



BACKGROUND APPENDICES TO ECONOMIC STRATEGY



JUNE 2005

A Vibrant
Economy



Background Appendices To Economic Strategy

June 2005

Appendix 1

Consultation Sessions

Schedule
Agendas
List of Participants
What Was Heard: A Summary

Background
Appendices
To Economic
Strategy

Schedule

Date	Consultation Session
November 12, 2003	Municipal Economic Development Partnership
November 18, 2003	Chambers of Commerce/Board of Trade
December 17, 2003	Provincial Government
January 14, 2004	Federal Government
January 20, 2004	Agricultural Advisory Liaison Group
January 22, 2004	Retail Sector
January 29, 2004	Business Services Sector
February 10, 2004	Tourism Sector
February 12, 2004	Manufacturing Sector
February 17, 2004	Multi-Cultural Sector
February 26, 2004	Technology Sector
April 7, 2004	Regional Council Workshop



Sustaining a Vibrant Economy

Economic Strategy Consultation Workshop with Municipal Economic
Development Partners

Wednesday November 12, 2003

1:00 p.m.

Seminar Room

Regional Administration Building
Newmarket, ON.

AGENDA

1. Introductions and Welcome
2. Overview of the Project : Guiding Principles and Background
3. Current Challenges and Opportunities (SWOT)
4. Discussion of Strategic Directions and Possible Action Area
5. Next Steps
6. Adjournment



Sustaining a Vibrant Economy

Economic Strategy Consultation Workshop with Area Chambers of
Commerce and Boards of Trade

Tuesday November 18, 2003

1:00 p.m.

Committee Room B

Regional Administration Building

Newmarket, ON.

AGENDA

1. Introductions and Welcome
2. Overview of the Project : Guiding Principles and Background
3. Future Economic Performance: Challenges and Opportunities
4. Discussion of Strategic Directions and Possible Action Area
5. Next Steps
6. Adjournment

Sustaining a Vibrant Economy

Economic Strategy Consultation with Provincial Economic Development
Partners

Wednesday December 17, 2003
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Ministry of Economic Development & Trade Office
Conference Room, 7th Floor
56 Wellesley Street, Toronto, ON.

AGENDA

1. Introductions and Welcome
2. Review of Current Economic Issues & Opportunities Facing York Region
3. Discussion:
 - How Can We Align Tactics for Global Competitiveness?
 - New Partnership Opportunities
4. Next Steps
5. Adjournment

Sustaining a Vibrant Economy

Economic Strategy Consultation with Federal Economic Development
Partners

Wednesday January 14, 2004
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

York Region South Services Centre
50 High Tech Road, Room #513
Richmond Hill, ON.

AGENDA

1. Introductions and Welcome
2. Review of Current Economic Issues & Opportunities Facing York Region
3. Discussion:
 - How Can We Align Tactics for Global Competitiveness?
 - New Partnership Opportunities
4. Next Steps
5. Adjournment

Agricultural Advisory Liaison Group Meeting

Committee Room B
York Region Administrative Centre
Ground Floor
17250 Yonge Street, Newmarket

January 20, 2004
7:00 – 9:30 P.M.

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Adoption of Minutes of October 27, 2003 (*attached*)
3. Business Arising from the Minutes
4. Economic Strategy Consultation
 - Update on the strategy development process
 - Consultation Session facilitated by Don Eastwood
5. GTA Agricultural Issues
 - Update on the GTA Agricultural Symposium (*GTA Agricultural Action Plan report attached*)
 - GTA Agricultural Profile Update (*GTA Agricultural Profile Update report attached*)
6. Membership
 - Nominations for second term
7. Other Business
8. Next Meeting

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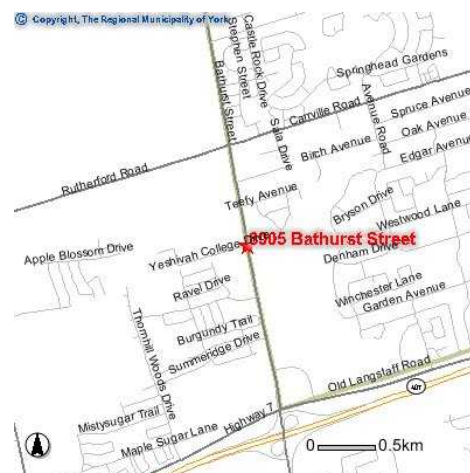
Retail Sector Workshop

Richmond Hill Country Club
8905 Bathurst Street, Richmond Hill

January 22, 2004
8:00 – 10:00 A.M.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Presentation
 - An Economic Snapshot of York Region
3. A Facilitated Discussion
 - Issues and Opportunities Facing Retailers in York Region
4. Next Steps
5. Adjournment



York Region

A Vibrant Economy



Business Services Sector Workshop

Richmond Hill Country Club
8905 Bathurst Street, Richmond Hill

January 29, 2004
8:00 – 10:00 A.M.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Presentation
 - An Economic Snapshot of York Region
3. A Facilitated Discussion
 - Issues and Opportunities Facing Business in York Region
 - How can the Region Assist Business?
4. Adjournment



A Vibrant Economy



Tourism Sector Workshop

Richmond Hill Country Club
8905 Bathurst Street, Richmond Hill

February 10, 2004
3:00 – 5:00 P.M.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Presentation
 - An Economic Snapshot of York Region
3. A Facilitated Discussion
 - Issues and Opportunities Facing Business in York Region
 - How Can We Make York Region Competitive?
4. Adjournment



A Vibrant Economy



Manufacturing Sector Workshop

Richmond Hill Country Club
8905 Bathurst Street, Richmond Hill

February 12, 2004
8:00 – 10:00 A.M.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Presentation
 - An Economic Snapshot of York Region
3. A Facilitated Discussion
 - Issues and Opportunities Facing Business in York Region
 - How Can We Make York Region Competitive?
4. Adjournment



A Vibrant Economy



Multicultural Business Workshop

Richmond Hill Country Club
8905 Bathurst Street, Richmond Hill

February 17, 2004
8:00 – 10:00 A.M.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Presentation
 - An Economic Snapshot of York Region
3. A Facilitated Discussion
 - Issues and Opportunities Facing Multicultural Businesses in York Region
 - How Can the Region Support and Build upon Skills and Experience?
4. Adjournment



York Region

A Vibrant Economy



Technology Industry Workshop

Innovation Synergy Centre in Markham
1380 Rodick Road, Markham

February 26, 2004
9:00 – 11:00 A.M.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Presentation
 - An Economic Snapshot of York Region
3. A Facilitated Discussion
 - Issues and Opportunities Facing the Technology Industry in York Region
 - How Can the Region Support the Industry to be More Competitive?
4. Adjournment



A Vibrant Economy



Economic Strategy Workshop With Regional Council

April 7, 2004
1:30 p.m.
Committee Room A
Regional Administration Centre

AGENDA

1. Introduction of Facilitator: Glenn Miller
2. What Was Heard: Results of the Consultations (PowerPoint presentation by Don Eastwood)
3. Discussion of Emerging Themes and Possible Action Plans:
 - Are theme areas appropriate ones for the Region?
 - Do Action Plans support Regional and Area Municipal program goals?
 - Opportunities for partnership and leverage
 - Priorities for implementation
4. Next Steps: Economic Strategy Forum, May 11, 2004
5. Adjourn



List of Participants

Municipal Economic Development Partnership

Name	Municipality
Dino Lombardi	Town of Aurora
Ruth Coursey	Town of East Gwillimbury
Harold Lenters	Town of Georgina
Kim Morton	Town of Georgina
Bob Casselman	Township of King
Stephen Chait	Town of Markham
Susan Plamondon	Town of Newmarket
John Meakes	Town of Richmond Hill
Emilia Valentini	City of Vaughan
Eric Lismanis	Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

Chambers of Commerce/Board of Trade

Name	Chamber of Commerce/Board of Trade
Steve Forsey	Aurora Chamber of Commerce
Dave Caswell	East Gwillimbury Chamber of Commerce
Daniel Girard	Georgina Chamber of Commerce
Don Fenn	King City Chamber of Commerce
Terry Carter	Newmarket Chamber of Commerce
Daniel Gilbert	Nobleton Chamber of Commerce
Leslie Walker	Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce
Anne Jessop	Schomberg Chamber of Commerce
Paul Bradbury	Vaughan Chamber of Commerce

Provincial Government

Name	Provincial Ministry
Ian Bromley	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Urban Economic Development
Chris Burke	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Urban Economic Development
Mike Church	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Field Services
Malka Lewittes	Ontario Technology Secretariat
Chantal Ramsay	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Business Immigration
Allan Rimmington	Ministry of Tourism and Recreation
Rifky Rosensweig	Ontario Training Colleges & Universities
Debbie Walker	Ontario Exports Inc.
Greg Wootton	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, International Investment Services

Federal Government

Name	Federal Department
Joe Carelli	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Angelo Delduca	NRC/IRAP
Kathy Garvey	Human Resources Development Canada
Stacey Morning	Human Resources Development Canada

Agricultural Advisory Liaison Group

Name	Organization
Mayor Margaret Black	Township of King
Judy Coward	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food
Don Fieldhouse	York Federation of Agriculture
Gary Johnson	Citizen-at-large representative
Hugh Mitchell	York Region Soil & Crop Improvement Association
Bill Moyer	Town of Whitchurch Stouffville
Allen Oldham	York Region Pork Producers Association
Jim Sellers	York Region Cattlemen's Association
Carl Wierenga	York Federation of Agriculture

Retail Sector

Name	Organization
Gary Brooks	Schomberg IGA
Michael Claener	Claener Enterprises Inc.
Greg Foster	M & M Meat Shops
Brian Johns	Vince's Country Market
Wilbert Lai	Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs
Tom Lachapelle	Sam's Club
Peter Mertens	NDCC Main Street Newmarket
Ornella Richichi	First Pro Shopping Centres
Maxine Share-Strom	Contents Unlimited
Gil Small	Upper Canada Mall
Serge Sotoadeh	Lexus of Richmond Hill
Dave Vanderkuyl	Sam's Club
Gordon Wilson	Wilson Niblett Motors Limited

Business Services Sector

Name	Organization
Mohammad Ashraf	BDO Dunwoody LLP
Peter Budreo	South Lake Futures Community Corp.
Glenn Crosby	J.J. Barnicke
Robin Hill	TD Bank Financial
Andrew Hutton	Napier Reid Ltd.
Valerie Kates	CDI College of Business & Technology
Darlene Klemchuck	Adecco Financial
Lenard Lind	LH Lind Realty Inc.
Glenn Lott	Glenn D Lott Chartered Accountant
Ralph Morley	Morley Sanderson & Millard
Brian North	The Ellis Studios Limited
Diane Santo	Marshall, Macklin, Monaghan
Michael Saunders	XGenSoft
Dean Smalley	A & B Courier
Catherine Turner	Job Skills Ontario
Debra Weller	York Region Newspaper Group

Tourism Sector

Name	Organization
Richard Arnold	Baldwins Steak & Seafood
Jennifer Best	Dave and Busters Toronto
Dorie Billich	Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum
Catherine Campbell	MCZCR
Cathy Chiappetta	Southbrook Farms Ltd.
Karen Dempster	Resurgence Theatre/Opera York
Bob Farrow	MCZCR
Joanne Gellatly	Sheraton Parkway Hotel Toronto North
John Gilbank	Jacksons Landing B & B
Virginia Hackson	Artslink
Chris Hales	Radisson Hotel
Ken LaCroix	Sibbald Point Provincial Park
Daniel Mathew	Hilton Suites Toronto Markham
Cathy Molloy	Markham Museum
Iain Newbiggin	McMichael Canadian Art Collection
Mary Patrick	Dave and Busters Toronto
Dave Phillips	Paramount Canada's Wonderland
Tom Price	Independent
John Ryerson	Varley Gallery
Cynthia Young	Magnotta Winery

