



February 6, 2024

Re: York Region Economic Development Action Plan 2024 – 2027

Dear Members of Council,

**DIVISION OF THE
VICE-PRESIDENT,
RESEARCH &
INNOVATION**

On behalf of York University and YSpace, the proposed York Region Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP) aligns extremely well with our mission and values as a post-secondary institution to drive innovation and create positive change. We have been working very closely with the York Region Economic Development and Strategy team over the past six years to drive the innovation agenda forward in York Region with the establishment of YSpace Markham in 2018 as well as the establishment of YSpace Georgina in 2022.

**Jennifer MacLean
AVP Innovation &
Research
Partnerships**

Since the inception of YSpace in 2018, we have supported over 800 ventures to generate over \$205 million in revenue, raise over \$109 million in public and private funding, and create over 1,300 new job opportunities. We have created strong ties with the City of Vaughan, City of Markham, City of Richmond Hill, Town of Newmarket, Town of East Gwillimbury and Town of Georgina through various partnerships and collaborations to create specific entrepreneurial training and mentorship programs. Out of the 800+ ventures that we have supported, approximately 23% of those ventures are York Region based including our joint efforts to establish the first regional Food & Beverage Accelerator program in 2020 that was funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

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As we look forward to the next four years of partnerships with York Region, York University and YSpace, we are excited to further support the Business, Innovation, Talent, and Marketing & Awareness pillars. Our newly council approved JumpSTART program in partnership with Treefrog, Town of Newmarket, Town of East Gwillimbury and Town of Georgina will drive foreign direct investment opportunities into those communities and better support women entrepreneurs to build and grow their businesses in York Region. We also hope to leverage these learnings to better support the northern six communities including Town of Aurora, King Township, and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Also, York University is a Regional Technology Development Site with the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN), and a key partner in the City of Vaughan and the City of Markham's OVIN Demonstration Zone to drive greater mobility innovations and research in York Region to address transit, last mile and other opportunities that exist in the community.

In addition to both new and existing programming and successes, we are excited to be opening the doors to our brand new Markham campus in the Fall of 2024 which will have a strong focus on experiential learning and entrepreneurialism. This campus will become a key pillar for talent and business attraction from a foreign direct investment perspective with our new JumpSTART and Startup Visa programs expected to bring international and innovative scaling businesses into York Region.

We have worked closely with York Region in the development of the Economic Development Action Plan and we are excited to continue our collaborative efforts to contribute to the growth of York Region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jan M", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jennifer MacLean
Assistant Vice President, Innovation & Research Partnerships
York University

