DRAFT

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)

York Region

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.

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.

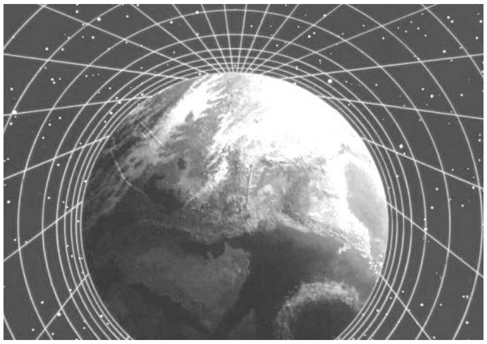
THE FOUNDATIONS OF ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

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.

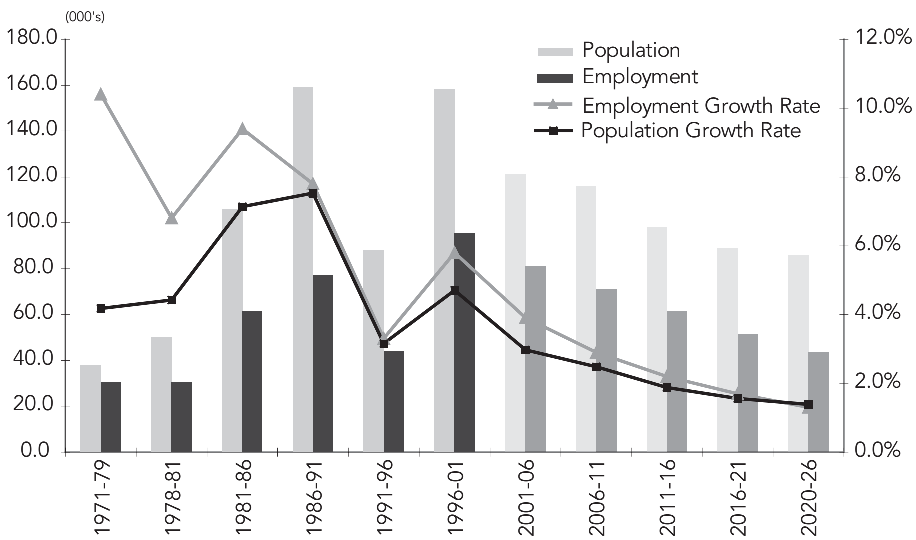
- The globalization of the economy means that York Region competes on a world-wide basis for new investment, new talent and new technology.
- The trend towards a highly skilled and knowledge-based economy and the shift of manufacturing jobs to countries with lower wages.
- The economic uncertainty and 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



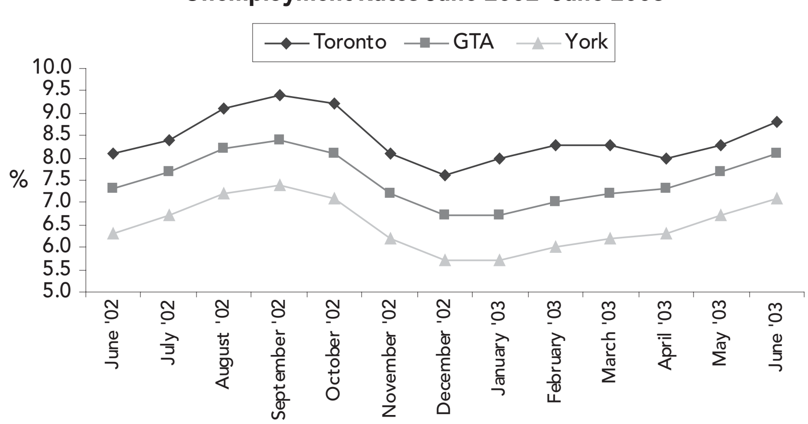
Source: York Region Planning & Development Services Department

- 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.