Manufacturing Sector

Name	Organization
Brian Butler	Butler and Baird Lumber Ltd.
Vern Cunningham	Alutron Modules Inc.
Walter Ferri	Windspec Inc.
Frank Giorgio	Avant Imaging & Information Group
Matthew Grossman	The Windsor Workshop
Kam Ko	Kobo-Tec Ltd.
Gene Lai	Steelcase Canada Ltd.
Mirek Macecek	Techno Scientific
Paul Manners	Tesma International Inc.
David McFarlane	Normerica Authentic Post & Beam Homes
Perry Rizzo	Axiom Group
Ray Simmons	Cable Test

Multi-cultural Sector

Name	Organization
Nirmala Bala	Hashimi Associates
Joseph Civitella	CIBPA Canadian Italian Business & Professional Association of Toronto
Shahid Hashmi	Canada Pakistan Chamber of Commerce
Surindar Jill	COSTI Employment Services, York Region
Sy Kazemi	Canada-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce
Wilbert Lai	Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs
Cathy Leung-Rosnuk	Asian Business Network Association
Ken Ng	FCCM Federation of Chinese Canadians in Markham
Patricia Robinson	York Neighbourhood Services
Adam Sorrenti	DSP Chartered Accountant
Karim Tahir	Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam (Ont.) Inc.
Grace Tallar	COSTI Employment Services, York Region
Fred Valozzi	Impact North
Daisy Wai	Richmond Hill & Markham Chinese Business Association

Technology Sector

Name	Organization
Doug Beynon	Unisearch Associates Inc.
Stephen Chait	Town of Markham
Warren Eberlin	Lucent Technologies
Bob Glandfield	Innovation Synergy Centre in Markham
Kevin Jackson	Biz-Zone Internet Group Inc.
Susan Lawton	IBM Canada Ltd.
Doug McIntyre	York Technology Association
Wayne Thomas	Dapasoft

What Was Heard: A Summary

Transit and Transportation

- Transportation is the second biggest problem for business.
- Congestion is a huge issue for the movement of good and people north of Steeles Avenue.
- Need to foster new business development in smaller communities to alleviate north/south traffic congestion.
- Need to plan, improve and co-ordinate an overall geographic transit structure well into the future.
- The Region should focus on road improvements and incentives to build rapid transit.
- Need to improve the transportation grid to be more conducive to shipping from north to south.
- Consideration should be given to extending the subway north of Finch Avenue.
- Extension of Highway 404 is a priority.
- There should be more GO trains to service the north part of the Region and Barrie.
- Need to utilize rail lines better, e.g. consider expanding the Uxbridge/Stouffville train line, and develop a rail link to reach the South Simcoe area.
- Need a co-ordinated and integrated inter-regional transportation service and transportation policy.
- Need to improve local transit systems and access to transit connections to industrial areas and work locations, particularly in the northern part of the Region.
- Regional transit schedules and interchanges need to meet the requirements of workers and residents.
- Consideration should be given to running smaller, more frequent buses throughout the Region.
- Transit needs to be more convenient, affordable, accessible and frequent throughout the day.
- Need to promote the use of transit to young people and immigrants.
- Improve transit route literature and disseminate transit information in an easily accessed and more user-friendly format for youth, immigrants, the elderly and visitors.
- Alternative modes of transportation such as bicycles need to be encouraged.
- Need to create a one-token or a single fare system between Toronto and the Region.
- Need to reassess traffic in big box retail areas that are creating traffic jams in parts of the Region.

Housing

- Housing affordability is a huge issue for employers in the Region.
- Employers need to drive the demand for affordable housing.
- Need to stimulate and market rental housing.
- The priority is getting housing closer to where people work.
- Need affordable housing for seniors and young people who are just getting started.

Planning and Infrastructure

- Need to co-ordinate urban design with future needs of employers.
- Better co-ordination of planning between municipalities is needed.
- Infrastructure and transit need to be in place before development.
- Need to intensify land use in Centres and Corridors to match employer requirements.
- Need to rethink regional standards, e.g. parking requirements.
- Municipalities are running out of land with which to attract new industry.
- Need to get all levels of government involved to build infrastructure.
- The Region should communicate the need for infrastructure to senior levels of government and encourage the private sector to partner in solving problems.
- The installation of communications infrastructure should be co-ordinated with other services and transit/transportation infrastructure.

Development

- There should be community involvement in the development process.
- Create opportunities for a balanced land use mix.
- Need to enforce guidelines for developers to ensure better urban design.
- Municipal regulations need to be supportive of retail business and expansion.
- Address issues at the local level, e.g. the proposed Centres and Corridors will not have a significant impact on the outlying areas.
- There are different issues facing business in the north and south end of Region, need to focus on finding appropriate solutions.

Employment and Labour Force

- Dispersed employment is a significant planning issue in the Region, e.g. manufacturing plants need to be located near to housing and labour.
- Need to address the lack of a critical mass of skilled workers such as welders, furniture makers, tool and dye makers, as well as sales personnel.
- Assist companies to attract the talent pool south of Steeles Avenue by improving housing and transportation options.
- Need to create an environment and a culture that supports workforce development.
- Create networks to facilitate matching between employers and the workforce.
- Need to establish a central regional information resource centre to provide information on employment opportunities and resources, business directory, assistance programs, and outsourcing of employees.
- Human resource organizations should be more supportive of the efforts of newly established businesses to find new employees.
- Need to create a directory of talent and professionals seeking work and make it available to all employers.
- Promote and assist companies in the use of recruitment websites.
- Need to understand the changing attitudes and perceptions of young workers in order to retain them in the Region.
- Need to attract businesses that would employ a large number of workers in order to keep local talents within the community.
- Employment is tied to infrastructure, especially in the northern parts of the Region.
- Need to support the quality of life of a variety of wage earners.

Skills, Education and Training

- Education and business need to partner and co-operate to develop and promote apprenticeship programs.
- Look at different apprenticeship models in other jurisdictions such as in Europe where companies must commit funding for apprenticeship programs and training.
- Boards of education, business and government need to work together to promote the advantages of a “blue collar” lifestyle and change the perception of the blue collar worker.
- School boards and colleges need to re-initiate trades courses such as welding, mechanics and carpentry.
- Promote the trades, apprenticeships and agriculture as careers of choice for young people.
- Education should reflect the needs of the workplace.
- The Region should confer with school boards, colleges and universities to ensure that the curriculum and training opportunities reflect the needs of business.
- Motivate and retain students in school/work environments particularly in the northern part of the Region.
- Need to keep the Region’s youth in school, engaged and informed.
- Educate companies to support student on-the-job certification requirements.
- Develop retraining initiatives for the middle-aged and seniors who are rejoining the workforce.
- Training agencies and the community need to communicate more effectively.
- Need to attract post-secondary education institutions, i.e. colleges and universities, to the Region.
- Need to look into training sites for specific apprenticeship programs.

Immigrant Issues

- Manufacturers need to embrace the opportunities that talented and skilled new immigrants can create.
- Need to have a new and more effective method of measuring the skills of new immigrants, such as prior learning assessment.
- Language barrier, accreditation, transit, affordable housing and prior Canadian experience are some of the barriers facing immigrants in seeking employment.
- York Region should lobby professional associations, such as PEO, to replace the requirement for Canadian experience with professional experience.
- Need to have an information centre where immigrants will feel welcomed, and where they can have their credentials recognized.
- Employers need to recognize that immigrants are a good source of skilled labour.
- The Region, employers and educational institutions need to provide accurate, readily accessible information on the reality of living and working in York Region.
- Need to create multicultural areas in a variety of locations.
- Establish a high level of social support services for new immigrants, e.g. schools, clinics, ESL classes, day care, etc.
- Assist immigrants in locating job opportunities that are in their area of expertise.
- Dialogue with government agencies to assist immigrants and help them integrate with the community.
- York Region can work with Chambers of Commerce and their members to initiate internships or part-time job programs for immigrants.
- Make immigrant entrepreneurs aware of export programs and financing opportunities that are available.
- There should be a directory of recently arrived professionals and trades people which employers can access to match their requirements with that of the talents that are available.
- York Region should take advantage of the Business Immigration Program to attract business immigrants.
- Work more closely with Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) who have significant programs (e.g. Career Bridge) in place and act as a strong voice for immigrants.
- Create an open environment for entrepreneurial immigrants.

Business Support and Access to Capital

- Technology is important for business to remain competitive.
- The Region should ensure that innovation is a focus and bring technology to the table, build on innovation aspects that have already been established, e.g. Biotechnology Cluster.
- Leverage high tech companies to assist local business.
- Identify and build on the Region's strong industry sectors.
- Identify the Region's exporters and their markets.
- Work with senior governments to develop the export capability of local companies, and expand global reach to manufacturers who currently only serve the U.S. market.
- Work more closely with Canada-Ontario Export Forum.
- Border delays are an issue for exporters.
- Need co-ordination and co-operation among Small Business Enterprise Centres to increase their collective profile and leverage funding sources.
- Assist business in accessing capital - need for a clearing house or a list of investors that can be drawn on for investment options.
- Explore the possibility of setting up a business incubator for new and immigrant entrepreneurs.
- Assist companies to consider sourcing amongst themselves to remain sustainable.
- Small towns need to evolve to more diverse business communities while still maintaining a vibrant main street.
- Promote youth entrepreneurs to become catalysts for change.
- Prepare for business loss through unexpected events such as SAR and the blackout.

Costs and Regulations

- The tax base needs to be carefully reviewed.
- High Development Charges will affect decisions to invest in York Region.
- High costs of doing business (e.g. high wages and rent, increasing hydro rates, rising insurance costs, gas, etc.) are impacting business.
- Sign By-laws are restrictive and prohibitive, and other requirements such as set backs, trees and fencing are discouraging business to expand and open in York Region.

Broadband and Electronic Infrastructure

- Broadband is a basic major infrastructure for business.
- High-speed data communication could alleviate housing, health care and transportation issues by reducing the overall costs of infrastructure and commuting.
- Government should provide the climate for the provision of electronic infrastructure.
- Need to improve the service gaps that currently exist in the outlying communities.
- Seek out Federal and Provincial tax incentives to enhance broadband capabilities within the Region.
- Need to consolidate and unify long distance telephone service within the Region.

Government

- More co-ordinated efforts and consistency are needed between different levels of government.
- The Region should work collaboratively with the municipalities.
- There should be a willingness on the part of government to understand what drives business.
- Create stronger partnerships with the Province.
- Educate residents on the uniqueness of York Region and the role of Regional government.

Agriculture

- Secure senior government support and participation in the GTA Agricultural Action Plan.
- There should be a forum to support the local farming community where farmers can meet and be informed of what is going on.
- Lobby the Province to reinstate local agricultural representatives in the GTA.
- Need to provide funding assistance for farmers for the implementation of the Nutrient Management Act and Regulations.
- Consideration should be given to waive Development Charges for farms.

Environment

- Need stringent environmental laws to deal with the fast pace of growth.
- Work towards “build up and not out” to ease on traffic and protect the environment.
- Need to promote and retain the natural environment as a resource.

Information, Communication and Networking

- It is difficult for business to navigate through the maze of government to find out who does what.
- Need for a Regional representative to meet regularly with community economic partners and cultural associations to obtain their feedback and input.
- Create ongoing networking opportunities for agriculture, tourism and business groups.
- Differences between the north and south of the Region need to be addressed.
- Establish communication and co-operation between cultural and business partners to create tolerance, promote internships, mentoring and language programs.
- There is need for an inter-cultural association to facilitate bringing people together and creating better synergy.
- Communication between elected officials and Chambers of Commerce/Board of Trade must be improved in order to put vision and business needs together.
- Need to improve communication between elected officials and residents.
- Multi-tiered government agencies must make access to information easier and less complicated.
- Need to share funding sources and services that are available to business.
- There should be a central repository to assist manufacturers on sourcing sub-contracts.
- Consider promoting the start up of Junior Chambers of Commerce.
- The Region needs to provide the best research and data available to the municipalities and Chambers of Commerce.

