decreased by more than 50% between 1991 and 2001, which is consistent with national trend.
- Male suicide rate is lowest rate amongst QOLRS communities at 7.2 per 100,000 Male Population - about half the QOLRS average. The rate, however, has increased by 1.6 percentage points, which is contrary to the overall QOLRS decreasing trend.
- Female suicide rate is 2nd lowest amongst QOLRS communities at 2.7 Female Suicides per 100,000 Female Population, and did not change between 1991 and 2001. York's rate is almost half the QOLRS average.
- Hours lost as a Percentage of Hours Worked due to illness or disability is 2nd lowest amongst QOLRS at 1.8%, but has increased similar to the national trend.
- Rate of Crimes Committed by Young Offenders has decreased as per national trend. York Region's rate in 2002 was 2,304 young offender charges per 100,000 youth population, which is 2nd lowest of all QOLRS communities and less than half the average rate for QOLRS communities.
- York Region has 3rd lowest Property Crime rate, next to Peel and Halton, at 2620 property crimes per 100,000. As per national trend, property crime rate has been on a downward trend since 1991, although recent York Regional Police statistics show slight increases between 2001 and 2003.
- Although Violent Crime rate is 2nd lowest, next to Halton, at 511 crimes per 100,000, the rate increased by 4.7% between 1996 and 2002.

Growth, the Economy and the Urban Environment³

Population and Household Growth

- York Region was the fastest growing municipality of all QOLRS Municipalities, both between 1991 and 1996 (17.3%) and between 1996 to 2001 (23.1%) at more than twice the average growth rate of QOLRS Municipalities
- Similarly, household growth in York Region was the greatest amongst all QOLRS Municipalities for both 5-year time periods, at 18.0% and 25.7%, respectively, compared to the QOLRS averages of 7.3% and 8.4% for both time periods
- The proportion of low density housing (detached, semi-detached and townhouse dwellings) as a percentage of all housing starts increased from 70.5% in 1991 to 93.5% in 2001 in York Region. Only two other QOLRS Municipalities, Sudbury and Niagara had a greater percentage of low density housing starts

Income and Economic Growth

- Between 1996 and 2001 York Region and Ottawa experienced the greatest growth in real value of building permits at 125.3%
- Between 1991 and 2001, York Region experienced the greatest employment growth rate of all QOLRS Municipalities. Between 1996 and 2001 the rate was 30.4%, more than twice the QOLRS average
- As per most QOLRS Municipalities, average household income decreased in York Region between 1990 and 1996 and then increased between 1996 and 2001 to \$76,109, the second highest of the 20 municipalities
- York Region experienced the greatest decrease in bankruptcy rates in both the 1991 to 1996 and 1996 to 2002 time periods. Bankruptcies declined by 38.5% between 1996 and 2002.

Municipal Solid Waste Management

- Between 1996 and 2001 York Region experienced a 16% decrease in solid waste collected – the second greatest decreases amongst QOLRS municipalities next to Vancouver
- The amount of solid residential waste recycled per capita as a percentage of total waste collected increased from 14.4% in 1996 to 18.0% in 2002, which is about average for the QOLRS municipalities for which this information is available.
- In 2002 York Region diverted 22.9% of its total waste, which is less than the 29.5% average for QOLRS Municipalities

Transportation and Air Quality

- In 2001, 9.4% of commuters used public transit as a mode of transportation. The average for all QOLRS Municipalities was 15.7%

³ Source: "Growth, the Economy and the Urban Environment", Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2005

- The proportion of commuters walking or cycling was 2.4% in 2001 – lower than the QOLRS average of 7.3%
- In 2001 the median commuting distance was 12.3 kilometres – higher than the Canadian average of 7.2
- The average Ozone concentration in York Region has increased from 24.6 in 1991 to 27.5 in 2001. The 2001 level was the second highest amongst QOLRS municipalities, next to Sudbury. The maximum acceptable level is 15.
- The number of smog alerts per year has generally been increasing, as per the national trend. In 2002 there were 9 smog alerts issued in York Region

Municipal Water Supply and Air Quality

- The percentage of the population not served by municipal water supply increased from 6.5% in 1991 to 9.1% in 1996 and declined in 1999 to 8.5%. The average QOLRS rate in 1999 was 2.4%.
- York Region's daily domestic water consumption has increased from 214 Litres per person per day in 1991 to 287 in 1999. The 1999 consumption rate is slightly higher than the QOLRS average of 278.
- The daily total water consumption increased in York Region from 278 litres per person per day to 422 in 1996 and then declined in 1999 to 415. York Region has consistently had a lower daily total water consumption rate than the QOLRS average.
- In York Region the percentage of the population served by water but not by sewers was 2.7%, slightly higher than the QOLRS average of 2.2%
- The percentage of the population served by sewers and not receiving Secondary or Tertiary treatment has been decreasing in York Region. The 1999 level of 11.8% was the 4th highest amongst QOLRS municipalities.
- In 2002, recreational water bodies were closed due to health regulation exceedances for 5 days, which is less than the QOLRS average of 13.5