

JUST THE FACTS ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

Languages of Residents Living in York Region

Introduction

The Regional Municipality of York is in the midst of rapid growth and diversification, which influences the demographic trends of York Region residents. One of the most significant trends is the change in the languages spoken at home, at work or first learned as a child.

The growing number of people from around the world who are choosing York Region as their home is greatly increasing the diversity of the region's culture, religious beliefs, ethnicity and language. According to Statistics Canada, in 2006 there were more than 60 languages, other than English or French, spoken in homes across York Region.

Knowledge of Official Languages (English and French) in 2006

- Most people in York Region (89%) speak English.
- However, among the five GTA municipalities (Durham, Halton, Peel, Toronto and York), York Region had the second-highest percentage of residents (4%) who, in 2006, could not speak English or French. This was also higher than the provincial and national levels, which were around 2%.
- As shown in Table 1, there was an increase in the number of York Region residents who do not speak an official language, from 23,565 in 2001 to 35,310 in 2006. Almost half (45%) of these residents were seniors aged 65 and older.
- In 2006, the local municipalities in York Region with a significant number of residents who spoke neither English nor French were Markham (18,225), Vaughan (8,670) and Richmond Hill (6,850).
- Map 1 shows that in general, residents living in East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Newmarket and Whitchurch-Stouffville were more likely to have knowledge of English or French than residents living in Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.
- In some neighbourhoods in Markham, the percentage of people with no knowledge of English or French ranged as high as 15 – 25%.

Table 1

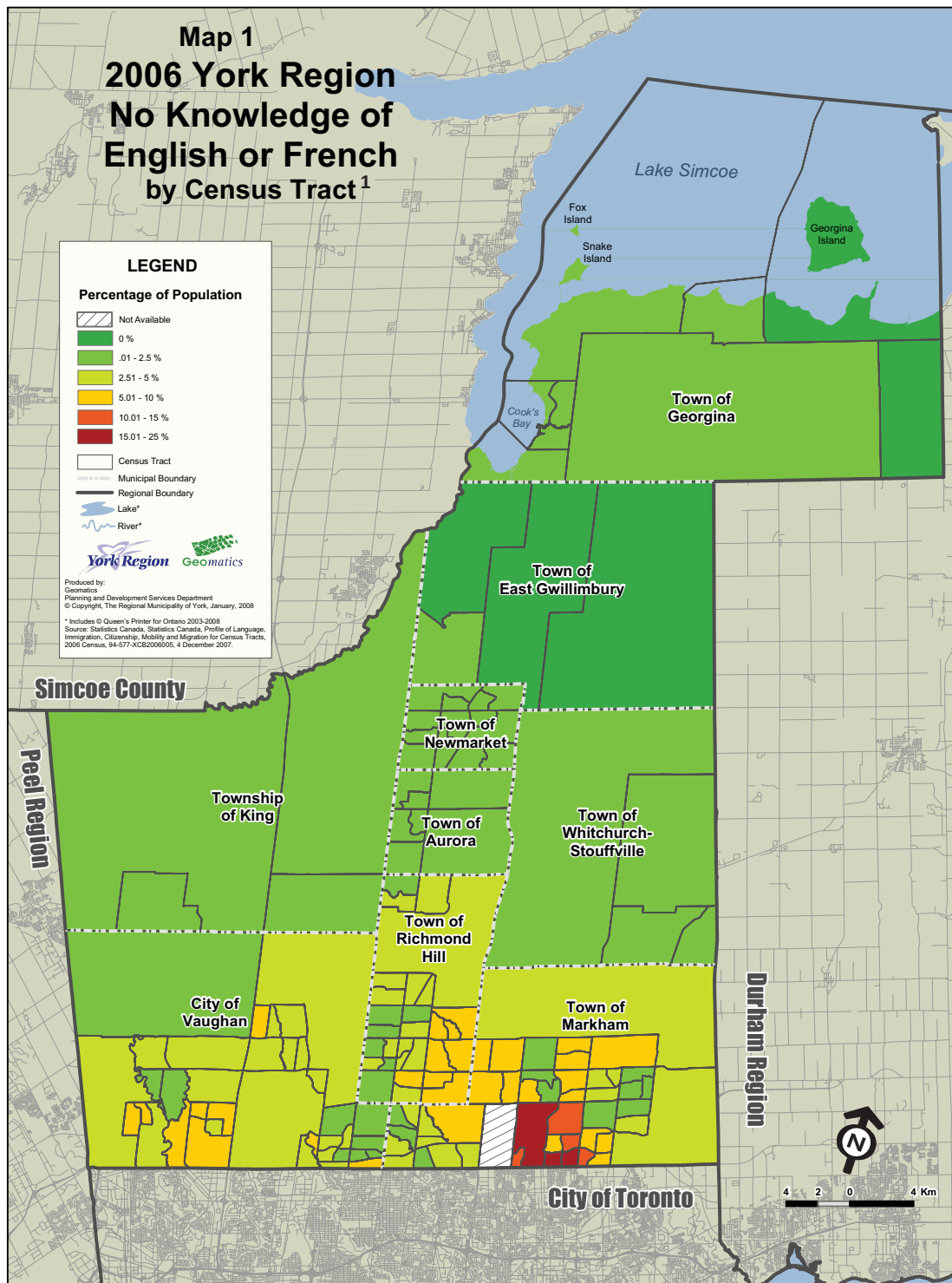
Knowledge of Official Languages, York Region, 2001 and 2006

Language	2001	2006	Percent Change
Total Population	729,254	887,345	22%
English Only	645,590	787,140	22%
French Only	390	575	47%
English and French	56,125	64,320	15%
Neither English Nor French	23,565	35,310	50%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001 and 2006

Did You Know?