Marketing and Promotion

- Assertively promote and market the uniqueness of York Region’s businesses, tourism and agriculture.
- Regional staff and politicians need to champion and actively promote the Region.
- Develop an identifiable branding for York Region to attract people and business.
- Need a new image to market the Region effectively.
- Promote York Region as the “living experiment in creating high quality communities”.
- Need to promote the Region as a whole - its image and inherited legacies, both natural and man made.
- Promote the Region as a good place for entrepreneurs.
- Embrace tourism as a viable part of economic development.
- Create cultural, heritage and experiential tourism opportunities for seniors.
- Promote York Region’s cultural diversity as a competitive advantage.

Quality of Life and Tourism

- It is important for the Region to offer quality housing, quality environment and quality work.
- Need to work on quality of life issues.
- Reinforce the sense of pride in communities.
- It is important for some communities to retain their small town environment.
- Address the personal as well as the business needs of a community.
- Need government assistance to create a regional tourism/recreation complex - a facility to attract athletics and events allowing visitors to stay in York Region for entertainment.
- People are making decisions based on quality of life choices.
- Need government assistance to create tourism programs.
- Identify how the Region can develop a stronger alliance and complement the efforts of Toronto Tourism.

Appendix 2

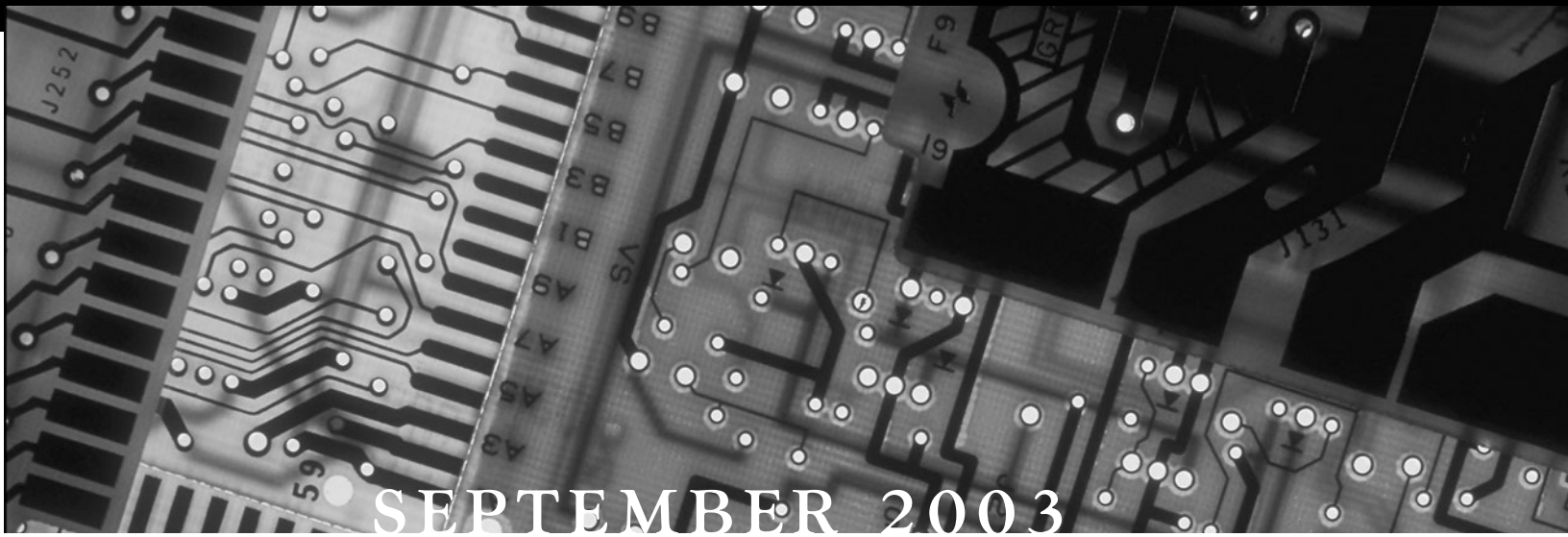
Background Papers

Discussion Paper
Backgrounder

Background
Appendices
To Economic
Strategy

HOW CAN WE SUSTAIN A VIBRANT ECONOMY?

A Discussion Paper



SEPTEMBER 2003

In 2026 York Region will be renowned for its advanced technology, innovative businesses, supportive business infrastructure and highly skilled resident workforce (Vision 2026)



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NEW ECONOMY: NEW ROLES

York Region is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada. The economic health of the Region is driven by a number of factors that will impact our collective 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. The growth and change in York Region's economy over the last few years begs the following questions:

- How will the Region's economy change in the next few years?
- What are the things that need to be done to ensure we can encourage innovation, attract new investment and foster new job creation?
- What's in this for me? Why should I get involved?
- Who should be responsible and accountable for funding, for delivering and for measuring new economic development programs?
- What is the role of the Regional Municipality of York in sustaining a vibrant economy and meeting the economic goals of Vision 2026?

THE PURPOSE OF THIS DISCUSSION PAPER

This paper has been prepared to spark discussion amongst key business and economic stakeholders in York Region, citizens and elected officials about the following:

- Key economic factors affecting York's economy in the future
- To provide information on the Region's strengths and successes
- To explore our weaknesses and issues which need to be addressed
- To define the role for the Region and identify key action areas
- To begin a discussion about new partnerships

Help us to create an action plan that will keep York Region's Economy strong.

WHY DEVELOP AN ECONOMIC STRATEGY?

The Region's past record of success in attracting economic growth cannot be taken for granted. An evolving role for the Regional Municipality of York is required to achieve our long term vision and create future opportunities. The process to develop a new economic strategy for the Region will do the following:

- Develop a better understanding of the Region's economy in order to help manage and sustain economic prosperity
- Chart the relationships and linkages with other key economic stakeholders
- Build on the strengths of the Regional Municipality of York
- Identify clear action areas and roles that will keep our economy strong

FUTURE TRENDS THAT WILL SHAPE THE REGION

The Region's strong and diverse economy has fuelled strong employment growth to date but it is timely to examine the collective impacts of the following trends to better understand the Region's economy.

Continued High Population and Growth

York Region will continue to grow at a rapid rate. By 2026, the population of the Region is forecast to be 1.28 million, up from 840,000 in mid 2003. This growth has historically been driven by York's proximity to the City of Toronto, an efficient transportation network and a high quality of life.

Strong Economic and Employment Growth

Over the past few years York Region's rate of employment growth has exceeded the rate of population growth. A burgeoning technology cluster and robust growth of many new small enterprises in a diverse range of industries has created many new jobs and a demand for new skilled workers. A key challenge will be maintaining the business environment to create employment opportunities in line with population growth. The attraction of skilled workers is a significant issue for business.

Impact of Global Economic Trends

The Region's economy is becoming more integrated with the global economy. No longer dependent on domestic markets alone, York Region businesses compete internationally for market share, for investment and for skilled workers. Accompanying this trend is the increasing dependence on technology to stay competitive. Around the clock financial trading, managing international supply chains and the instantaneous flow of news and information are all preconditions for a heightened level of global economic integration. This has implications for the evolution of York Region's economy as it becomes more efficient, but also more vulnerable to international events.

Aging Population

As the baby boom generation gets older and moves into retirement, there will be increased pressures on business to recruit and train workers with the necessary skills. These demographic impacts will have implications for businesses as well as the health care, education, housing and community services sectors.

Increasing Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

The Region's strong economic performance and its proximity to Toronto will continue to draw more immigrants into York Region. The increased ethnic and cultural diversity will bring new market opportunities and place new and different demands on service providers.

Increased Public Awareness of Congestion and Growth

The rapid growth of York Region has generated increased traffic congestion and concern about the quality of the environment. The increased volumes of traffic on the Region's roads slow the movement of goods and people into and out of the Region. As the Region undergoes change, so does public expectation about the need to retain quality of life, manage growth and provide public services to meet this growth.





2026 Vision

YORK REGION HAS A LONG TERM VISION

Approved by Regional Council in 2002 after extensive public consultation and research, Vision 2026 outlines the key areas of focus for the Region and its partners for the future. Vision 2026 is an overall blueprint for York. It sets a context and provides a framework for more detailed corporate and multi-year business that will be undertaken by the Region

Vision 2026 has eight goal areas:

- **Quality Communities for A Diverse Population**
- **Enhanced Environment, Heritage and Culture**
- **A Vibrant Economy**
- **Responding to the Needs of Residents**
- **Housing Choices for Residents**
- **Managed and Balanced Growth**
- **Infrastructure for a Growing Region**
- **Engaged Communities and a Responsive 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."

Vision 2026 sets out three broad action areas within the area of economic vibrancy.

Attracting and Supporting Business

- Supporting business start ups, and the incubation and expansion
- Encouraging revitalisation of established business areas
- Partnering with area municipalities and GTA neighbours to promote economic development
- Promoting tourism
- Fostering networking between businesses
- Increasing business awareness of Regional services
- Supporting efficient goods movement
- Building more global awareness of the Region's attractions to live work and play and learn

Encouraging Continual Learning

- Developing life-long learning opportunities and learning options for residents
- Encouraging more accessible post-secondary opportunities for residents
- Identifying workforce and educational needs in partnership with business and education providers
- Developing public awareness of conservation programs

Promoting and Supporting Innovation

- Promoting shared technology infrastructure
- Facilitating job creation in designated employment areas
- Encouraging broad public access to the Internet

Vision 2026 sets out an important role for the Region to act in partnership with the area municipalities and neighbouring regions in the GTA to seek better understanding of how York Region's economy works, and to create more detailed plans and programs to help sustain economic vitality.



SUSTAINING A VIBRANT ECONOMY



THE REGION'S OFFICIAL PLAN SUPPORTS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Regional Official Plan was adopted by Regional Council in 1994 and establishes a goal of economic vitality as one of the three cornerstones of the Plan. 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 Development Goal of the Official Plan is:

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

The more detailed objectives flowing from this policy goal identifies a role for the Regional Municipality of York to work with the Area municipalities in creating a land use plan that sustains York Region as a location for new business investment and support business expansion and employment.

SENIOR GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT WILL BE IMPORTANT

York Region's actions to strengthen its economy need to be integrated with programs of other levels of government.

- The Federal Government's "Innovation Strategy" which involves Human Resources Development Canada and Industry Canada addresses community initiatives to ensure 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 Road Map to Prosperity set out a long-term economic strategy for the Province in 1999. More recently the Ontario Government Task Force on Competitiveness, Prosperity and Economic Progress has issued four Reports from the Ontario Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity. These reports provide a framework to better understand the economic performance and future competitive position of the regional economies within Ontario.

An Economic Strategy at the Regional level must be built on the policy framework set out by senior level governments and also establish a basis for partnerships to access funding and support for economic initiatives. The support of HRDC, and Industry Canada, as well as the Provincial Ministries of Agriculture, Enterprise Opportunity and Innovation, Colleges and Universities and Municipal Affairs and a number of others have all been instrumental in past regional programs.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

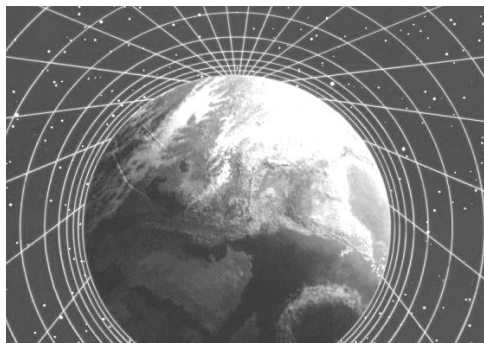
There are many factors that affect the future course of York Region's economy. The experience of other successful high growth regions such as the Silicon Valley or the Research Triangle in South Carolina demonstrates that building upon core assets such as the talent of the workforce, the technology pool and capital and infrastructure are key to improving innovation. Economic growth also comes from reducing barriers to interaction through improvements to networks and relationships between individuals and organizations.

