




2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

York Region
Economic Development

YORK  LINK


York Region



What's Inside

Director's Note	4
Regional Economic Development Highlights	6
York Small Business Highlights	40
Business Community and Ecosystem Highlights	46
York Region Economic Indicators	58
York Region Economic Strategy Team	68

Director's Note



I am pleased to present the 2024 Economic Development Year in Review. This publication highlights achievements of our Economic Strategy team and the collaborative work with our local partners; in addition to showcasing significant activities within the business community across York Region.

York Region, home to over 57,000 businesses, ranks as the third largest business community in Ontario and is a leading Canadian tech hub with over 4,900 technology companies. Our robust economy supports 624,000 local jobs, and our labour force is projected to reach 900,000 by 2041.

Guided by the 2024 - 2027 York Region Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP) – approved by York Regional Council in February 2024 – our team collaborates with local municipalities and various partners to deliver comprehensive economic development services. These efforts enhance local programs, leveraging the combined economies-of-scale of the Region's strong and growing industry clusters, skilled workforce, innovation ecosystem, and advanced infrastructure to support business retention and future growth opportunities to the benefit of all residents.

In 2024, York Region experienced healthy growth across several key metrics. From drafting and beginning to implement two crucial roadmaps – the EDAP and a new Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector Strategy, to being named one of Canada's best locations to invest, the Region continues to be an economic powerhouse, with many key indicators ranking among the highest in Ontario and Canada.

As we reflect on 2024, we celebrate all the entrepreneurs and businesses across York Region that make this the place where talent and opportunity intersect. I also extend my gratitude to the Economic Strategy team for their dedication to delivering best-in-class service to the business community.

We look forward to supporting our municipal partners and the business community as we push forward for continued growth in 2025 and delivering on Regional Council's priority of economic vitality for our business community and residents.

I encourage you to stay connected with what's happening in the local business community by following the York Link social media channels, subscribing to our monthly York Region Business Update e-newsletter, and explore yorklink.ca for the latest business news, investments, events, and more.

Jonathan Wheatle
Director, Economic Development
The Regional Municipality of York

Regional Economic Development Highlights



yorklink.ca

York Region: An Economic Powerhouse in the GTA, Ontario and Canada

A central and strategic location, strong and diverse economy, highly skilled workforce and a high quality of life continue to make York Region a destination of choice for business, innovation, and talent in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Ontario and Canada.

The Region is home to over 57,000 employer businesses and boasts robust manufacturing and services industry clusters, including:

- Agriculture and Agri-Food
- Automotive Parts and Technology
- Building and Construction
- Financial, Insurance, and Real Estate Services (FIRE)
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT)
- Life Sciences and Healthcare Technology
- Logistics, Distribution, and Warehousing

York Region’s nine local municipalities are among the most desirable communities to live and work in Canada. The Region is unique in its mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities, presenting a range of both lifestyle and economic development opportunities.

York Region is a hub for talent that fuels growth in the knowledge-based economy, with 73% of residents having post-secondary education. That’s the third highest rate nationally among jurisdictions with a population of more than one million, according to Canadian Census data.

The availability of highly skilled talent underscores the strength of the local technology sector, with York Region having the highest labour force proportion in natural and applied sciences occupations, and the highest proportion of post-secondary grads specializing in science, tech, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) in the Toronto-Waterloo corridor. York Region also has the highest labour force proportion in business, finance and administration occupations among Canada’s largest municipal jurisdictions.

With support from other levels of government, York Region and its local municipalities are

making unprecedented investments in transit, infrastructure, and services that support residents and businesses. A significant share of that development is taking place in York Region’s urban centres and transit corridors, anchoring its evolution into a world-class community that offers residents a spectrum of live/work opportunities.

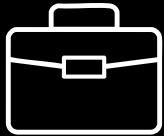
The Region is also home to some of the most productive agricultural areas in Ontario, with nearly half of its land protected for agricultural uses. The total operating farm revenue ranks first in the GTA and third highest in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. This success can be partially attributed to the fact that more than half of the Holland Marsh, a specialty crop area, is located within the Region.

In collaboration with local municipalities and other partners, the York Region Economic Strategy team delivers cross-municipal economic development services that augment and support local-municipal programs. Services and activities leverage the combined economies-of-scale of the Region’s strong and growing:

- Industry clusters
- Talent pool
- Innovation ecosystem
- Infrastructure

All of which drives opportunities for residents and businesses across the Region’s nine cities and towns.

Despite on-going and new economic challenges, York Region has experienced healthy growth across several key measures compared to pre-pandemic levels. The Region continues to be an economic powerhouse, with many key economic indicators (see page 62-63) ranking among the highest in both Ontario and Canada.



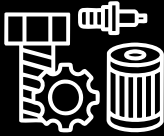
Ontario’s 3rd Largest Business Centre

57,000+ Employer
Business Establishments



4,900+ ICT Companies

One of Canada’s Top
Tech Jurisdictions



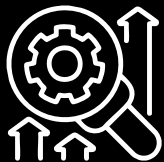
Canada’s Largest Independent Auto Parts and Electronics Manufacturing Cluster

250+ Core Sector Companies



Ontario’s 2nd Largest Food and Beverage Processing Sector

4th Largest in Canada



3 of the Top 5 Corporate R&D Spenders

in the Greater Toronto Area



Ontario’s 3rd Largest Manufacturing Hub

and 5th Largest in Canada
with 2,600 Local Manufacturers

YORK REGION IS WHERE TALENT AND OPPORTUNITY INTERSECT



Augmenting and supporting local business retention, expansion, and attraction services

York Region’s Economic Strategy team works in close collaboration with local municipalities and other service delivery partners to strengthen economic vitality across the Region. Over the last five years, York Region’s targeted business advisory support services have facilitated over 5,500 new jobs throughout the region and the retention of thousands of existing jobs.

Additional job creation is also facilitated with key entrepreneurship and innovation partner organizations directly funded or supported by the Region, such as ventureLAB, Treefrog Accelerator, Workforce Planning Board of York Region and York University’s YSpace. These support services underscore the pivotal role of York Region in ensuring a steady pipeline of skilled professionals to meet the demands of its diverse and dynamic economy.

Region-wide business advisory services delivered by York Region, alongside local municipalities, primarily target established companies in strategic growth industry sectors. These services leverage regional economies-of-scale, the robust York Link communications platform, sector specific expertise, and a network of external partners to extend the reach of municipal corporate call programs and client engagements.

Regional services include, but are not limited to, designated business referrals to the Federal Government’s Global Skills Strategy, strategic cross-municipal business-to-business introductions, sector-specific advisory, on-request joint client expansion and attraction consultations, community business exposure, and cross-municipal industry business development and promotional activities.

Small businesses in York Region’s northern six municipalities – Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Newmarket, and Stouffville – benefit from advisory services, programming, and funding programs through the York Small Business Enterprise Centre (YSBEC). Check out pages 42-47 for more information on YSBEC services, programs, and success stories.

Strong region-wide industry clusters are key to retaining, growing, and attracting businesses in York Region and differentiating the Region as a business location of choice within the wider Greater Toronto Area.

To assist with maintaining and growing the Region’s strategic industry clusters, York Region Economic Strategy, with local municipalities, undertakes cluster development work through an integrated approach that combines research and analysis, direct-to-business advisory, high-profile activations and sector marketing and promotion.

Industry clusters of focus in 2024 were automotive parts and autotech, information and communications technology (with a focus on hardware and semiconductors), life sciences, and agri-food. These sectors will continue to remain a priority focus in 2025; a sub-focus of advanced manufacturing ties all these sectors together and was highlighted at Hannover Messe, one of the world’s largest manufacturing and technology tradeshows, in April 2025.

Success through collaboration:

Hanon Systems invests \$155M in electric vehicle parts manufacturing facility in Vaughan, creating 300 new jobs

In October, global auto parts company Hanon Systems, headquartered in South Korea, announced a \$155 million investment to build a new 284,200 sq. ft. electric vehicle parts manufacturing facility in Vaughan, York Region. The new e-compressor plant when operational will be the first-of-its-kind in North America.

Collaboration across many levels is critical to landing successful investments like this. The York Region Economic Strategy team was proud to work alongside Vaughan Economic Development, Invest Ontario, and the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade to support Hanon Systems before the company decided and finalized this major investment project in York Region.



York Region’s foreign direct investment partnership program

supports local-municipal investment readiness and attraction

York Region is a leading destination for business foreign direct investment (FDI) in the GTA. FDI has contributed to substantial net economic benefits to the Region’s economy, with approximately 600 foreign companies accounting for roughly 10 per cent of all local jobs. The United States and the ICT sector represent the largest source country and target sector, respectively, for FDI in York Region. The region is home to an impressive list of foreign companies, some of which are highlighted in this publication with investment and expansion activities.

In May 2022, Regional Council approved a new “Made in York Region” Regional FDI support partnership framework in collaboration with local municipalities.