In 2006, 18% (15,730) of residents age 65 and over did not speak English or French. This is a significantly higher percentage than all other age groups in York Region.



Did You Know?

York Region was the only municipality among the five GTA municipalities that had Russian and Persian among the top five non-official languages most commonly spoken at home. Russian and Persian were not among the top five non-official languages most commonly spoken at home on a national or provincial basis.

Did You Know?

In 2006, the "Mother Tongue" (i.e., language first learned as a child) of 44% of York Region residents was a language other than English or French. This is an increase from 25% of the population in 1991. The proportion of residents who learned only English as children has steadily decreased from 71% in 1991 to 53% of the population in 2006. About 2% (16,840 people) learned more than one language in their childhood.

¹A "census tract" is a small geographic area with a population of 2,500 to 8,000 defined by Statistics Canada for the purpose of collecting and analyzing census data.

Language Used at Work in 2006

- The most commonly used language in the workplace in York Region was English. English was used by 95% (508,690) of the total population 15 years and over who worked in 2005.
- In 2006, there were 17,805 people who only spoke a non-official language at work. There were also close to 8,000 York Region residents who spoke a combination of a non-official language and either English and/or French at work.
- Of the 17,805 residents who only spoke a non-official language at work, the most commonly spoken non-official languages in the workplace were Chinese languages (73%), Korean (4%) and Italian (4%).

Home Languages in 2006

The term “Home Language” refers to the language spoken most often at home. Most York Region residents speak English. However, a non-official language at home can be an indication of what language people find most practical or comfortable to use at home. Residents who reported having a non-official language as their Home Language often can also speak English and/or French.

- In 2006, 72% of York Region residents spoke English most commonly in the home. This was lower than the provincial average of 82% and higher than the national average of 67%.
- The number of York Region residents who spoke a non-official language at home increased by 48%, from 160,285 in 2001 to 236,435 in 2006.
- In 2006, the top five non-official languages most commonly spoken at home were:
 - Chinese languages - spoken by 94,270 residents
 - Italian - spoken by 19,975 residents
 - Russian - spoken by 18,600 residents
 - Persian² - spoken by 14,210 residents
 - Tamil - spoken by 11,745 residents

Although these rankings remained relatively unchanged between 2001 and 2006, there was a significant increase in the number of residents who spoke a non-official language at home during that time period.

- Table 2 shows the top 10 non-official languages most commonly spoken at home. The languages that showed the largest increase in use between 2001 and 2006 were Tamil (156% increase), Persian (138% increase), Urdu (119% increase) and Korean (89% increase).

Table 2
Non-Official Languages Most Commonly Spoken at Home,
York Region, 2001 and 2006

Language	2001	2006	Percent Change
Chinese Languages	71,735	94,270	31%
Italian	19,895	19,975	less than 1%
Russian	10,600	18,600	76%
Persian (Farsi)	5,970	14,210	138%
Tamil	4,580	11,745	156%
Korean	3,955	7,475	89%
Urdu	3,240	7,085	119%
Punjabi	5,275	7,010	33%
Spanish	3,650	5,935	63%
Gujarati	3,360	4,585	36%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001 and 2006

Municipal Trends

- Between 2001 and 2006, the municipalities that had the greatest increase in the percentage of residents who spoke a non-official language at home were Aurora (133%), Georgina (99%) and Newmarket (72%).
- Italian was the most commonly spoken non-official language at home in East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Vaughan and Whitchurch-Stouffville.
- In Aurora and Newmarket, Russian was the most commonly spoken non-official language at home.
- In Markham and Richmond Hill, Cantonese was the most commonly spoken non-official language at home.



²Persian is an Indo-European language spoken in Iran (Persia), Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It is derived from the language of the ancient Persian people.



What Does This Mean?

The languages that our residents speak are playing a significant role in shaping the diverse changes that we are seeing in York Region. Awareness of the languages spoken in York Region can help community agencies, government and the business community to determine what is needed to connect or do business with residents who have no, or limited, knowledge of English or French. For example, translation services and English as a Second Language training can be better delivered if we have a clearer understanding of the languages spoken in different parts of York Region. Businesses, emergency responders like ambulance services, and other organizations will also have a better sense of when and where they may need to have employees who can communicate in different languages. The ability to communicate is fundamental to inclusion and participation in the activities of our communities.

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York Region's Community Social Data Strategy Consortium



York Region's Community Reference Group

Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Catholic Community Services of York Region, Central Local Health Integration Network, Human Services Planning Coalition, Regional Municipality of York, Town of Markham Planning & Urban Design Department, Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce, United Way of York Region, Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, York Catholic District School Board, York Region District School Board, York Regional Police, York South Simcoe Training and Adjustment Board

To view this document as well as other socio-economic information about York Region's residents, please visit York Region's Community Social Data website:

www.york.ca/yrscsd