The economic competitiveness of a region depends upon its underlying social health, including the quality of its education, the affordability of its housing and the opportunities for creative employment and advancement of its people.



Not all of these factors can be influenced by the Region or any other individual organization, but the chart indicates the realm of partnerships and working relationships that have to be addressed to create long term economic success.

The process of developing an economic strategy for York Region will help to understand and address the areas of strength and relative weakness of the Region's economy. It will uncover opportunities for future involvement and initiatives that are aligned with the future needs of the Region and its economic partners.



WHAT ARE THE TRENDS AND ISSUES THAT AFFECT THE REGION'S ECONOMY?

A range of global business trends and issues will impact on the Region's efforts to sustain economic vitality.

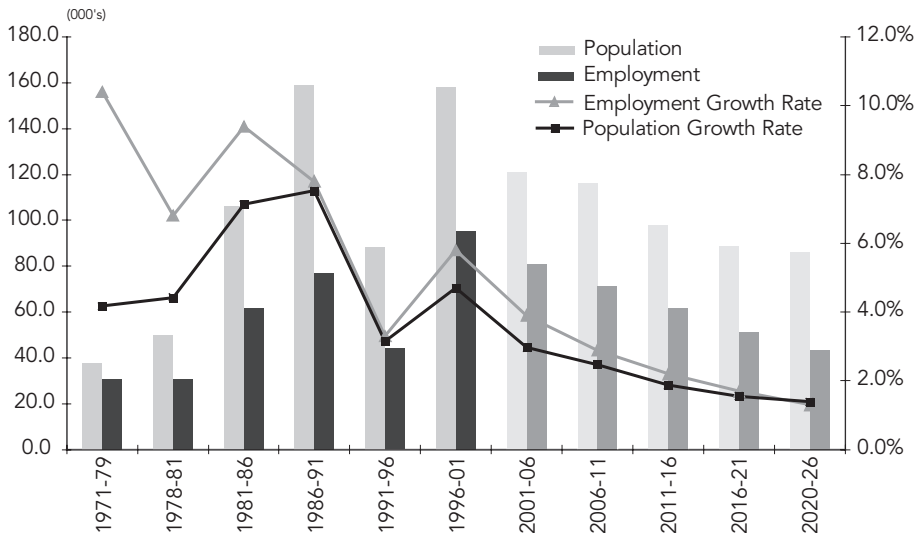
- The globalization of the economy means that York Region competes on a world-wide basis for new investment, new talent and new technology.
- The trend towards a highly skilled and knowledge-based economy and the shift of manufacturing jobs to countries with lower wages.
- The economic uncertainty and trade disruption caused by terrorist attacks, wars and political unrest and the impact of infectious disease outbreaks such as SARS which has severely impacted tourism.
- The volatility of the technology sector and its impact on employment and investment.
- Corporations are seeking greenfield sites in areas of lower labour costs but demand state of the art servicing, transportation and communications infrastructure leading to pressures at the edge of the urban envelope.
- Availability of skilled labour is the number one priority of companies seeking to relocate.
- Federal and provincial deficit reduction has caused major shifts and downloading onto the local property tax base.
- Deregulation and privatization initiatives have had mixed success. In some cases they have triggered significant cost increases for business and consumers.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT YORK REGION'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE?

In spite of the global and national trends, York Region continues to demonstrate one of the most robust and resilient economies in Canada.

- Employment growth continues to outpace population growth. Since 1971, employment in York Region has grown at a faster rate than population. At the end of 2002, approximately 405,000 people were working at 25,000 businesses in York Region.
- Most of these jobs are located in southern York Region. While all of the municipalities within York Region experienced job growth, the three municipalities of Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan accounted for almost 73% of the jobs in York Region.
- A higher proportion of the labour force is working in York Region. The participation rate (the total number of people working as a percentage of the working age population) was 71.3% which is higher than Ontario's (67.3%) or Canada's (66.4%) participation rates.

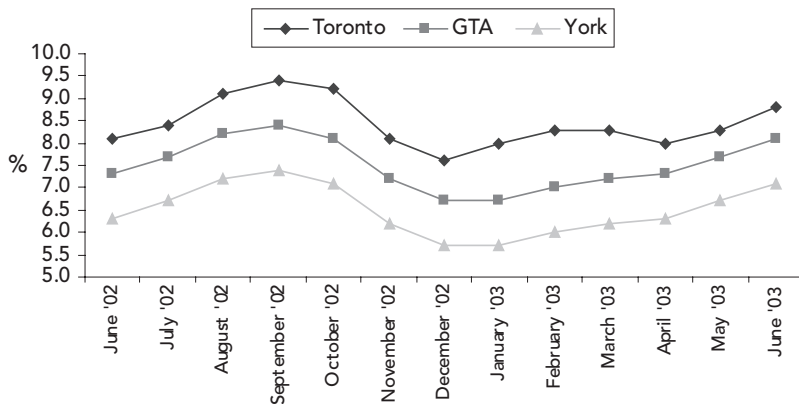
Population and Employment Growth, York Region, 1971-2026



Source: York Region Planning & Development Services Department

- York Region's share of total employment within Greater Toronto Area is 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 York Region as a location for new business.
- Full time employment accounts for the majority of jobs. This reflects the overall health of the York Region labour market with growth amongst full time and part time workers occurring at a similar rate. This is encouraging because full time work is generally higher paying and more stable than part-time employment.
- The Region's labour force has a higher than average education and more college and university graduates than the Ontario or Canadian average. This is a key reason for the emergence of a strong and diverse manufacturing and technology industrial base.

Unemployment Rates June 2002- June 2003



Source: Toronto Economic Development Division, Toronto Economic Indicators, 2001 and 2002
Note: York Region unemployment figures are estimates.

- Manufacturing is still a primary source of employment in the Region but retail trade and business services are the fastest growing segments of the economy. An analysis of the employment areas of the Region in 2002 indicates that manufacturing provides 31.2% of employment but that retail employment grew by 32.2% since 1998 and business services employment grew by 22.9%.

- Financial services
- Automotive
- Biomedical and biotechnology
- Food and beverage
- Business and professional services
- Information and communication

Sector	1998 (%)	2002 (%)
GOODS-PRODUCING		
Primary	38	37
Utilities	1	1
Construction	6	6
Manufacturing	32	31
SERVICES-PRODUCING		
Wholesale Trade	14	12
Retail Trade	6	8
Transportation/Warehousing	3	3
F.I.R.E.	5	6
Business Services	16	17
Education	2	2
Health Care & Social Assistance	2	3
Personal Services	13	13
Public Administration	1	1

Source: York Region Planning & Development Services Department

Current trends indicate that employment growth in York Region is exceeding both the provincial and national rate of job creation. By 2026, the Region is forecast to have almost 700,000 jobs. This will pose long term challenges from the standpoint of providing the infrastructure to move people and goods throughout the Region, and also from the standpoint of providing the range of housing and other services that these new workers will demand.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS?

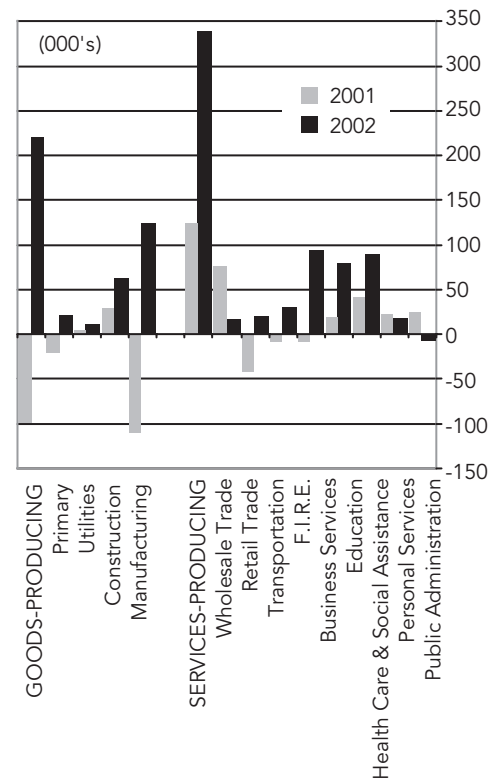
Many other regions across Canada and the United States are working collaboratively to build partnerships that address economic challenges, to promote innovation and skills development and encourage economic diversification. Good examples include:

- **Ottawa:** The Ottawa Partnership (TOP) is the leading economic development steward for the newly amalgamated City of Ottawa and includes the participation of the City's economic development agency, the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation, major employers, chambers of commerce and education. A key focus is the detailed profiling of the labour force into nine workforce related dimensions.
- **Canada's Technology Triangle:** is a collaborative marketing initiative of the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge and the Regional Municipality of Waterloo which has brought together area universities, local companies, the technology community (CTTAN and Communitech) to foster technology spin-off and new enterprise creation and labor market development.
- **The Greater Halifax Partnership:** established primarily to address the economic downturn of a maritime based economy, the GHP has brought consensus to create new technology clusters and overcome the negative effects of intermunicipal competition.
- **Portland:** known for its comprehensive approach to land use planning, Portland has also developed a creative strategy to applying the Internet to community building in less-advantaged segments of the community. Portland has also established a dynamic economic cluster known as the Silicon Forest in the absence of a major technology research institution.
- **Silicon Valley:** widely recognized as the world's leading and archetypal technology cluster, Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network is a regional organization that has developed a strategy to encourage a "habitat for innovation" and recover from the tech industry downturn.

The common themes of economic development that emerge from a review of these and other successful high tech or high growth jurisdictions are:

- New public-private partnerships or organizations have emerged
- Resources are shared and leveraged by the partners
- Networks develop across business community and sectoral lines that create inclusivity.

**Employment Growth by Industry,
Canada, 2001-2002**



Trade: Retail & wholesale trade.

F.I.R.E.: Finance, insurance, real estate & leasing.

Business Services: Professional, Scientific & Technical Services and

Management, Administration and Other Support Services.

Misc. Services: Information, Culture & Recreation; Accommodation &

Food Services; and Other Services.

Note: Data are seasonally adjusted at annual rates.

Source: Statistics Canada

ASSESSING YORK REGION'S FUTURE ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Ontario Competitive Cities Regions Symposium

In May 2002, the Regional Municipality of York, in partnership with the Public and Catholic School Boards of York Region, the National Research Council, Seneca College, York University, the York Technology Association, Human Resources Development Canada and the Canadian Urban Institute, hosted a one day Symposium in Richmond Hill.

The title of the Symposium was *"Brain Gain or Brain Dead; The Imperative of Growing the Knowledge Base of York Region"*.

The objectives of the day long session were to identify the gaps, needs and competitive factors affecting the supply and demand of knowledge workers; and to propose action strategies to attract, retain and re-energize the knowledge workforce in the Region. The Symposium forum brought perspectives from industry, academe and government on the issue of building Smart Communities and Smart Worker. About 70 participants from the private and public sectors participated in the OCCR Symposium to share their views and exchange ideas with each other. Companies such as IBM, Magna International, Kelly Employment Services, and iTrans were among the participants from the business sector. There were a number of key issues and lessons learned from the day's proceedings.