- The partnership framework includes the following key focus areas:
- Assist York Region’s local municipalities meet their FDI attraction priorities through cost-sharing of professional services for FDI prospecting or investment readiness projects and initiatives
 - Expand economies-of-scale visibility and promotion of York Region as a destination for FDI attraction in the GTA in key growth industry sectors via the York Link marketing platform and through targeted promotional activations
 - Provide on-request regional staff support for partner-led FDI client files, or activities of regional significance
 - Support the GTA’s FDI attraction agency – Toronto Global – with their centralized end-to-end FDI attraction services

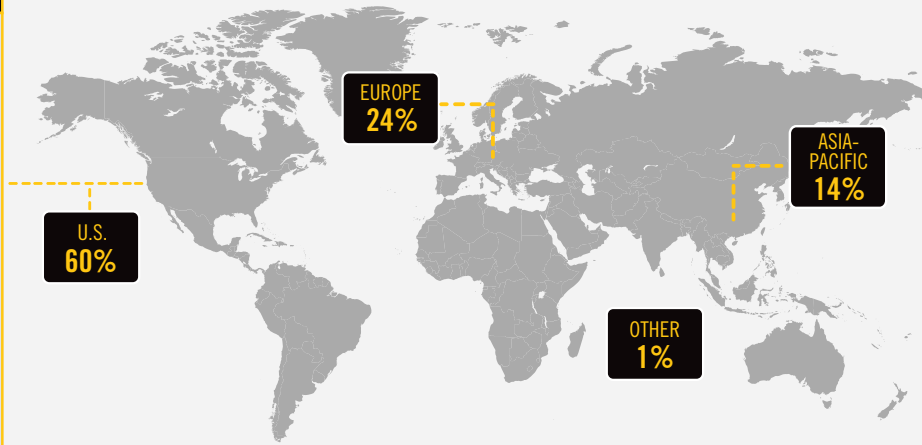
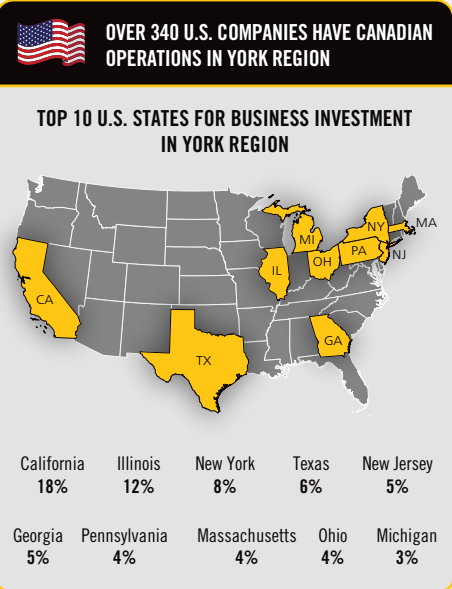
York Region FDI partnership Fund delivers results through collaboration

In 2024, York Region Economic Strategy supported the following local municipalities with investment readiness or attraction through the Region’s FDI partnership fund for a variety of projects. All nine local municipalities in York Region can leverage the fund towards eligible FDI activities subject to the fund’s criteria. The following municipalities leveraged regional funding support for their local FDI projects and initiatives in 2024:

- **East Gwillimbury:** Community and business data research and the development of marketing material such as key sector profiles and investment nodes to support investment attraction.
- **Georgina:** Development of a professional pitch deck to support investment attraction prospecting activities, a new community profile to be used at tradeshow and investment-related events, a commercial

brokerage campaign promoting Georgina’s employment lands investment opportunities, and targeted work with lead generation firm.

- **Markham:** Life sciences sector promotional video for use at the Markham kiosk as part of York Region presence at the MedTech Conference in Toronto this past October.
- **Richmond Hill:** Professional FDI training for staff and elected officials, plus development of additional marketing materials, and further development of the city’s FDI implementation plan.
- **Vaughan:** Showcase for the Vaughan Healthcare Centre Precinct via targeted video, a Betakit advertorial, on-site presence and panel activation, as part of the York Region presence at the MedTech Conference in Toronto.



Percentage of Foreign Companies in York Region by Source Country

600 Foreign Companies have operations in York Region



Logos represent a small sample of foreign companies in York Region.



York Region delegation attends the Site Selectors Guild Annual Conference to showcase key investment lands

In April 2024, York Region, along with municipal economic development partners from Georgina, Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan attended the Site Selectors Guild (SSG) Annual Conference in Nashville, Tennessee.

The SSG is an industry association of experts and consultants who specialize in guiding enterprise-of-scale corporations through the complex process of selecting optimal locations for major expansions or growth. Site selectors work with corporations across a wide array of industries including manufacturing, technology, logistics, and life sciences, among others.

The York Region delegation delivered presentations to six senior site selectors from North America and Europe. This meeting

showcased York Region’s collective strength as a prime location for international companies considering expansion into Canada and its largest market, the Greater Toronto Area, and facilitated expert feedback on the region’s investment attraction positioning and value proposition.

Our municipal partners highlighted the unique advantages of their respective communities and business ecosystems providing the site selectors in attendance with a strong overview of the region’s potential for future business expansion.

Throughout the conference, the York Region delegation gained a wealth of insights, including targeted feedback directly from those involved with major expansion experience on what the Region and our municipalities should be leveraging when pitching companies. The collective economies-of-scale that the Region can offer is a leading driver that would assist site selectors in their initial research and selections before they dive deeper into additional municipal specific advantages.

York Region named one of ‘Canada’s Best Locations’ to invest by Site Selection Magazine

In 2024, The Regional Municipality of York was named one of Canada’s top 20 locations to invest by Site Selection Magazine, a leading business publication covering corporate real estate and economic development.

“York Region is proud to be named one of Canada’s best places to invest for the second consecutive year,” said former York Region Chairman and CEO Wayne Emmerson. “Through

York Region’s commitment to economic vitality in our Corporate Strategic Plan and through the activities identified in the Economic Development Action Plan, together with our nine local cities and towns, we continue to create thriving conditions for existing and new businesses to grow and succeed.”

For more visit: yorklink.ca/york-region-named-one-of-canadas-best-locations-to-invest/





Connecting growing businesses in the knowledge-based economy with global talent

The Greater Toronto Area, and York Region in particular, has a deep talent pool in technical, engineering, and scientific occupations, as well as management and business administration. However, there are times when local companies need skilled individuals from abroad in certain occupations to help them grow. That's where Canada's Global Skills Strategy (GSS) comes in.

The GSS is a Federal Government program created to help eligible Canadian businesses access skilled talent from around the world in eligible, in-demand and specialized occupations and positions.

In collaboration with local municipalities and innovation partners, York Region assists local growth companies in technology and scientific sectors to navigate the GSS and determine their eligibility for the program. York Region is a designated referral partner for the GSS Dedicated Service Channel and Global Talent Stream Category 'A' through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Economic and Social Development Canada.

Over the past five years, York Region Economic Development has facilitated the creation of over 1,500 new knowledge-based and advanced manufacturing jobs across York Region through confidential business referrals to Canada's Global Skills Strategy programs.

Referrals were made for companies in a range of industry sectors such as information & communications technology, engineering, and life sciences. The companies referred range from high-growth startups to major employers investing or expanding in the Region.

ONTARIO
CANADA

EMBRACE THE FUTURE WITH

YORK + LINK
YORK REGION
YORKLINK.CA

York Region and local partners forged new connections at The MedTech Conference Toronto

York Region Economic Strategy, alongside municipal partners from Georgina, Richmond Hill, Markham, and Vaughan showcased the Region within the Destination Toronto and Invest Ontario pavilion. This included insightful panels, a dedicated space highlighting regional life science assets, and on-site staff were able to network with industry professionals over the three-day event.

Our presence at North America's premiere medical technology conference was a prime opportunity to reinforce the strength of York Region's life sciences assets and contributions to Ontario's ecosystem.

During the conference, the Ontario Government announced \$146 million in funding to position Ontario as a global biomanufacturing and life sciences hub.

Highlights from York Region's presence at The MedTech Conference included:

- A panel hosted by Vaughan Economic Development focused on the value of forming strategic partnerships with healthcare and innovation stakeholders, such as the partnership with ventureLAB and the Vaughan Healthcare Centre Precinct around the Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital.
- A panel hosted by Georgina Economic Development emphasized the promising potential of the proposed new Canadian Life Sciences and Technology Park in Georgina and highlighted the importance of industry led developments in enhancing Ontario's life sciences sector.

While Economic Strategy staff were busy at the conference, an accompanying marketing campaign on social media resulted in over 3 million impressions and 3,000 engagements from key industry stakeholders. These efforts significantly enhanced visibility and recognition of York Region's life sciences and health tech sector within the broader provincial and Canadian ecosystem.

For more information about York Region's presence at The MedTech Conference visit: yorklink.ca/medtech2024





The bright lights of **Collision Conference** shined on the York Region tech ecosystem one final time as the conference finished its multiyear run in Toronto

In mid-June, the final Collision Conference took place at the Enercare Centre in Toronto. The major tech event has rebranded to Web Summit and moved to Vancouver for the 2025 edition. The concluding Collision Conference attracted over 40,000 attendees from more than 130 countries.

This global tech event featured over 800 industry leaders and visionaries and more than 2,000 next generation startups from around the world, making it a melting pot of innovation and inspiration.