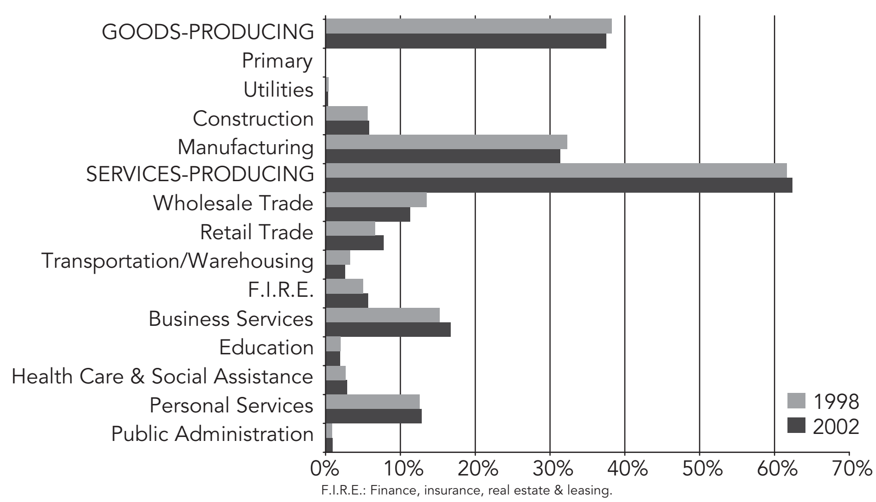
- Manufacturing is still a primary source of employment in the Region but retail trade and business services are the fastest growing segments of the economy. An analysis of the employment areas of the Region in 2002 indicates that manufacturing provides 31.2% of employment but that retail employment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

- Small businesses dominate the economic landscape. As of 2002, small businesses (less than 20 employees) accounted for 83.1 % of the businesses located in York's employment areas. However, there are 34 companies in York Region that employ more than 500 people.

- York Region is home to a large and growing technology cluster. Centred on the Highway 404 and Highway 7 corridors, there are over 800 technology-based companies in the Region. The recently announced Toronto Region Innovation Synergy Centre and the emerging York Region Biotechnology Cluster Consortium are two visible examples of the linkages and partnerships between industry, government and the education sector.

- York Region companies comprise a significant part of the following industry clusters:
  - Financial services
  - Automotive
  - Biomedical and biotechnology
  - Food and beverage
  - Business and professional services
  - Information and communication

Employment by Industry, York Region, 1998 & 2002



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

Business Services: Professional, Scientific & Technical Services and Management, Administration and Other Support Services.

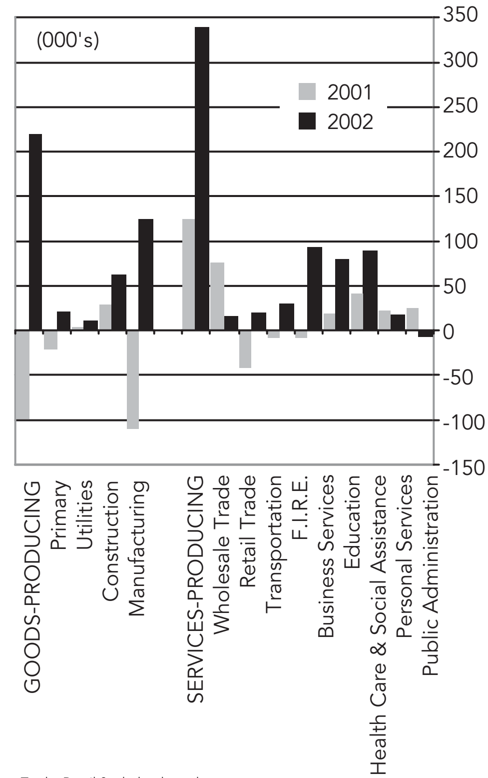
Personal Services: Information, Culture & Recreation; Accomodation & Food Services; and Other Services.

Note: Data based on comparable areas surveyed in 1998 and 2002 Employment Surveys. Excludes most home and farm-based businesses.

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.

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

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.

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.