- There is an ongoing imbalance between supply and demand for highly skilled knowledge workers
- Attracting and keeping these 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

In the Fall of 2002, Regional staff retained the firm of GPA/ Advisory Services to undertake an assessment of York Region's competitive position, relative to other jurisdictions, in attracting new business investment.

A Competitive Assessment of York Region examined the comparative performance of York Region by first looking at the GTA relative to other international jurisdictions, then determining the competitive position of York Region with respect to neighbouring regions in the GTA. As a final component, a series of interviews with company executives was conducted to validate the findings and to get a private sector perspective on the role of the Regional Municipality of York in economic development.

The Study found that York Region compares favourably to other jurisdictions in attracting new and expanded business investment. The Region's success in attracting new corporate investment were attributed primarily to:

- Skills and availability of the labour force
- Availability of land for construction/expansion
- Competitive costs of doing business
- Proximity to the GTA
- Transportation and servicing infrastructure

However, the executives surveyed during the study identified key issues that will impact York Region's ability to sustain its success in supporting continued business growth.

- Labour shortages in key skills areas that will drive the need for recruitment and retraining initiatives;
- Transit and transportation must be provided in a different, more innovative way to meet workforce needs;
- The availability of diverse and affordable housing choices will directly affect the retention of workers;
- Encouraging better information sharing networks to encourage innovation and continued business expansion

These two initiatives underscored the need to better understand the complex interplay of variables that will affect business and their ability to expand and provide jobs into the future.

REGIONAL INITIATIVES THAT ADDRESS KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES FOR BUSINESS

York Region has established clear strategic direction and goals for the delivery of services and the development of infrastructure to meet future growth demands and support economic development.

Here are some of the major initiatives that address the key issues identified in *The Competitive Assessment*

Transit

The York Region Transportation Master Plan identifies a 30 year capital plan for the development of Region-wide transit system that is integrated with other systems within the GTA.

The York Region Rapid Transit Plan (YRTP) is a public private partnership that will serve the four major regional centres identified in the Regional Official Plan and link to neighbouring transit systems. YRTP has put in place a \$150 million Quick Start plan with funding from the Province of Ontario, the Government of Canada and Regional Council to fund the first phase of the system by 2004.

In addition to the development of new infrastructure, York Region Transit is co-operating in a Smart Commute Initiative as a joint GTA project under the Federal government's Urban transportation showcase program. This includes programs for ride-matching, van and car-pooling and the establishment of additional Transportation Management Association such as the Black Creek Regional TMA.

The transit initiatives are designed to complement the Region's ongoing roads capital program that addresses continued development of road capacity needed by new growth and rehabilitation and maintenance of existing roads, bridges and signal infrastructure.

Water and Wastewater Infrastructure

The construction, supply and maintenance of water and wastewater services are one of the Region's primary legislated mandates. The availability of supply and capacity of these services is a determining factor in the growth and carrying capacity of the Region for new residential, commercial and industrial users.

To accommodate growth in the Region and meet the demands of future demand for water, Council adopted a Water Supply Plan in 1997. The Long Term Water Project Master Plan consists of a phased strategy to meet the Region's water needs to the Year 2036 and involves four elements:

- Expansion of the water supply from Toronto
- Implementation of a Water Use Efficiency Program
- Construction of a Lake Simcoe Treatment Facility
- Completion of a longer term Lake Ontario supply.

In February 2002, an Agreement with Peel Region was executed to provide new supplies of water to York Region through the Peel trunk system.

Approximately 95% of York Region's wastewater is collected through the York-Durham Trunk Sewage System (YDSS). In 2002, the YDSS Master Plan was updated to reflect new population forecasts in the Official Plan and to categorize projects on a priority or strategic basis. A series of new projects is to 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.

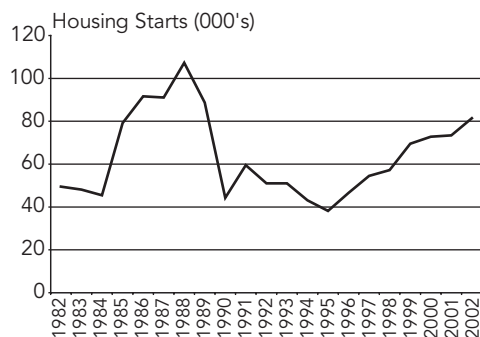
The staged expansion and financing of the water and wastewater network is a key element of the Regions growth management strategy to focus and encourage compact urban form and controlled growth.

Affordable Housing

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 affordable, 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.

The Region has prepared a draft Centres and Corridors Strategy to implement the action items from the Making it Happen - The York Region Centres + Corridors Study. A co-ordinated long-term commitment by the public sector will create a favourable private sector investment climate to promote a range and mix of higher density housing options in the high employment areas. 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 choice. Continued economic vitality is dependent on affordable housing. While some

Ontario Housing Starts, 1982-2002



Note: Housing starts are seasonally adjusted at annual rates.
Source: Statistics Canada

progress has been made to increase the diversity of the housing stock, the Region continues to address these issues and has identified the following action areas in the Region's Housing Strategy.

- *More work needs to be done to provide a wider range of housing choices, both in built form and type of tenure, and to address the key issue of affordability.*
- *More financial assistance is required from the province and the federal government to meet the Region's future housing requirements.*
- *Changes to the tax structure would encourage developers to consider rental housing as a viable investment.*
- *Changes are needed to federal mortgage insurance requirements to give better access to less expensive financing for housing providers, including non-profit organizations.*
- *Further collaboration is required among all levels of government, non-profit providers, the building industry and employers.*



Human Services and Skills Training

The Human Services Strategy is a long-range plan to co-ordinate human service needs required by the growth and change within the communities of York Region. The Strategy was adopted by Regional Council in 2000 and is a key element of the Official Plan and Vision 2026. The Human Services Planning Coalition (HSPC) is a partnership of government, service provider agencies and corporations, non-profit agencies and consumers that oversees the implementation of the Strategy. HSPC plays a key role in identifying gaps in human services and initiating collaborative action to close those gaps. The HSPC has five priority areas:

- Leadership
- Funding
- Communication
- Data Collection and Information Management
- Long-term Planning

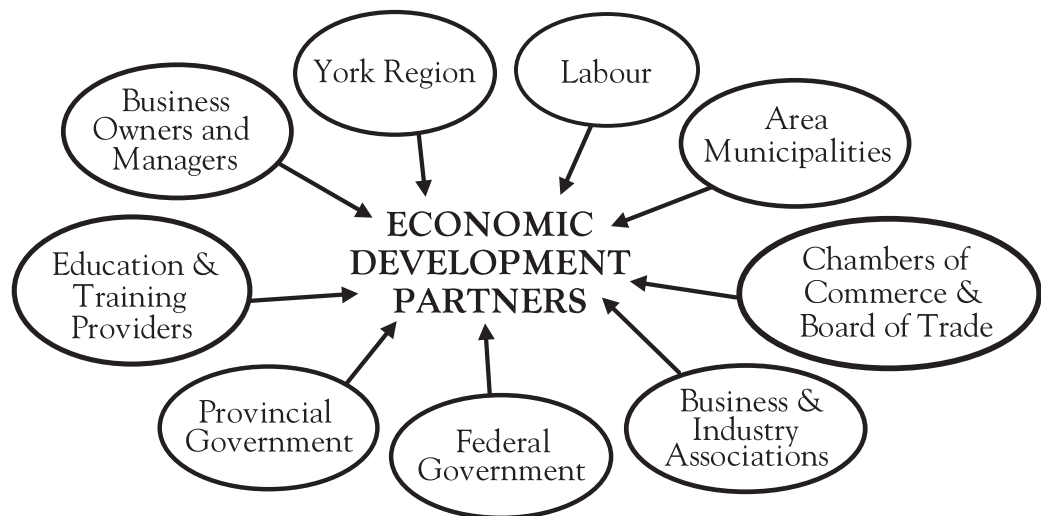
The Human Services Employment Action Group was established by the Human Services Planning Coalition in March 2002 to address the needs to recruit and retain trained human service professional to meet the resulting increase in demand for services. The goal of the project is to develop shared tools, resources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

In addition, the Social Assistance Division of the Region's Community Services and Housing Department delivers the Ontario Works program to eligible residents in the nine municipalities of York Region. The Ontario Works program provides assistance to individuals through employment assistance, employment placement and community participation. This directly assists individuals to return to the workforce, and also provides assistance to York Region employers to source new employees. The success of this program has reduced the social assistance caseload, which contributes to reduced government intervention and fewer impacts on the property tax rate.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS

No one agency or level of government has responsibility for managing the economy. A number of different organizations play key roles in the Region's economy and have been involved in economic development at the neighbourhood, municipal and regional level.

- Business, labour, education and government will be participants in new programs to sustain economic development.
- More broad-based partnerships stand a better chance of securing senior level government support for economic development initiatives.
- The interrelationship between economic, social and environmental "success" demands that future initiatives be broad-based and inclusive.
- 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.



HOW WILL ECONOMIC SUCCESS BE MEASURED?

Understanding what drives economic progress is the first element of a long-term economic strategy. The second element is implementation of programs to address key action areas. The third element is measuring success.

Vision 2026 sets out a range of indicators to measure progress in the eight goal areas that are addressed in the plan. More detailed indicators might be necessary to "fine tune" the effectiveness and sustainability of new programs, and act as the basis for program accountability.

A range of possible indicators could be tracked and reported on annually;

- **Measures of Prosperity:** wages per person, household income, Gross Domestic Product
- **Measures of Business Success:** number of start ups, number of failures, average growth rates
- **Measures of Equity and Disparity:** income differentials, participation of immigrants
- **Measures of Sustainability:** numbers of jobs retained, training participation, waste generation, water and sewer usage, increased density or residential and employment land uses, loss of farmland
- **Measures of Intellectual Performance:** educational attainment, numbers of patents issued, access to broadband infrastructure,
- **Measures of Quality of Life:** housing costs and affordability, air quality alerts, crime rates

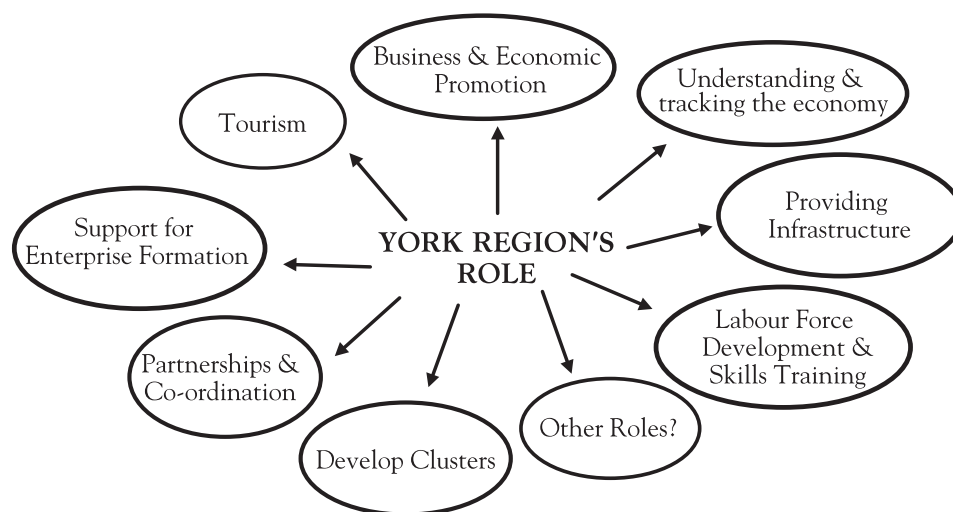
A number of these indicators are already being tracked by various agencies but not all are collected or reported on a basis that relates directly to the Region.

WHAT IS THE EVOLVING ROLE FOR THE REGION OF YORK?