York Region stood out with a strong on-the-ground presence featuring:

- A media booth with tech journalist Marc Saltzman conducting more than 35 interviews with startups, innovation partners, business park developers, elected officials, and major companies like IBM Canada.
- A startup island featuring a diverse array of 24 innovative startups showcasing their technology were a part of the #YRtech ecosystem via our innovation partners – YSpace, ventureLAB, Treefrog Accelerator, Seneca HELIX, and the Centre for Local Innovation and Collaboration.
- A networking space that allowed municipal economic development and innovation partners to host meetings and engage with Collision attendees as they learned about the Region and our nine cities and towns.

The participation of local municipalities including economic development staff from Aurora, Georgina, Markham, Newmarket, and Richmond Hill, underscored the collaborative spirit of the Region, highlighting its role as a leading Canadian tech hub.

For more details on York Region’s presence at Collision visit: yorklink.ca/collision2024

APMA Canada 2024 Automotive Summit

brings together professionals
from leading automotive
and parts manufacturers
and suppliers

In June, York Region alongside Vaughan Economic Development, supported the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association (APMA) Canada Automotive Summit held in Vaughan. This sold-out event attracted key players in Canada's and North America's automotive ecosystem to network, learn from industry experts, and celebrate the success of recent investments made in the Canadian auto sector.

This was the first of three summits to take place in the city and follows City of Vaughan's earlier work and collaboration with York Region Economic Strategy in 2023 to attract this summit to the city.

The summit was a great opportunity to showcase the advantages of York Region's auto parts and autotech sector as the Region is home to Canada's largest independent automotive parts and electronics manufacturing cluster.

The focus of the event was around the ongoing advancements in electric vehicle technology and the importance of transitioning to a sustainable automotive future.

With additional discussions and panels highlighting:

- The role of innovation in maintaining Canada's competitive edge in the global automotive market, with a focus on new technologies and manufacturing processes.
- The importance of collaborations and partnerships aimed at driving growth and addressing challenges within the automotive sector in North America.

Overall, the summit underscored York Region's pivotal role in shaping the future of the automotive industry in Canada and beyond. Local municipal partners from Aurora, Georgina, Markham, and Vaughan were in attendance to network with professionals from companies including Honda Canada, Linamar, Martinrea, Magna, and many others.



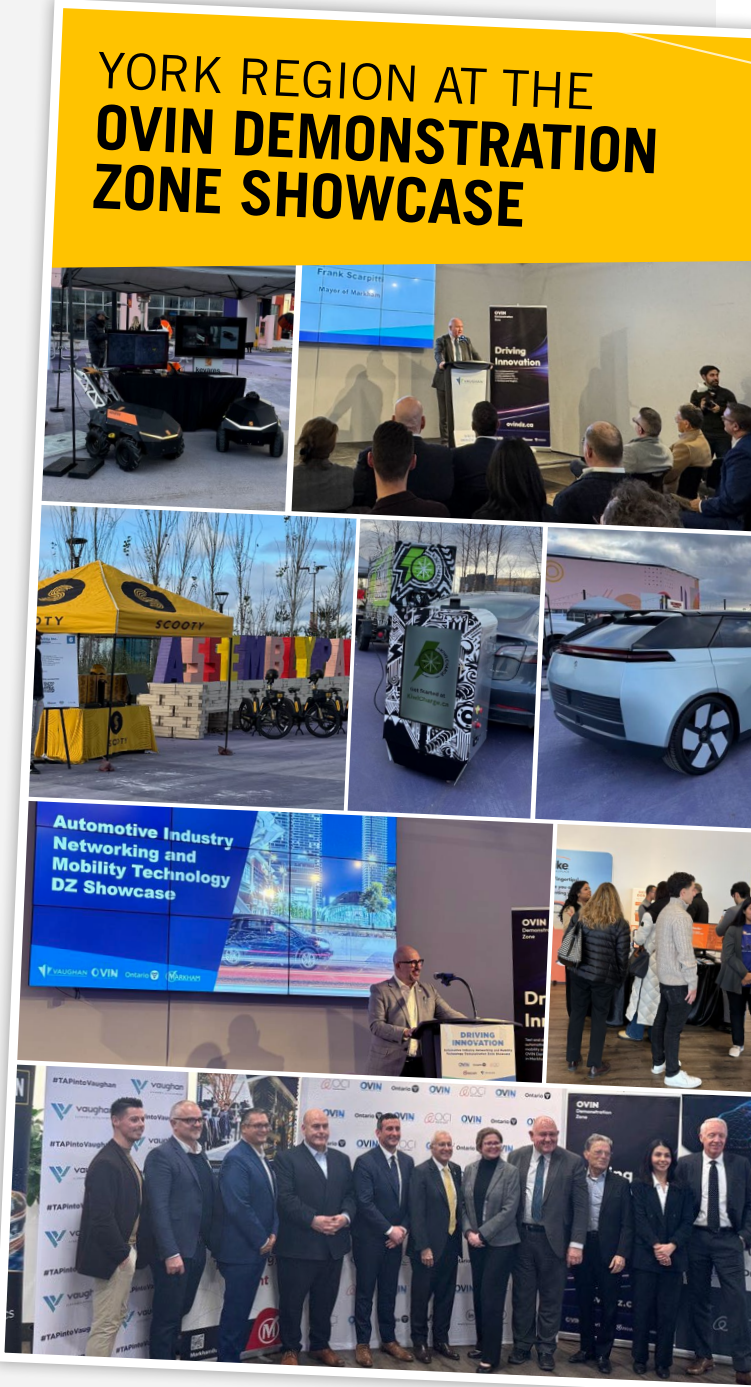
Interactive autotech and mobility showcase held in major urban centre in York Region

In December, the Driving Innovation Showcase took place at Assembly Park in Vaughan, connecting start-ups from the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN) Demonstration Zones to industry leaders. Hosted by the Ontario Government, OVIN, APMA Canada, Assembly Park, Markham, Vaughan, and York Region, the event highlighted and celebrated York Region's and Ontario's mobility innovation ecosystem.

Opening remarks were delivered by Ontario Minister Victor Fedeli, Vaughan Mayor Steven Del Duca, Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti, and Head of OVIN, Raed Kadri. Attendees networked with industry leaders and experienced the latest technologies in the OVIN Demonstration Zone and APMA Canada's Project Arrow. Start-ups showcased innovations to address various mobility challenges, such as maintenance and delivery robots, traffic safety, sustainable charging, parking detection, and road monitoring solutions.

The OVIN Demonstration Zones in Markham Centre and Vaughan Metropolitan Centre serve as a platform for small and medium-sized enterprises in the province to test, pilot, and showcase innovations, such as electric vehicle advancements, integrated mobility solutions, robotics, and connected and autonomous vehicle technologies in real-world environments.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/ovindzshowcase



Mobility Innovation Happens in York Region

2 OVIN DEMO ZONES
Markham Centre & Vaughan
Metropolitan Centre



**1 REGIONAL TECHNOLOGY
DEVELOPMENT SITE**
ventureLAB



The Region is also home to one of GM's three Canadian Technical Centres, the Markham Elevation Centre, which is Canada's largest corporate automotive innovation hub.

For more information visit: yorklink.ca/autotech

York Region’s new vacant employment land inventory visualization platform

Supports local municipalities with investment attraction and employment lands growth forecasting and monitoring

Last year, York Region launched the vacant employment land inventory (VELI) platform – a land parcel-based inventory and map visualization tool for undeveloped employment lands within designated industrial employment zones throughout York Region.

The VELI platform aims to assist local municipalities with the promotion of employment lands and large investment-ready sites, support economic development business attraction and retention strategies, facilitate forecasting and monitoring of employment growth, and inform future transit and other infrastructure service needs.

The VELI collects data under the following main categories: property location, size of property, development status, key investment ready sites, servicing availability, and other information such as distance to highways, airport, rail, etc.

Data is provided by the Region’s local municipalities to help provide a comprehensive regional picture.

Explore the VELI platform:
yorklink.ca/employmentlands

The York Link marketing platform

Supports cross-municipal business growth and economic development promotion

York Region’s award-winning York Link economic development marketing platform has become a recognized name, comprised of a suite of dedicated social media tools and the York Link website. York Link has established itself as a distinguished brand within the business and economic development community across the GTA and beyond.

The York Link platform is focused on marketing to the business and professional talent community and has proven to be of significant value in extending the reach and impact of local municipal economic development promotional efforts in the Region.


YorkLink.ca serves as a comprehensive resource hub, featuring business community news, economic development updates from across the Region’s local municipalities, sectoral profiles, Regional-level business data, targeted job boards, a business events calendar and many other resources aimed at supporting business growth and talent attraction across the Region.

Regional value proposition messaging through the York Link platform has proven to have on-the-ground impact on business location decisions across the Region as companies continuously assess and evaluate their business location options.

In 2024, there was a continued effort to enhance the York Link marketing platform to promote York Region as a leading destination for business, innovation, and talent leveraging the collective economies-of-scale to the benefit of all of the Region’s cities and towns.

By year-end, the platform had garnered a total of over 3.5 million content views (impressions) and more than 46,000 followers and subscribers across all channels and products. This high level of engagement underscores the platform’s role in creating a dynamic and interactive community that supports business growth and collaboration within the Region. The York Link digital marketing platform has proven to be a valuable asset for engaging with businesses and supporting key action items in the 2024 - 2027 Economic Development Action Plan.