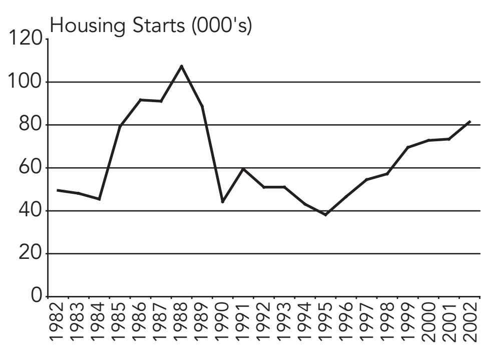
The staged expansion and financing of the water and wastewater network is a key element of the Regions growth management strategy to focus and encourage compact urban form and controlled growth.

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.

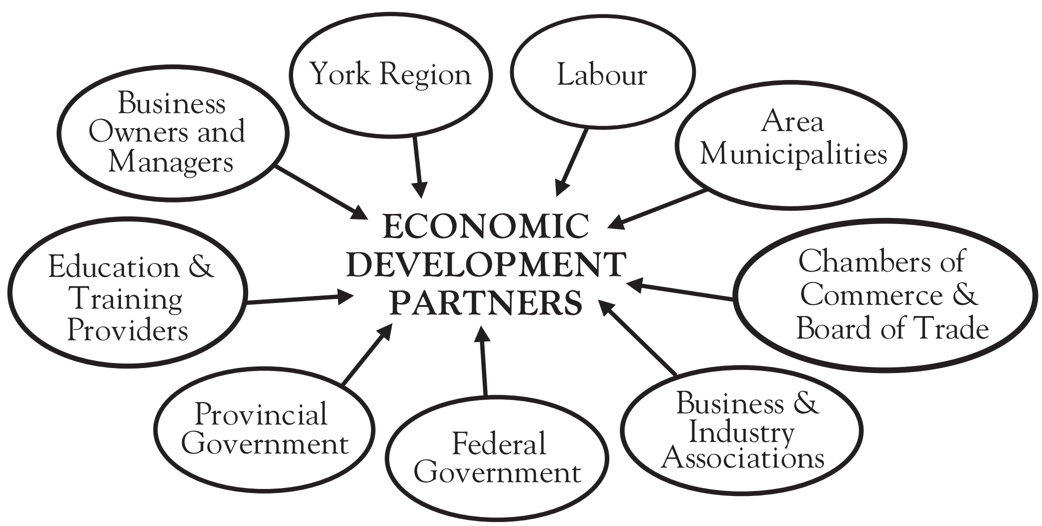
- Business, labour, education and government will be participants in new programs to sustain economic development.

- 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

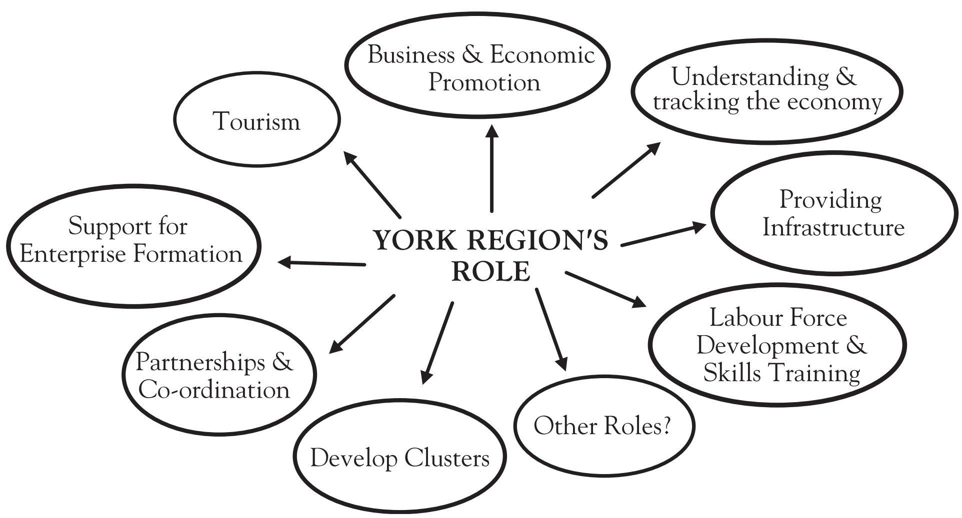
A number of these indicators are already being tracked by various agencies but not all are collected or reported on a basis that relates directly to the Region.

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:

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