In the last several years the Region of York has carried out an economic development role in the following ways:

- Business Promotion of the Region
- Tourism marketing, promotion and industry support
- Undertaking a co-ordination and facilitating role in areas such as agriculture and rural economic development, telecommunications initiatives and work place development such as the OCCR (Ontario Competitive City Regions) Symposium
- Providing information and assistance to business in areas such as export development, small business enterprise promotion, support for technological innovation (IRAP) and tourism promotion
- Research and analysis of the Region's economy

Against the backdrop of the issues challenges and opportunities presented in this Paper, What is the evolving role for York Region in supporting economic health and sustainability?



WE NEED YOUR INPUT

- *How should the Region proceed to implement the Action areas of the Vibrant Economy goals and actions of Vision 2026?*
- *How can the Region support local municipal efforts?*
- *What is the most effective way that the Region can attract and support new business investment, promote innovation and encourage continuous education?*
- *What new partnership opportunities should be explored?*
- *What are the best ways to measure success?*
- *Who should be responsible and accountable for funding, for delivery, for results?*

WE NEED YOUR INVOLVEMENT

The development of an economic strategy for York Region is a community wide effort. No one group, agency or government department has responsibility for setting the future direction, it must be driven in partnership. The process to develop the economic strategy is identified below.

We need the participation of business, individuals and organizations.
Become involved:

- by reviewing the Discussion Paper
- by participating in a workshop
- by attending the Economic Strategy Forum
- by forwarding your ideas and thoughts to us at the address below
- by talking to a member of Regional Council or Regional staff

Please direct any questions, comments or suggestions to:



Mr. Don Eastwood
Director, Economic Strategy
Economic Development Branch
Planning and Development Services Department
The Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1
Phone: 905 830-4444 ext. 1503
Fax: (905) 895-3482
Email: don.eastwood@region.york.on.ca



2026 Vision

YORK REGION HAS A LONG TERM VISION

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- **Engaged Communities and a Responsive Region**



A Vibrant Economy



Background

York Region is beginning consultation sessions with retail, technology, manufacturing, business services, tourism and agriculture industries in the second phase of its Economic Strategy consultation. The consultation will take place until the end of February in the form of focus groups with executives and representatives of these industries.

The results of these consultations will further identify what economic initiatives need to be undertaken to enhance the business climate in the Region.

York Region began consultation in the development of an Economic Strategy last fall. The goal of the strategy is to develop an action plan that will result in the Region being a more competitive location for business.

In its first phase of consultation, Regional staff held workshops with economic development partners, which include area municipal economic development staff and the Executive Directors and Presidents of the local Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade. Discussions took place about the current challenges and opportunities facing the Region's economy and focussed on what strategic direction and possible action areas that the Region could undertake as part of its Economic Strategy.

The following key issues were raised during the first phase of consultation:

- The availability of skilled labour to meet the needs of existing and new business growth.
- The need to better plan for and benefit from immigrants.
- The need to improve the Region's transportation road network to better meet the growing needs of business and residential growth.
- The availability of broadband high-speed telecommunications infrastructure across the Region.
- The availability of serviced employment land to accommodate future demands in all areas of the Region.
- Housing affordability and supply.
- Involvement and education of youth in economic development planning.
- Need to position York Region as a high quality community.
- The need for more co-ordination, cooperation and leadership among the Region, economic development offices, Chambers of Commerce/Boards of Trade and various levels of government.

Following phase two of consultation, York Region will host a Regional Economic Strategy Forum with a broad cross section of business and economic stakeholders in the spring to validate results of consultation, and identify and prioritize key action items that need to be included in the Economic Strategy. A final report and draft strategy will be completed in late June.

For further information, please contact:

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Tel: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 1503
Fax: (905) 895-3482
Email: don.eastwood@region.york.on.ca



Appendix 3

Economic Strategy Forum

Agenda

Economic Strategy Forum: Strategic Directions Workbook

List of Participants

Breakout Sessions: Themes

Breakout Sessions: Recommended Priority Actions

Background
Appendices
To Economic
Strategy

A Vibrant Economy



ECONOMIC STRATEGY FORUM

AGENDA

Tuesday, May 11, 2004

7:30 a.m. to noon

RADISSON HOTEL
50 East Valhalla Drive
Markham, ON L3R 0A3
Tel: (905) 477-2010

7:30 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast

8:00 a.m. Introduction

Bryan Tuckey, Commissioner of Planning and Development Services

8:15 a.m. Welcome

Bill Fisch, Regional Chair and CEO, York Region

8:30 a.m. Keynote Address:

"Strengthening the Competitiveness of Ontario and its City Regions"

James Milway, Executive Director

Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity

9:15 a.m. Why An Economic Strategy for York Region?

Frank Scarpitti, Chair of the Planning and Economic Development Committee
York Region

9:30 a.m. What Was Heard: Results of the Consultations

Don Eastwood, Director of Economic Strategy
York Region

10:00 a.m. Refreshment Break

10:15 a.m. Breakout Sessions: A Discussion on Themes and Action Plans

11:15 a.m. Feedback from Breakout Sessions

Glenn Miller, Vice President Education and Research
Canadian Urban Institute

11:45 a.m. Next Steps

Mayor Sue Sherban, Town of Whitchurch Stouffville

12:00 noon Lunch





ECONOMIC STRATEGY FORUM
Strategic Directions
WORKBOOK



table of contents

Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Purpose of Economic Strategy Forum
Chapter 3	Context
Chapter 4	Overview of Key Initiatives
Chapter 5	What We Heard: Consultations with the Community
Chapter 6	Proposed Strategic Directions: Your Thoughts and Feedback
Chapter 7	Next Steps





chapter 1: introduction

BACKGROUND

York Region is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada. The economic health of the Region is driven by a number of factors that will impact our collective ability to sustain economic prosperity and create future employment opportunities. The growth and change in York Region's economy over the last few years begs the following questions:

- How will York Region's economy change in the next few years?
- What actions need to be undertaken to ensure we can encourage innovation, attract new investment and foster new job creation?
- Who should be responsible and accountable for funding, for delivering and for measuring new economic development programs?
- What is the role of The Regional Municipality of York in sustaining a vibrant economy and meeting the economic goals of Vision 2026?

AN ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR YORK REGION

An evolving role for York Region is required to achieve a long-term vision and create future opportunities. The process to develop a new economic strategy for the Region will achieve the following:

- Develop a better understanding of the Region's economy in order to help manage and sustain economic prosperity.
- Chart the relationships and linkages with other key economic stakeholders.
- Build on our economic strengths.
- Identify clear action areas and roles that will sustain a vibrant economy.

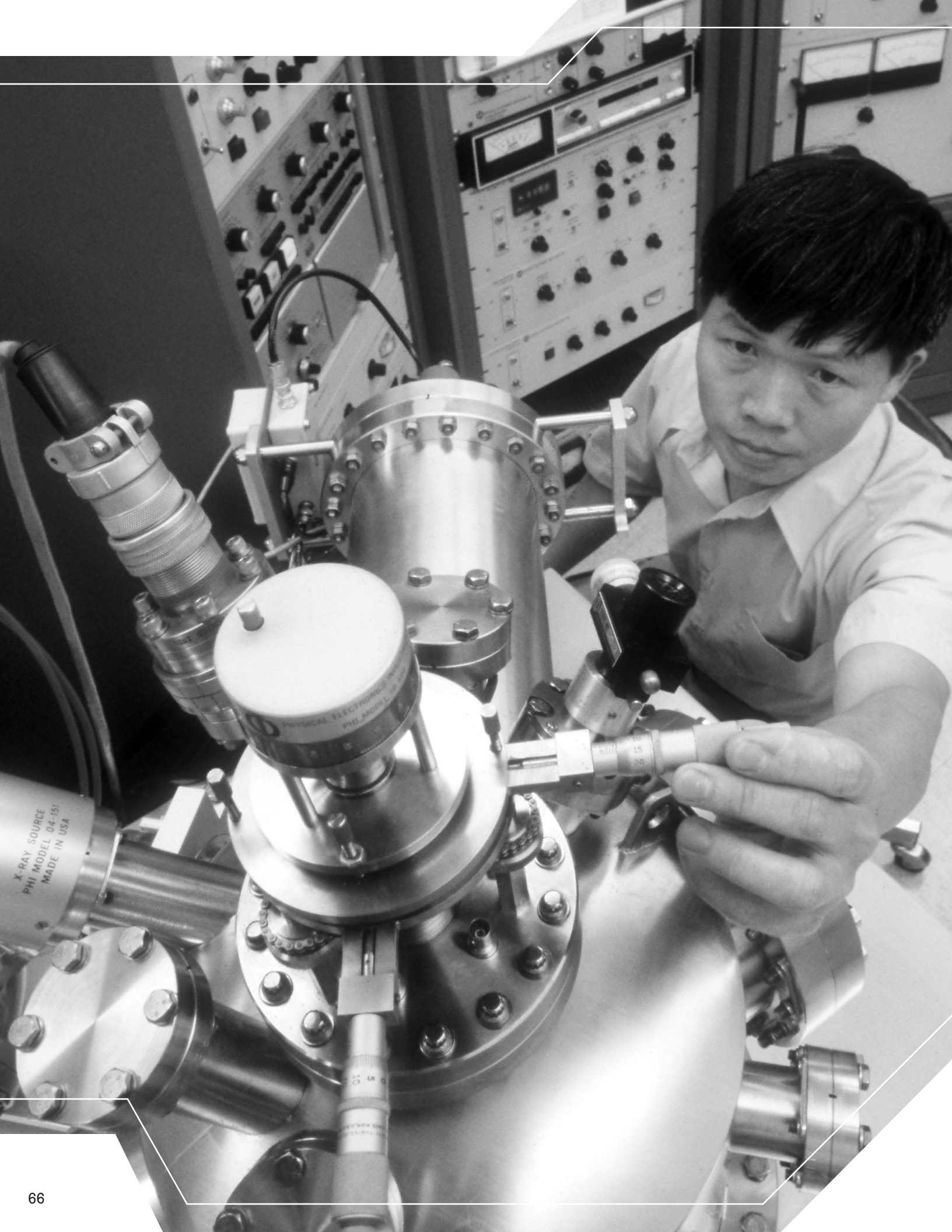
The goal is to develop an action plan that will result in the Region being a more competitive location for business.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

York Region began consultation in the development of an Economic Strategy in the fall of 2003. The consultation sessions with industry and economic development stakeholders have raised key issues and identified some of the economic initiatives that need to be undertaken to enhance the business climate in the Region.

The results of the consultations will be validated at the Economic Strategy Forum, which will form the basis for identifying and prioritizing key action items that need to be included in the Economic Strategy.

Following the Forum, a draft strategic document will be prepared and circulated for comments. A final Economic Strategy will be completed in the third quarter of 2004.



chapter 2: purpose of economic strategy forum

The Economic Strategy Forum on May 11, 2004 is a crucial step in the development of strategic directions for York Region. As a participant, you will be joining approximately 150 invited key business and community leaders to:

- Review the summary of our consultations to-date.
- Examine the key economic factors affecting the Region's economy in the future.
- Discuss ways to build on the strengths and meet future challenges facing the Region.
- Help define the role for the Region and identify key action areas.
- Begin a discussion about new partnerships.