2024 Indicators:


3.5 M
Content views
(impressions)


46,338
Followers


37,913
Engagement


14,824
Video views

Follow us on:



Disclaimer: Statistics are cumulative for York Link’s social media channels; total followers is cumulative for social media channels and e-newsletter subscribers.



York Region takes step to address talent development and acquisition challenges in local business community

In 2024, York Region began the development of a comprehensive Partners Engagement Plan (PEP) to address talent development and acquisition challenges facing the local business community. This is a key deliverable under the talent pillar of the York Region Economic Development Action Plan. The plan, which will be launched in 2025, aims to establish a collaborative talent ecosystem involving multiple partners, integrating resources and expertise to ensure a proactive response to the evolving labour market demands.

The PEP was developed through research of existing reports on talent issues in York Region and other regions. Feedback from stakeholders was also leveraged to guide development of the PEP and identify opportunities for their participation in key actions.

Key objectives of the Partners Engagement Plan include:



Raise awareness and understanding of programs and initiatives amongst employers and job seekers



Create and support partnerships and collaboration between stakeholders across the talent development and attraction spectrum



Exploring opportunities to support talent development, attraction and retention for specific sectors

York Region and Vaughan Chamber of Commerce collaborate on 2024 Future of Manufacturing Report

In October, the 2nd annual Future of Manufacturing Summit held in Vaughan, brought together industry leaders, policymakers, and experts to discuss the evolving landscape of Canadian manufacturing.

The release of the Future of Manufacturing Report in December following the Summit, built upon those discussions, and provided data, insights, and expert advice on navigating the evolving manufacturing industry. This report was a collaborative effort led by the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce with support from York Region Economic Strategy and Humber Polytechnic.

The report highlights the importance for manufacturers to embrace and implement industry 4.0 technologies, strengthen supply chain adaptability, and improve cybersecurity awareness and protection measures.

A key element to the report also addresses the challenges of talent in the manufacturing space and offers key actions to improve the talent pipeline, which includes:

- **Strengthen Industry-Education Partnerships:** Align training programs with industry needs, focusing on digital skills and automation.
- **Promote STEM and Trades Education Early:** Increase high school students' exposure to manufacturing careers through co-op placements and mentorship.
- **Implement Regional Training Incentives:** Advocate for tax credits to support workforce development and offset training costs.
- **Expand Diversity Efforts:** Engage underrepresented communities through mentorship and outreach.

Read the 2024 Future of Manufacturing report:
vaughanchamber.ca/wp-content/uploads/Future-of-Manufacturing-Report.pdf





Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund delivered for promising startups, accelerators, and partners

York Region continues to champion positive transformation and business growth through the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund (EIF). The EIF is dedicated to fostering innovation by providing comprehensive support to promising early-stage start-ups, accelerators, incubators, and community partners, driving development and growth within York Region's business community and beyond.

In 2024, York Region entered into a new four-year funding agreement with ventureLAB to support innovation network development under the EIF. This agreement commits an annual investment of \$100,000 – with the possibility of up to three renewals – bringing the total potential investment in the EIF to \$400,000.

The EIF continues to play a crucial role in nurturing the entrepreneurial ecosystem, driving innovation, and supporting economic development across York Region. Funding is made available annually through a competitive process and delivered through the following three funding stream opportunities.

A record number of EIF applications were received in 2024, which is indicative of the growth in awareness and demand for this program. ventureLAB was also able to grow the EIF by \$40,000 with contributions from TechBridge, Sterling Industries Ltd., City of Markham and City of Vaughan. This enabled an increase in the available prize for the HardTech Summit Pitch Competition.

STREAM 1: Non-profits / community partners that serve underrepresented communities

This stream focuses on fostering an inclusive community by supporting non-profits and community partners that serve underrepresented groups. In 2024, two qualified non-profit organizations were each awarded \$10,000 to promote and enhance entrepreneurship and innovation within these communities.

STREAM 2: Small businesses or entrepreneurs developing agri-tech and cleantech solutions

Recognizing York Region's status as a major tech and agri-food hub, this EIF stream is dedicated to supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs in the agri-tech and cleantech sectors. This stream awarded seven prizes of \$10,000 to qualified businesses, encouraging the development of innovative solutions that promote social and environmental sustainability.

STREAM 3: Pitch competition for tech companies at annual HardTech Summit

This stream supports regional tech companies through an annual pitch competition, held in conjunction with ventureLAB's HardTech Summit. In 2024, 70 applications were received and after a rigorous review process, eight finalists were selected to compete. These finalists received one-on-one pitch coaching sessions and pitched for a \$50,000 award to support their innovative tech solutions.

For more information visit: venturelab.ca/eif



York Region solidified its **commitment to fostering innovation** through a new funding agreement with ventureLAB

In April 2024, York Regional Council approved a new four-year agreement, that allocates \$150,000 annually for core services, totaling up to \$600,000 through 2027. Under this agreement, ventureLAB will provide comprehensive program support, financial administration, and detailed program reporting.

Key responsibilities under the agreement include supporting entrepreneurs and scale-up companies with product and service development, offering mentorship and training, collaboration on innovation programs, and promoting ventureLAB’s services at various events throughout the region. This is in addition to the ongoing five-year \$1.5 million funding agreement to expand the Hardware

Catalyst Initiative, which ventureLAB leveraged to secure an additional \$4.5 million from FedDev Ontario.

Additionally, ventureLAB will deliver entrepreneur programs such as the Capital Investment Program and Venture Growth Program and provide one-on-one advisory services.

The regional advisor will work with local economic development offices and business organizations across the Region to identify and engage qualified businesses and founders. A coordinated marketing plan was implemented to increase awareness of ventureLAB highlighting success stories and the economic impact of their initiatives.



Over 1,100 attendees participated in ventureLAB’s 4th Annual HardTech Summit in Markham

In November, more than 1,100 people participated in ventureLAB’s 4th annual HardTech Summit in person or virtually. Hosted by CBC journalist, Manjula Selvarajah and held at the Toronto Marriott Markham, this summit focused on global manufacturing and semiconductor opportunities in Canada.

For the first time, the summit featured a side stage for deeper discussions. Panels explored topics such as medtech innovation, strategies for Canada’s tech growth, workforce challenges, and communication tools in hardtech. Attendees also visited over 30 exhibition booths showcasing advancements in hardware, medtech, AI, and semiconductors.

For more information visit: yorklink.ca/venturelab-hosts-4th-annual-hardtech-summit/

York Region Innovation and Investment Fund enables the development of Project JumpSTART

In 2024, York Region made a significant leap in expanding York Region’s innovation capacity while supporting entrepreneurship through the Innovation and Investment Fund (IIF).

The purpose of the IIF is to drive innovation in the community and attract investment in transformational projects of regional, provincial or national significance.

In January, Council approved the allocation of \$1.08 million over three years in support of Project JumpSTART - a collaboration between York University and Treefrog Inc.

This initiative addresses the needs of internationally-based tech entrepreneurs and female tech entrepreneurs by leveraging two standout programs:

- **York University’s Entrepreneurial Leadership and Learning Alliance (ELLA) Program** is dedicated to empowering women entrepreneurs, offering them the resources, mentorship, and support they need to thrive.
- **Treefrog Accelerator Program** aims to attract and support both local and international entrepreneurs with support from both organizations involved in Project JumpSTART.

Building on the successful models already established by York University and and Treefrog Inc., and support previously received by the Ontario Skills Development Fund (SDF) program, this initiative is expected to create 300 jobs over the next three years. It aligns with the IIF mission and goal of being a catalyst for innovation, with an increased focus in York Region’s northern six municipalities.

York Region Innovation Leadership Group enhances innovation and entrepreneurial spirit in the Region

The York Region Innovation Leadership Group (ILG) is an industry-led group that provides strategic guidance to the Innovation Pillar in the York Region Economic Development Action Plan. In 2022, a study suggested creating this group to use industry knowledge to strengthen the Region's innovation efforts.

Founded in 2023, the ILG is administered by York Region Economic Strategy and comprised of members from the business community, academia, centres of innovation, York Angel Investors, and YorkNet. The group meets quarterly to discuss innovation-related issues and opportunities, aiming to enhance the region's innovation and entrepreneurial spirit by identifying new opportunities.

In 2024, four productive meetings were held where the group tackled important topics such as addressing talent gaps and enhancing the mobility ecosystem.

Key results from these meetings include:



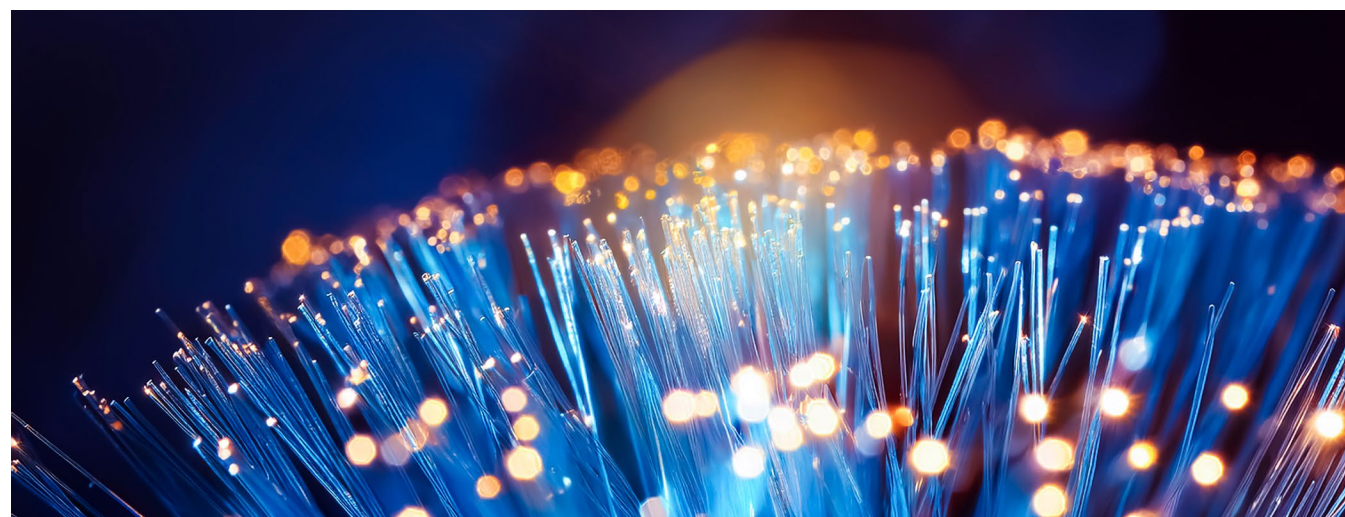
- **Gathered valuable feedback** on the York Region Partner Engagement Plan, which will help refine talent-related strategies moving forward.



- **Explored the development** of a York Region Innovation Exchange and established a working group to set the framework for its launch and operation, which will enable collaboration between private, public and academic sectors to drive innovation in the region.



- **Received insights on best practices** from Ontario Centre of Innovation (OCI) regarding large-scale initiatives like ENCQOR - a transformative 5G technology innovation project led by OCI in partnership with the governments of Canada, Ontario and Québec - that can be leveraged by York Region when considering similar initiatives.



YorkNet growth supports innovation and broadband service delivery across York Region

YorkNet is a regional-owned corporation that builds and operates a high-speed, dark fibre network across the Region to create equitable access to high-speed internet. It achieves this through three primary areas of focus:

- Improving the delivery of regional services such as traffic management, transit systems, water/wastewater control management, security monitoring, policing, and cloud-enabled applications.
- Working with municipalities, hospitals, libraries, fire halls, schools, community centres, and other public sector organizations to improve the broadband services they deliver using YorkNet's network.
- Providing telecommunication and internet service providers with open access to the network to drive economic and social benefits and enhance broadband service for the Region's residents and businesses, particularly in rural and underserved areas of the Region.

Currently, more than 1,000 kilometres of dark fibre conduit has been installed across all nine regional municipalities and into the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, making it one of the largest constructed dark fibre networks in Ontario.

The growing footprint of this network presents opportunities for other telecommunications users to enhance data service delivery, and this is being shared with interested parties to raise awareness. This infrastructure also serves as a foundation for research, development, and testing leading-edge technologies that will shape the way we live, work, and learn.





2024 York Region Tourism Fund supports fifteen local events

Established in 2022, the York Region Tourism Fund aims to support tourism and placemaking across York Region by encouraging increased participation at local events. The fund is open to registered charitable organizations and non-profit/not-for-profit organizations, including local municipalities, business improvement areas, chambers of commerce and boards of trade, destination marketing organizations, arts associations, and community groups. Successful applicants can receive up to \$5,000 per event and funds are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

In 2024, events supported by the Tourism Fund attracted over 40,000 attendees and more than 300 businesses participated. Many organizations received earned media coverage and increased awareness for their event. The fund not only enhanced local tourism, but also strengthened community bonds and economic growth.

In 2024, 15 recipients received funding through the Tourism Fund:

- **Aurora Chamber Street Festival**
Aurora Chamber of Commerce
- **Stouffville Main Street Classic Car Show**
Stouffville Chamber of Commerce
- **World Aquatics Artistic Swimming World Cup**
Canada Artistic Swimming
- **Markham Village Music Festival**
Markham Village Festival Corporation
- **Aurora Through the Archives**
Town of Aurora
- **Annual Lavender Festival**
Lavender Polo Community Centre for Children in Need
- **Markham Talent**
Markham Arts Council
- **2024 Markham Jazz Festival**
Markham Jazz Festival
- **York Region 2SLGBTQ+ Community Action Plan**
York Pride Fest
- **Symphony Under the Stars**
Town of Stouffville
- **Canada Day Celebrations 2024**
City of Markham
- **Summerfest Marketplace**
The Richmond Hill Board of Trade
- **Field to Table Farm Tour**
Town of Georgina
- **Gran Fondo King**
King Chamber of Commerce
- **Taste of King**
Township of King

For more information visit: yorklink.ca/tourismfund



Agriculture and agri-food sector support in the Region

New council-approved strategy aims to support and grow the sector

As a crucial component of York Region’s economic vitality, the agriculture and agri-food sector in York Region is a significant contributor to the local economy accounting for \$3.8 billion in gross domestic product. The Region is home to some of the most productive agriculture areas in Canada and the country’s fourth-largest food and beverage processing hub, supporting more than 67,000 local jobs.

In October 2024, York Regional Council approved the 2024 - 2027 Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector Strategy. By focusing on initiatives supporting innovation, resiliency and education, the updated strategy aims to support the future growth and success of this vibrant industry.

Building on the success of the previous strategy, the new version focuses on sustaining and supporting the entire local agri-food sector and addresses modern challenges such as climate change, labour shortages, supply chain disruptions, and technological advancements while integrating the Region’s commitment to inclusivity, diversity, equity, accessibility and Indigenous relations.

The 2024 - 2027 Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector Strategy was developed using a phased approach with input from over 200 stakeholders through focus groups, interviews, an agri-food business survey, and engagement with the Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee. Implementation of the strategy has been initiated in collaboration with York Region’s nine local municipalities, the Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee, and other key stakeholders.

Read the 2024 – 2027 Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy: yorklink.ca/agstrategy



York Region’s Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee provides leadership and guidance

The York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee advises York Regional Council and staff on agriculture, agri-food, and rural matters in York Region. Advisory Committee members provide balanced representation across the agri-food value chain including farmers, producers, input suppliers, food processors, distributors, and food retailers.

After a successful first term, the Agriculture and Agri-food Advisory Committee elected new members in December 2022 for the 2023 - 2026 term. The Advisory Committee provided input on initiatives such as Farm 911, educational agri-food workshops, and other projects. Advisory Committee members also provided leadership and guidance in delivering the first strategy and the development of the 2024 - 2027 strategy.

We thank members of the 2023 - 2026 term of the Advisory Committee for their guidance and support. We look forward to continuing to work together to strengthen relationships across our communities so that York Region is a place that all are proud to call home.

2023 - 2026 Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee members:

- Wayne Emmerson, York Region Chairman & CEO (Former)
- Regional Councillor Naomi Davison, Town of Georgina
- Councillor Avia Eek, Township of King (Chair)
- Kim Empringham, York Federation of Agriculture (Vice Chair)
- Janice Bartley, Foodpreneur Lab
- Antonio Gomes, Cavaleiro Farm
- Brandon Hebor, Boreal Farms
- Laurie Jittoo, Tacos and Waffles
- Scott Paisley, Little Rouge Farms
- Melanie Pearson, citizen member
- Jenna Pegg, York Farm Fresh
- Jessica Tong, York Region Food Network

Partnerships are critical component to delivering agri-food initiatives across York Region

Leveraging the knowledge and expertise of agri-food stakeholders and community partners is key to delivering agri-food programming. York Region worked closely with community partners to deliver initiatives including:

- Continued support of York Farm Fresh to raise awareness of local agricultural products and develop the Farm Fresh Guide Map to connect communities with locally grown products through farms and farmers' markets.
- Using Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance ConnectON platform, an asset mapping platform for the agri-food and manufacturing sectors, York Region produced a map in the new Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector Strategy that demonstrated the nearly 5,000 agri-food businesses across the agri-food value chain in the Region.
- Collaborated with King-based, Boreal Farms, and Aurora-based, STEM Minds, to host several farm tours and delivered an agri-tech skills development workshop with a focus on building foundational skills, introducing agri-food innovations, and fostering partnerships to support workforce transitions into agri-tech careers.

A focus of the 2024 - 2027 Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector Strategy is to strengthen partnerships and leverage resources to deliver agri-food programming. York Region looks forward to continuing to work with community partners, municipal partners, the Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee, and agri-food stakeholders to implement the actions outlined in the strategy.



Supporting local agri-food events in the community

With vibrant agriculture and agri-food events happening throughout the Region, supporting and participating in these events helps raise the profile of the local agriculture and agri-food sector and promote local food.

In 2024, the York Region Economic Strategy team supported several events, including:

- Farm to Table Summer Feast in King Township
- Beyond the Fields documentary screening in the Town of Georgina
- Farm to Fork event in the Town of East Gwillimbury

Looking ahead, York Region will continue to collaborate with partners on local food projects and support and participate in related events.