This Strategic Directions Workbook has been designed to help participants prepare for discussions at the Forum. You are requested to review the Workbook, consider and complete the questions posed, and share your views at the session.



chapter 3: context

THE REGION'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

York Region continues to demonstrate one of the most robust and resilient economies in Canada:

- York Region is now home to over 870,000 people, an increase of 4.1% from 2002.
- Employment has continued to expand; despite global and national challenges, over 10,000 new jobs were created in York Region last year bringing total employment to 415,000.
- Since 1971, York Region's employment growth has increased at a higher rate than its population growth.
- Industrial and Commercial building permits accounted for 35% of the \$2.7 billion of building activity in the Region last year.
- Manufacturing employment accounts for 17% of the total employment in York Region, but business services and retail trade are the fastest growing segments of the labour force.
- Natural and related sciences is the fastest growing occupation group.
- York Region's labour force contains a higher percentage of workers with post-secondary education as compared to the rest of the GTA or the Provincial workforce as a whole.
- York Region is home to 40 private sector firms with more than 500 employees, but over 95% of local businesses employ less than 50 people: small business contributes to York Region's economic diversity and resilience to economic downturns and is a key source of new jobs.
- There are established clusters of innovative companies in the automotive, biotechnology, information and communications and furniture sectors.
- The percentage of the Region's residents working within York Region is increasing.

FUTURE TRENDS THAT WILL SHAPE THE REGION

The Region's strong and diverse economy has fuelled strong employment growth up to now, but the following factors collectively will impact the future economic performance and force both business and government to examine their policies and processes to encourage continued economic development:

Continued Population Growth

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

Strong Economic and Employment Growth

York Region's rate of employment growth has historically exceeded its rate of population growth. A burgeoning technology cluster and the robust growth of many new smaller enterprises in a diverse range of industries has created many new jobs and increased the demand for new skills. The availability of skilled workers is now the number one priority of companies seeking to relocate. A key challenge will be maintaining a climate to attract business investment and skilled workers.

Changing Demographics and Diversity

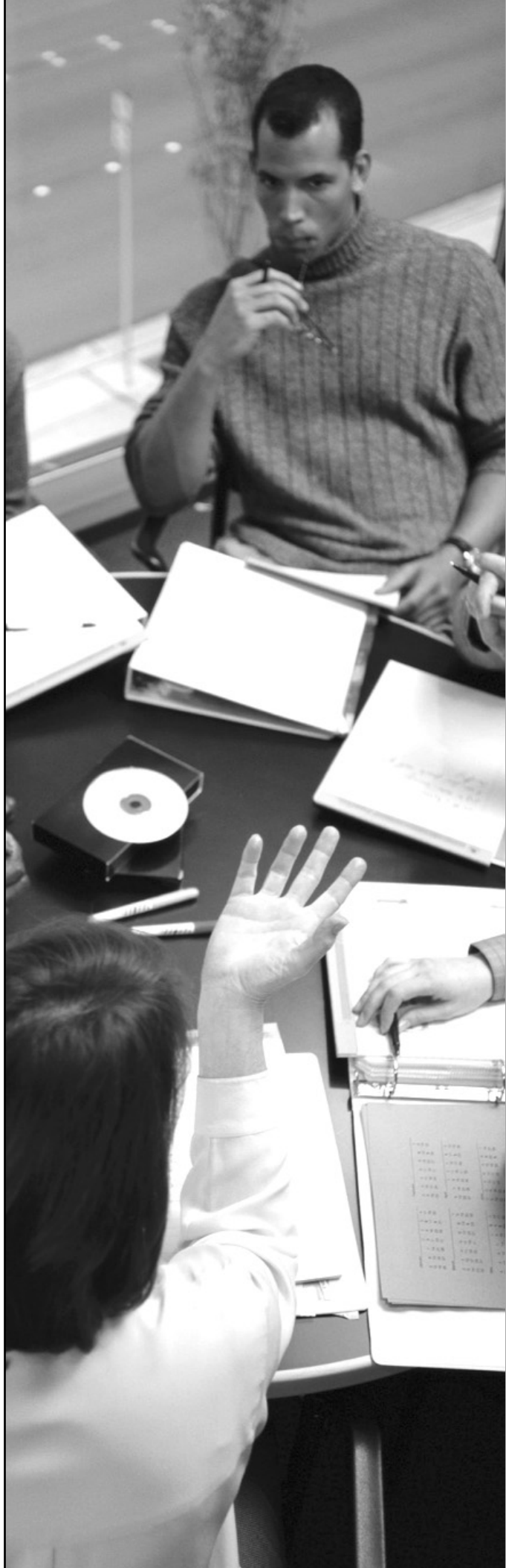
As the Region's population continues to grow, the age, economic, social and ethnic composition of the Region will begin to change. As the baby boom generation moves into retirement, there will be increased pressure on business to recruit and train workers with necessary skills. Internationally trained workers will become a key segment of a labour force dependent on new immigrants. This increased ethnic and cultural diversity in the Region will bring new market opportunities and place new and different demands on service providers.

Impact of Global Economic Competition

The businesses that drive the Region's economy are becoming more integrated with the global economy. York Region companies now compete at home and abroad for market share, for new investment and for skilled workers. Technology has enabled firms to trade around the clock, manage international supply chains and monitor global business conditions. This has immense benefits for business but also makes them more vulnerable to international events. The trend towards a highly skilled and knowledge-based economy here means a shift of manufacturing to countries with lower wages.

Changes in the Regulatory and Fiscal Environment

The economic uncertainty and disruption caused by terrorist attacks, wars and political unrest, and the impact of infectious disease outbreaks such as SARS has severely impacted tourism and trade flows. Border delays and new trade regulations have posed new costs to export-oriented companies. The strengthened value of the Canadian dollar means Canadian exports are less price competitive in world markets.





chapter 4:

overview of key initiatives that address strategic issues for business

The Region has undertaken or is involved in a number of key initiatives to better understand and address the complex range of issues that affect business and their ability to expand and provide jobs into the future.

ONTARIO COMPETITIVE CITY REGIONS SYMPOSIUM

In May 2002, York Region hosted an Ontario Competitive City Regions Symposium 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 objective of the session was to identify the gaps, needs and competitive factors affecting the supply and demand of knowledge workers. The goal was to propose action strategies to attract, retain and re-energize the knowledge workforce in York Region.

The Symposium brought perspectives from industry, academia and government on the topic of building Smart Communities and Smart Worker. A number of key issues were identified from the symposium proceedings:

- 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

In the fall of 2002, a consulting firm was retained to undertake an assessment of York Region's competitive position in attracting new business investment, relative to other jurisdictions. A series of interviews with company executives were held to get a private sector perspective on the role of the Region in economic development.

The Study found that York Region compares favourably to other jurisdictions in attracting new and expanded business investment. The Region's success in attracting new corporate investment were attributed primarily to:

- Skills and availability of the labour force.
- Availability of land for new industries or expansions.
- Competitive costs of doing business.
- Proximity to the GTA.
- Transportation and servicing infrastructure.

At the same time, the executives surveyed also 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 Consortium established 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.

A preliminary survey of biotechnology sector-related companies has shown that over 120 companies located in the Region are involved in medical device, biopharma and assistive technologies. In addition, a large number of companies in the information and communications technology, digital media, software, and manufacturing sector also contribute to this biotechnology cluster. The Regional Innovation Profile and Analysis being developed as part of the Biotechnology Cluster Innovation Plan will offer a better understanding of this sector and its strengths and opportunities. The knowledge derived will be used to support the development of the Economic Strategy to expand the innovation dimension.

TRANSIT

In response to the demand from business and residents, the **York Region Transportation Master Plan** has identified a 30-year capital plan for the development of Region-wide transit system that is integrated with other systems within the GTA.

The **York Region Rapid Transit Plan (YRTP)** is a public-private partnership that will serve the four major regional centres identified in the Regional Official Plan and link to neighbouring transit systems. YRTP has put in place a \$150 million **Quick Start** plan with funding from the Region and the federal and provincial levels of government to implement the first phase of the system with construction beginning in fall 2004. In addition to the development of new infrastructure, York Region



Transit is co-operating in a **Smart Commute Initiative** as a joint GTA project under the Federal Government's Urban Transportation Showcase Program. This includes programs for ride-matching, van and car-pooling and the establishment of additional Transportation Management Association such as the Black Creek Regional TMA.

The transit initiatives are designed to complement the Region's ongoing roads capital program that addresses continued development of road capacity needed by new growth and rehabilitation and maintenance of existing roads, bridges and signal infrastructure.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

It has been recognized that the Region's continued economic vitality is dependent on available affordable housing for its workers. 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.



CENTRES AND CORRIDORS STRATEGY

The Region has prepared a draft Centres and Corridors Strategy to implement the action items from the ***Making It Happen - The York Region Centres and Corridors Study***. A co-ordinated long-term commitment by the public sector will create a favourable private sector investment climate to promote a range and mix of higher density housing options in the high employment areas. 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.

WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

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 Water Supply Plan was adopted in 1997. The ***Long Term Water Project Master Plan*** consists of a phased strategy that will meet the Region's water needs to 2036.

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.

The water and wastewater system is a key element of the Region's growth management strategy to focus and encourage compact urban form.

HUMAN SERVICES AND SKILLS TRAINING

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. 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. 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 professional to meet the resulting increase in demand for services. The goal of the project was to develop shared tools, resources and supports for enhancing the recruitment and retention potential of York Region human service employers.

In addition, the Social Assistance Division of the Region's Community Services and Housing Department delivers the Ontario Works program to eligible residents in the nine municipalities of York Region. The Ontario Works program provides assistance to individuals through employment assistance, employment placement and community participation. This directly assists individuals to return to the workforce, and also provides assistance to York Region employers to source new employees.



chapter 5: what we heard: consultations with the community

To better understand the changes in the economy that will affect businesses in York Region, a broad range of consultations were held between November 2003 and March 2004. Almost 200 business owners, managers and senior executives, as well as economic stakeholders and representatives from interest groups, area municipalities and senior level governments were engaged throughout the process.

A number of issues and opportunities for the Region have emerged from the consultations. Four strategic themes, based on the consolidated input of the participants have been developed. Within each theme, a series of possible roles or action plans have been identified.

THEME: SHARING INFORMATION & IDEAS

- Stimulate collaborative linkages between public and private centres of research, schools, universities, colleges and hospitals to create shared knowledge.
- Create new networking opportunities such as the establishment of a region-wide Business Roundtable to facilitate exchange of information and discussion of economic issues.
- Set up a comprehensive economic and business information source to provide research and data on the state of the Region's economy.
- Work with public, private and non-profit sector partners to facilitate the extension of broadband telecommunications throughout the Region.

THEME: A HIGH QUALITY WORKFORCE

- Engage the Region's youth in workforce development and life-long learning initiatives.
- Attract additional academic and institutions of higher learning to York Region.
- Promote land use, housing and public transportation policies and initiatives that enhance the ability of local companies to attract and retain workers to York Region.
- Facilitate partnerships for immigrant mentoring and integration of internationally trained workers to meet the growing labour needs of regional companies.
- Advocate for increased apprenticeships and skilled trades training and education.

THEME: STRENGTHEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

- Build and strengthen support for entrepreneurship throughout the Region.
- Undertake research on key factors that support industry clusters and work with area municipal staff to attract and retain industry.
- Facilitate the establishment of advanced manufacturing consortia to encourage technological innovation and adoption.
- Strengthen export trade initiatives.
- Promote agriculture-based business in support of the GTA Agricultural Action Plan.
- Act as a conduit for senior government business support programs.
- Facilitate access to capital initiatives.
- Evaluate new international business exchange and partnering opportunities for regional businesses.
- Encourage and facilitate business involvement in transportation demand management and network planning.

THEME: PROMOTING YORK REGION

- Understand what makes York Region unique and promote it through a marketing and promotional program.
- Promote the identity and attractions of each community in the Region.
- Identify opportunities to host major athletic or cultural events in the Region.
- Promote the development of world-class sporting and recreational facilities to support special events and future needs of the Region.
- Develop new partnerships and "experience-based" tourism products.
- Champion a balanced approach to economic development to enhance quality of life, environmental sustainability and community health.



chapter 6: proposed strategic directions: your thoughts & feedback

The following questions are intended to provoke discussion at the Forum. After reviewing the material, please respond to the questions. We would appreciate receiving your Workbook at the end of the Forum to assist us in capturing all of the constructive ideas that will emerge from the session.