Afri Future Tech Summit 2024

Attendees tour the #YRfood and #YRtech ecosystems

In October, York Region's #YRfood and #YRtech ecosystems were on display during the Afrifursa 2024 Afri Future Tech Summit and accompanying innovation bus tour. The tour was organized by York Region Economic Strategy and allowed participants, including a local MPP, to explore York University's YSpace to learn about support systems in place for startups. The tour also included a visit to Boreal Farms in King to see how tech is impacting the next generation of farming.

As a hub for global collaboration, York Region provides significant opportunities for knowledge and technology transfer with Africa. York Region Economic Development's Program Manager of Rural and Agri-Food Initiatives moderated a discussion with panelists on how York Region's agri-food ecosystem is at the forefront of driving sustainable food production through cutting-edge agri-tech solutions.

The session also served as a platform for Black and African Canadians to explore the agri-tech ecosystem in Markham and York Region, uncovering opportunities for business development and partnerships.



Mars Wrigley showcases Newmarket manufacturing plant to York Region Chairman and Economic Strategy team

In November, former York Region Chairman and CEO Wayne Emmerson, and the York Region Economic Strategy team toured Mars Wrigley's impressive manufacturing plant in Newmarket.

The facility operating twenty-four hours a day has 160 staff focused on producing nut-free confectionary product brands, including Mars, 3 Musketeers, Milky Way and Maltesers. The plant uses a mix of skilled employees and

advanced automation to keep the chocolates rolling efficiently off the lines.

Site visits help strengthen communication and collaboration to support sector development. Companies like Mars are important contributors to the York Region food sector. Mars is one of over 300 food and beverage manufacturers and processors in York Region, which makes it the fourth-largest food and beverage sector in Canada.

Sign up for the York Region Agri-Food Newsletter: yorklink.ca/agrifoodnewsletter



/ 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

York Small Business Highlights

yorklink.ca/smallbusiness

Small Business Success Spotlight: Coconut Village Nails Spa

Phiona Durrant, owner of Coconut Village Nails Spa has created a haven for clients looking to relax and feel refreshed through services like manicures, pedicures, facials, and more. The spa's success is evident in its fully booked days and the glowing reviews it receives online.

"You did not just get a grant and a goodbye. That was very important to me. It's a space where you are welcome. You can ask questions. You got the mentorship, resources and training you need to make sure that you're going to succeed,"

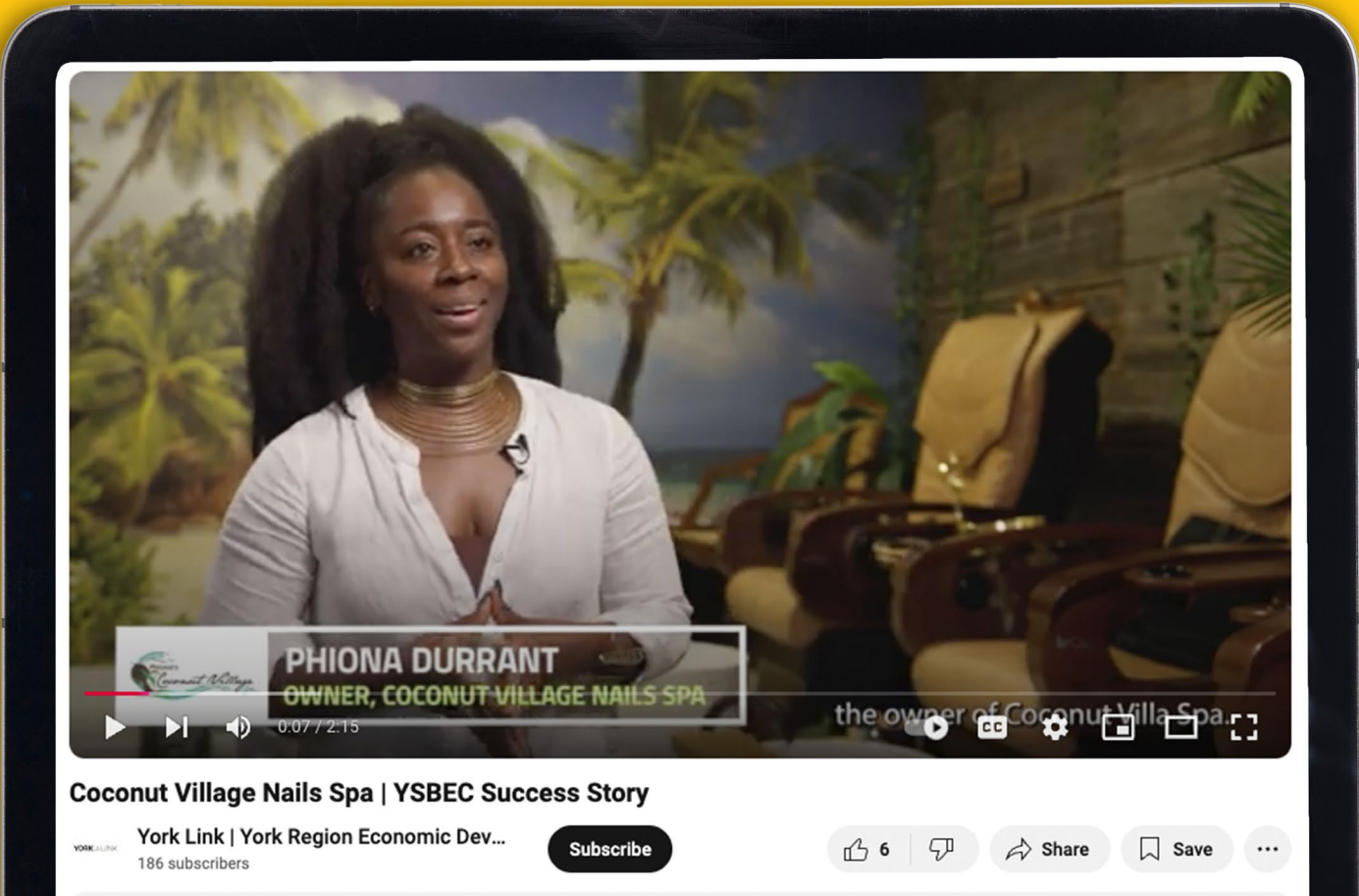
Phiona

The Aurora resident of nearly 16 years, started her business in 2019 and grew it with the help of YSBEC's Starter Company Plus program.

Reflecting on her entrepreneurial journey, Phiona expressed her gratitude for the support she received from the YSBEC, "I've gone and knocked on many doors. I know what it is to have to navigate and fight and find resources. It is one of the most flawless processes that I've gone through."

Phiona credits the Starter Company Plus program and YSBEC for their crucial role in her business's success. **"The Starter Company Plus, YSBEC, that's all a part of the Coconut Village story and how they helped us to be still standing today,"** she said.

Watch the video:
yorklink.ca/ysbec-success-story-coconut-village-nails-spa/



Increase in Starter Company Plus funding provides additional support to small businesses and Ontario Government boosts funding allocation

Starter Company Plus is an entrepreneurship program, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, geared to help adults over 18 to start or grow their business. The program provides a variety of services, including mentoring, training, workshops, and a provincial grant up to \$5,000. The 2023 - 2024 program funded a total of 11 businesses. The 2024 - 2025 cohort supported a total of 16 businesses – seven existing businesses and nine new businesses – due to additional funding allocated to the YSBEC by the Ontario Government.

This additional funding support from the Ontario Government enabled YSBEC to continue offering additional services including business consultations, seminars, workshops, mentorship, training, and two more Summer Company grants of \$3,000 each and five more Starter Company Plus grants of \$5,000 each to entrepreneurs in northern York Region.

For more about the program visit:
yorklink.ca/startercompanyplus



YSBEC partners with Federation of African Canadian Economics (FACE) Coalition events to support black entrepreneurs in York Region

In 2024, YSBEC took the lead in fostering collaboration between FACE Coalition and the four small business enterprise centres across York Region.

This initiative aimed to support black entrepreneurs by delivering workshops that highlighted the opportunities available through the Black Entrepreneur Loan Fund, a program created by FACE in partnership with the federal government. The fund is designed to help black business owners access capital, investments, and additional business resources for expansion.

Throughout the year, YSBEC and its partners hosted four events to educate and connect black entrepreneurs within the community. These workshops provided valuable information and networking opportunities, helping to accelerate business growth for Black Canadian entrepreneurs.



Fostering the Youth Entrepreneurial Spirit: Summer Company Program

Each summer, in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, the York Small Business Enterprise Centre (YSBEC) administers the Summer Company program, which is funded by the Ontario Government. The program is designed to foster and develop the entrepreneurial spirit in students between the ages of 15 to 29, and who are registered to return to school in September. Each participating student is also paired with an experienced mentor for one-on-one support and can receive a grant of up to \$3,000 to help launch their business.

In 2024, eleven students participated in the program and along with running their businesses throughout the summer, had an opportunity to promote their businesses at showcases during the Aurora Street Festival, Upper Canada Mall, and an event at the York Region office in Newmarket.

The students came from five of the six northern York Region municipalities and had a variety of unique business ideas, ranging from 3D printing, swimming classes, clothing design and more. **These were the 2024 Summer Company Cohort:**

- **Pucktive:** Protective athletic wear by Edward P.
- **AquaSplash Swim school:** by Bethany E.
- **Daniel's Café:** Popup games café by Daniel X.
- **GreenWave Lawn and Pool Care:** by Mujaahid K.
- **Cook's Cut & Care:** Grass cutting services by Dillan C.
- **Decked Out Detailing:** Boat detailing by Nevaeh S.
- **ClearView Windows:** Window cleaning by Ashwin K.
- **Royal Swimmers:** Swim school by Claire L.
- **Designbyhasti:** Custom clothing design by Hasti M.
- **PrintedShapes:** 3D printing by Yegor I.
- **Xendraut Clothing:** Sustainable clothing design by Kiarash Z.

For more about the program visit: yorklink.ca/summercompany

Northern York Region Professional Services Access Program gives small businesses assistance with critical services

Having access to professional services is critical for the success of any business, but it can be expensive. The Northern York Region Professional Services Access Program makes it easy for eligible businesses to get free advice on legal, finance, marketing, and human resources.

Since the launch of the program in 2021, this special program for YSBEC clients has helped more than 100 businesses by connecting them with experts like lawyers, accountants, and financial analysts.

For more information visit: yorklink.ca/psap

Northern York Region small businesses can access a variety of support from the York Small Business Enterprise Centre

If you are starting a new business or expanding an existing small business with less than 10 employees, the York Small Business Enterprise Centre is here to help!

Serving small businesses in the northern six York Region municipalities: Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Newmarket, and Stouffville. The YSBEC provides support through business consultations, workshops and seminars, funding programs, and networking events.

In 2024, YSBEC:



Hosted and partnered on over **30 seminars and events**, covering topics such as marketing, sales, financing, market research, and business plan development, **reaching over 800 people.**



Delivered **over 400 business consultations** including one-on-one and group sessions.



Delivered the successful implementation of the **Summer Company and Starter Company Plus** programs.

Small businesses in Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan can reach out to their local small business enterprise centres for support.

For more information visit: yorklink.ca/smallbusiness

Signup for the YSBEC newsletter:
yorklink.ca/ysbecnewsletter

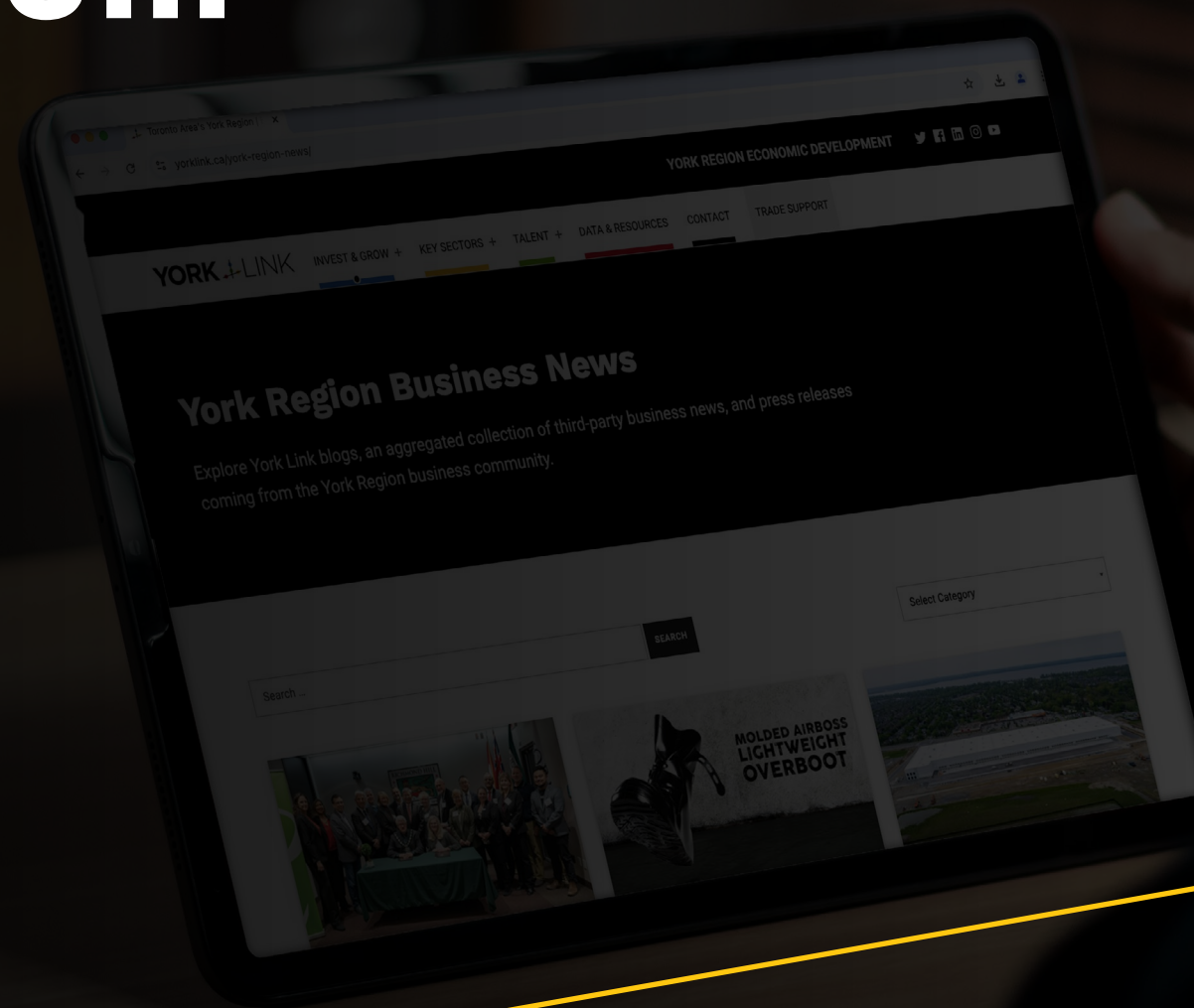
Visit in-person:
17150 Yonge Street, Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 8V3



/ 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

Business Community and Ecosystem Highlights

yorklink.ca/news



Loblaw distribution centre began hiring in October for massive new facility in East Gwillimbury, which is now operational

Yorkregion.com | East Gwillimbury

The massive new Loblaw distribution centre on Woodbine Avenue, just north of Green Lane off Highway 404 in East Gwillimbury, began hiring. The new 1.2-million-square-foot logistics and distribution facility opened in early 2025. Jobs advertised include warehouse supervisors, warehouse inventory control, warehouse workers, equipment operators and automation technicians. The distribution centre broke ground in August of 2022 and is the town’s largest employment project in its history; it’s estimated that it will create up to 1,000 new jobs.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/loblaws-starts-hiring-for-massive-new-facility

Markham headquartered IBM expands team and capabilities in Canada Software Lab to accelerate adoption of generative AI and other key technologies

Business Wire | Markham

In April, IBM Canada announced the expansion of IBM Technology Expert Labs in Markham to support Canadian and global organizations as they continue to adopt and integrate generative AI, such as WatsonX, IBM’s AI and data platform, hybrid cloud, and cybersecurity solutions. The software lab’s expertise and resources have enabled IBM to drive innovation and advancements in AI, solidifying IBM’s commitment to progress in the field.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/markham-headquartered-ibm-expands-team-and-capabilities-in-canada-software-lab-to-accelerate-adoption-of-generative-ai-and-other-key-technologies



An 82-acre medtech campus emerges in Vaughan

Betakit | Vaughan

The City of Vaughan has partnered with Mackenzie Health, York University, and ventureLAB to develop a destination for healthcare innovation called the Vaughan Healthcare Centre Precinct. Emerging startups can accelerate their path to commercialization by collaborating with worldclass healthcare partners in Vaughan’s ecosystem. One key partner is Sterling Industries, a contract manufacturer specializing in medical devices. As a host for ventureLAB’s Hardware Catalyst Initiative lab, Sterling supports startups in refining product design, meeting regulatory requirements, and scaling their go-to-market strategies.

For more information visit: yorklink.ca/an-82-acre-medtech-campus-emerges-in-vaughan



Record attendance’ fuels three top 100 event awards for Stouffville

yorkregion.com | Municipality

Stouffville Ribfest, Stouffville Holiday Market and the 50th Annual Antique and Classic Car Show were all named in the top 100 festivals. “Being recognized by Festivals and Events Ontario is the icing on the cake after a record-breaking attendance year for all of these signature events,” community services commissioner Rob Braid said. “The team works incredibly hard to deliver top-notch, free and inclusive events in our community and by winning these awards, we are shining a light on Stouffville as not only a great place to live and work but also to play and visit.”