1. Do the Theme Areas address key issues that will sustain York Region's economic vitality?

Theme Areas	Comments
Sharing Information and Ideas ☐ Yes ☐ No	
A High Quality Workforce ☐ Yes ☐ No	
Strengthening Entrepreneurship and Industry Clusters ☐ Yes ☐ No	
Promoting York Region ☐ Yes ☐ No	

2. Are there other "strategic directions" that should be included in the Region's Economic Strategy?

3. For each of the Theme Areas, what do you think are the top 3 priority Actions?

	Suggested Priority Action Areas		
Theme Areas	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority
Sharing Information and Ideas			
A High Quality Workforce			
Strengthening Entrepreneurship and Industry Clusters			
Promoting York Region			

4. Are there other Actions that should be included in the Economic Strategy?

5. Who do you think should be responsible or take a lead role in implementing the top priority Actions. Please check all that you think are appropriate.
(i.e. business, education, or federal/provincial/regional/municipal government)

	Who Should Take a Lead Role in Implementation?						
Theme Areas	Business	Education	York Region	Province	Federal Government	Community Organizations (specify)	Other Agencies (specify)
Sharing Information and Ideas							
A High Quality Workforce							
Strengthening Entrepreneurship and Industry Clusters							
Promoting York Region							

6. How can we leverage resources and forge new partnerships to help implement these Actions?

7. How should we be measuring our success?

8. Would you or your organization be able to assist in implementing any of the proposed actions?

☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Any additional thoughts or comments on the process, the issues, or today's Forum?

We would like to communicate with you further in this process to keep you informed and to send you a copy of the Draft Strategy for your comments. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

Name _____ Title _____

Company _____

Address _____

Tel _____ Fax _____

Email _____



chapter 7: next steps

Based on discussions and input from today's Strategy Forum, the four theme areas will be modified or restructured and incorporated into a draft Economic Strategy for circulation and comments.

The following components will be developed as part of the draft strategy document:

- **Economic Baseline Analysis** - This research will provide a more complete snapshot of the state of the Region's economy, and will be used to complement the results of the industry consultations to guide the development of the strategy.
- **Accountability Framework** - A "Who Does What" matrix and an analysis of the respective accountabilities for each of the theme areas will be developed.
- **Performance Metrics** - A list of performance metrics to measure progress in achieving success will be included.
- **Financial Implications and Resources** - Staffing and financial implications will be presented for each of the theme areas.
- **Implementation Timeline** - A discussion of the timeline to implement the strategic plan will be included.

ANY ADDITIONAL NOTES.....

[illegible]

List of Participants

Name	Organization
John T. Anders	NDC Health
Allan Anderson	Industry Canada
John Armstrong	Rogers Cable
Mohammad Ashraf	BDO Dunwoody LLP
Lorne Atkinson	Cansult Group Ltd.
David Barrow	Town of Richmond Hill
Barbara Bartlett	Best Western Voyageur Place
Dorie Billich	Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum
Diane Bladek-Willet	York Region Health Services
Renee Blake	The Red Barn Theatre
Donna Blea	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Jordan Brennan	Independent
Chris Brennan	Independent
Wayne Brennan	Independent
Peter Budreo	South Lake Futures Community Corp.
Blaine D. Buott	Island Grove Communications Inc.
Chris Burke	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade
Ruth Burkholder	Markham Board of Trade
Brian Butler	Butler and Baird Lumber Ltd.
Chris Cable	York Catholic District School Board
Jim Campbell	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Karen Campbell	Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance
Jim Carter	Senes Consulting Limited
Patrick Casey	York Region Corporate Communications
Stephen Chait	Town of Markham
Louis Cheng	Pacific Mall
Mike Church	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade
Judy Coward	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food
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Vern Cunningham	Alutron Modules Inc.
Lyn Doering	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade
Christian Dube	Cardio Med
Michael Evans	Aurora True Value Hardware
Don Fieldhouse	York Federation of Agriculture
Bill Fisch	York Region
Nicole Fletcher	York Region Newspaper Group
David Flynn	Lenmark Communications
Greg Foster	M & M Meat Shops
Joanne Fowler	York Region Community Services and Housing
Tim Frakes	York Region Community Services and Housing
Michael Garrett	York Region
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Mike Gerbis	Delphi Group
John Gilbank	Jacksons Landing B & B

Daniel Girard	Georgina Chamber of Commerce
Bob Glandfield	Innovation Synergy Centre in Markham
Peter Goodhand	The Health Technology Exchange (HTX)
Jim Gragtmans	ACTION International
Chris Hales	Radisson Hotel
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Shahid Hashmi	Independent
Robert Hickey	York South Simcoe Training and Adjustment Board
Robin Hill	TD Bank Financial
Gary A. Hodgins	Pharmax Limited
Diane Humeniuk	Diane Humeniuk & Associates Inc.
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Helena Jaczek	York Region Health Services
Katharine Janzen	Seneca College
Barbara Jeffrey	York Region Planning and Development Services
Anne Jessop	Schomberg Chamber of Commerce
Brian Johns	Vince's Country Market
Helene Johnson	Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce
Gary Johnson	PlannerPlus Eents
Shirley Kam	City of Vaughan
Anna Karasik	York Region Planning and Development Services
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Bob Kawun	Markham Hydro Distribution Inc.
Andy Keir	Gartner Lee Limited
Debra Kelly	York Region Newspaper Group
Jacqueline Kennedy	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Robert A. Kiefer	BMO Bank of Montreal
Darlene Klemchuck	Adecco Financial
Wilbert Lai	Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs
Jason Laidler	Investors Group
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Susan Lawton	IBM Canada Ltd.
Stephen Lee	Ontario Korean Businessmens' Association
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Dino Lombardi	Town of Aurora
Dan Lynch	NRC/IRAP
Doug McIntyre	York Technology Association
John Meakes	Town of Richmond Hill
Peter Mertens	NDCC Main Street Newmarket
Glenn Miller	Canadian Urban Institute
Bill Milroy	Markham Hydro Distribution Inc.
James Milway	Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity
Hugh Mitchell	York Region Soil & Crop Improvement Association
Ralph Morley	Morley Sanderson & Millard
David Morrison	Markham Fair
Kim Mortson	Consultant, Town of Georgina
Iain Newbigin	McMichael Canadian Art Collection

Brian North	The Ellis Studios Limited
Ted Northcott	Town of Markham
Bill O'Donnell	Town of Markham
Scott Owens	Highland Transport
Bert Pendergast	Solectron Global Services Canada
George Phillips	Markham Museum
Gerry Pisarzowski	Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance
Susan Plamondon	Town of Newmarket
Sheyrel Rames	Link Consultants
Doug Reed	NRC/IRAP
David Rennie	York Region Community Services & Housing, Social Assistance
Ornella Richichi	First Pro Shopping Centres
Erika Rimkus	York Region District School Board
Alan Rimmington	Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Recreation
Patricia Robertson	York Neighborhood Services
Rifky Rosensweig	Ministry of Education
Peter Ross	York University
Michael Ruskin	Microdea Inc.
John Ryerson	Varley Gallery
Michael Saunders	XGenSoft
Frank Scarpitti	Town of Markham
Sue Sherban	Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
Hugh Sibbald	Briars Resort
Joann Simmons	York Region Community Services and Housing
Dean Smalley	A & B Courier
Robert Smith	Town of Richmond Hill
Jeff Solly	Landtactix Inc.
Serge Sotoadeh	Lexus of Richmond Hill
Daniel Stong	National Bank of Canada
Karim Tahir	Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam (Ont) Inc.
Grace Tallar	COSTI Employment Services, York Region
Susan Taylor	York Region Planning and Development Services
Wayne Thomas	Dapasoft
Dan Thomson	Rogers Cable
Bryan Tuckey	York Region Planning and Development Services
Catherine Turner	Job Skills Ontario
Emilia Valentini	City of Vaughan
Tony Van Bynen	Town of Newmarket
Vincent Varga	McMichael Canadian Art Collection
Daisy Wai	Richmond Hill & Markham Chinese Business Association
Debbie Walker	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade
Leslie Walker	Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce
Jo Walks	Seventh Tier Consulting Inc.
John Waller	York Region Planning and Development Services
Brad Watson	KPMG
Debra Weller	York Region Newspaper Group
Stephen Willis	Marshall, Macklin, Monaghan
Gordon Wilson	Wilson Niblett Motors Limited

Al Wilson	York South Simcoe Training and Adjustment Board
Lorraine Woon	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
James Young	Town of East Gwillimbury

Breakout Sessions Themes

- Sharing Information And Ideas
- A High Quality Workforce
- Strengthen Entrepreneurship And Industry Clusters
- Promoting York Region

Breakout Sessions: Recommended Priority Actions

Theme 1: Sharing Information and Ideas

- Host region-wide quarterly meetings with rotating themes, featuring leaders in specific sectors
- Learn from the best
- Stimulate collaborative linkages between public and private centres of research to create shared knowledge
- Organize sector-specific special events
- Combine and consolidate resources
- Create new networking opportunities to facilitate exchange of information
- Set up a comprehensive economic and business information source to provide research and data
- Identify target markets
- Reduce barriers for new immigrants
- Work with public private and non-profit sector partners to facilitate the extension of broadband
- Educate elected Council to the importance of information sharing
- Improve efforts to co-ordinate and gather information across the Region
- Build a database that is accessible
- Provide opportunities to share information
- Establish more connections between levels of government
- Use different methods of communication

Theme 2: A Quality Workforce

- Access to and utilizing resources for youth, workers and immigrants
- Educate and promote to youth about working and living in York Region
- Engage youth in learning more about the market system and acquiring the skills and attitudes for entrepreneurship
- Emphasize on establishing co-op programs at all levels
- Mobilize immigrants into work force and advocate for services that meet the needs of new immigrant
- Integrate the current highly qualified immigrants into the workforce at a level that employs their skill level and credentials
- Invest in the existing workforce by identifying issues and needs for training and upgrading, and make lifelong learning a reality
- Support for quality of living for a variety of wage earners, i.e. childcare, housing, services, transportation
- Partner with educational institutions (Seneca and York), e.g. satellites campus, Biotech Cluster initiative, Seneca Markham Campus
- Provide the opportunity for municipalities to work with developers on providing affordable housing
- Provide broad housing choice for workers - entry housing, rental housing (second suites)
- Co-ordinate transit services to overcome governance boundaries
- Practise Transportation Demand Management and provide solution to transportation issues - regional and local (feeder) transit service, sidewalks, traffic lights, etc.
- Address failure to attract quality staffing - must fix transit and affordable housing, lower business taxes

Theme 3: Strengthening Entrepreneurship and Industry Clusters

- Build and strengthen support for entrepreneurs and remove barriers (tax, education, regulations)
- Provide opportunities for networking, mentoring and strengthening small business
- Facilitate access to capital initiatives
- Establish business enterprise support networks/consortia for existing and new businesses
- Facilitate advanced manufacturing consortia for technological innovation and adoption
- Secure public and private funding for R&D and innovation (bringing product from research to market)
- Compile an inventory of what is available in infrastructure funding
- Assess current business base, promote and support from a retention and growth perspective
- Maximize communication infrastructure
- Upgrade transportation infrastructure

Theme 4: Promoting York Region

- Understand what makes York Region unique and promote it through a marketing and promotional programme
- Champion a balanced approach to economic development to enhance quality of life, environmental sustainability & community health
- Develop new partnerships and “experience-based” tourism products
- Identify opportunities to host major athletic or cultural events in the Region
- Promote the identity and attractions of each community in the Region
- Identify target markets - tourism/business investments
- Leverage partnerships



For more information please contact:

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Economy