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/record-attendance-fuels-3-top-100-event-awards-for-stouffville/



New 60,000 sq.ft. King City animal hospital aims to ‘revolutionize’ care

NewmarketToday.ca | King

The 60,000 sq.ft. four-storey King Animal Hospital that opened in August is a privately owned multidisciplinary referral and emergency facility for animal care located on 50 acres. The facility has seven operating rooms, 12 exam rooms, a state-of-the-art laboratory and pharmacy, and specialized areas, including a separate cat ward and a medical device reprocessing department sterilization room.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/new-king-city-animal-hospital-aims-to-revolutionize-care



Provincial grant helps Newmarket textiles manufacturer, Precambrian Products, expand

NewmarketToday.ca | Newmarket

The Ontario Government is granting \$880,695 to a Newmarket-based Precambrian Products to help expand capacity. Precambrian Products, which is spending \$5.6 million to expand its production line, manufactures non-woven fabrics used in products like medical-grade masks. The company has started growing from three production lines to five, with each line able to make 1.2 tonnes of material a day.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/provincial-grant-helps-newmarket-textiles-manufacturer-precambrian-products-expand



Richmond Hill-based manufacturer M.I.S. Electronics enhances production to support critical sectors

Government of Canada | Richmond Hill

Local Members of Parliament visited M.I.S. Electronics in Richmond Hill to meet with and hear from employees about how the over \$1-million investment from the federal government supported replacing its manufacturing line with new state-of-the-art technologies to meet growing demands from domestic and international clients. The new manufacturing line has had positive impacts on productivity, allowing M.I.S. to nearly double its electronic components manufacturing per hour.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/manufacturer-enhances-production-to-support-critical-sectors



Province invested \$150,000 for the YSpace Northern York Region Hub

York University | Georgina, East Gwillimbury

The YSpace Northern York Region Hub is a partnership between the Town of Georgina, Town of East Gwillimbury and York University’s YSpace. The province is investing \$150,000 into the project as part of the Rural Economic Development fund.

The YSpace Northern York Region Hub creates an ecosystem of entrepreneurial resources, including mentorship, access to networks and co-working space for collaboration. These resources and programs have been tailored to address specific needs identified within the local business community, have garnered significant participation, with over 700 individuals benefiting from the educational initiatives.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/province-investing-150000-for-the-yspace-northern-york-region-hub/



Aurora-based STEM Minds and King-based Boreal Farms partner to engage next generation of farmers

NewmarketToday.ca | Aurora

Brandon Hebor, who owns Boreal Farms, has partnered with Anu Bidani, founder of Aurora-based STEM Minds, to run free monthly community nights and a dozen workshop sessions for children, plus an agriculture-themed summer camp for youth aged 15 and up.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/aurora-stem-centre-king-based-farm-partner-to-engage-next-generation-of-farmers

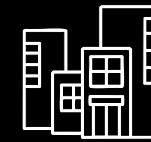


Amazon Canada opens Richmond Hill delivery station hiring new employees

Yorkregion.com | Richmond Hill

The world’s largest online retailer cut a ribbon in November at its newest delivery station in Canada, a 225,000 sq.ft. building near Highway 404 in Richmond Hill. Amazon Canada started hiring in October for the “last mile” facility, known as DO14, and already has 150 regular and seasonal employees there.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/amazon-opens-richmond-hill-delivery-station/



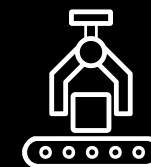
Creation Technologies expands Markham facility

Electronic Products & Technology | Markham

The tech company held a ribbon-cutting event in January 2024 that celebrated the move to a new site in Markham, which now boasts a custom built, state-of-the-art space spanning 118,500 sq.ft. The new location represents a 54% larger physical footprint for Creation Technologies in Markham.

For more information visit:

yorklink.ca/creation-technologies-expandsmarkham-facility



New healthcare distribution centre in Vaughan uses AI-robots to 'optimize' efficiency

Yorkregion.com | Vaughan

Cardinal Health Canada is a global healthcare company providing products and services to hospitals, pharmacies, and clinics. They opened a 165,000 sq.ft. medical supply distribution centre in Vaughan this past June and it operates using autonomous robots. The autonomous mobile robots are integrated with the warehouse management system and use artificial intelligence and optimization algorithms to fulfil orders.

For more information visit:

yorklink.ca/new-health-care-distribution-centre-uses-ai-robots-to-optimize-efficiency-opened-in-vaughan/



Infostream Solutions reaches key construction milestone at its new multimillion-dollar AI and cybersecurity innovation campus in Richmond Hill

Cision | Richmond Hill

In July, Infostream Solutions announced the substantial completion of two specialized facilities, each spanning 44,000 sq.ft., at its new Technology and Innovation Campus. The facilities are designed to house Infostream's newest additions to their service offerings focused on artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. This expansion is expected to create over 200 high-skilled jobs.

For more information visit:

yorklink.ca/infostream-solutions-inc-reaches-key-construction-milestone-at-its-new-multimillion-dollar-ai-cybersecurity-innovation-campus-in-richmond-hill

SIGN UP FOR THE YORK REGION BUSINESS UPDATE

Business community
news, events, and
funding opportunities
direct to your inbox
once a month



yorklink.ca/newsletter



Muddy York Brewing crafts new roots in Stouffville

Yorkregion.com | Stouffville

Muddy York Brewing, a beloved fixture in the Toronto craft beer scene since 2013, is branching out in Stouffville. This expansion marked a significant milestone for the brewery, known for its diverse beer lineup that caters to a wide range of palates. As for the beer, it comes with a great reputation. Muddy York won the 2023 Brewery of the Year at the Canadian Brewing Awards.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/muddy-york-brewing-spreading-its-wings-in-stouffville/

Global tech firm, Agilysys, acquires Markham headquartered Book4Time for \$204 million

Betakit | Markham

In August, Markham-based Book4Time announced it had been acquired by global tech firm, Agilysys, for \$150 million USD (\$204 million CAD). Founded nearly 20 years ago by Roger Sholanki, Book4Time is a software-as-a-service company that provides revenue and spa management for the hospitality and wellness industries.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/american-hospitality-tech-firm-agilysys-acquires-markham-headquartered-book4time-for-204-million/



York University's Digital Technologies program, Canada's first fully work-integrated degree, completes first year with 100 per cent student contract renewals and new IBM partnership

Globe Newswire | Markham

York University's Lassonde School of Engineering announced the early success of its Digital Technologies BASc program, Canada's first fully work-integrated degree. With a rigorous curriculum designed by experienced faculty and a focus on immediate practical application, students in the program spend approximately 80 per cent of their time gaining hands-on experience in the workplace.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/york-universitys-digital-technologies-program-canadas-first-fully-work-integrated-degree-completes-first-year-with-100-per-cent-student-contract-renewals-and-new-ibm-partnership/

Canadian healthcare tech gets a shot in the arm, featuring Aurora-based Skinopathy

National Post | Aurora

While it's typically Canadian to not toot our own horn, the country is packed with health-care companies — big and small — with smart

solutions to help us live healthier lives. By leveraging technology, including AI, we're able to better access (and understand) our medical scans or use our smartphone's camera to detect skin cancer, which is what Aurora-based Skinopathy aims to do with its app.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/canadian-health-care-tech-gets-a-shot-in-the-arm-featuring-aurora-based-skinopathy/



The Ontario Government is investing over \$26 million to build a new training centre at LiUNA 183's skilled trades training campus in Vaughan

Ontario Government | Vaughan

With this new training centre, LiUNA 183, will be able to train nearly 50,000 additional new workers, doubling their current training capacity to almost 100,000 workers for in-demand careers in construction across the Greater Toronto Area, such as bricklaying, heavy equipment operators, and concrete finishing.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/ontario-building-training-centre-for-50000-new-construction-workers-in-vaughan



The first cohort of students celebrated the opening of York University's Markham campus

Yorkregion.com | Markham

More than 400 students are enrolled at the Markham campus, excluding those in continuing studies programs, which began in late fall or winter. Additionally, students from York's Keele Campus in Toronto can choose to attend some of their classes at the Markham location. The campus offers many different programs that feature experiential learning opportunities to gain first-hand experience with local employers.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/first-cohort-of-students-at-york-university-markham-campus-celebrate-start-of-a-new-academic-journey/



Richmond Hill welcomes United Nations University; selected to host the institute's new headquarters

City of Richmond Hill | Richmond Hill

Richmond Hill was selected to host the new headquarters of the United Nations University – the UN's academic arm with 13 institutes in 12 countries. The decision was based on the city's commitment to sustainability, highly skilled and educated workforce, the many opportunities the city offers for partnership with the private sector, and its interest in using the best available knowledge to improve the quality of human life and the environment.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/richmond-hill-welcomes-united-nations-university-selected-to-host-the-institutes-new-headquarters/



Postmark Hotel marked grand opening on Main Street Newmarket

NewmarketToday.ca | Newmarket

The Postmark Hotel marked its years-long journey of restoration, renovation, and construction on Newmarket's historic Main Street with a grand opening celebration in October. A scroll presented to the hotel's general manager acknowledged the innovation behind the Postmark project and for taking a cherished landmark and bringing it to life by restoring and creating a unique boutique hotel, by offering distinctive accommodation as well as iconic gathering and dining experiences for Newmarket residents and beyond.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/cherished-landmark-postmark-hotel-marks-grand-opening-on-main-street-newmarket/



Canadian Life Science and Technology Park, Allyant, and IPS-Integrated Project Services, ULC Announce Strategic Partnership for Development of a Life Science Technology Park in Georgina

Business Wire | Georgina

In the initial phase, this collaborative effort will begin with the development and site master planning of a 56-acre site in Georgina, situated within the Keswick Business Park. This park aims to serve a wide array of sectors, attracting tenants and clients from pharmaceutical, biotechnology, medical device, bioprocessing, contract research organizations, contract development and manufacturing organizations, warehousing, healthcare, academia, digital and technology sectors, and other related fields.

For more information visit:
yorklink.ca/canadian-life-science-and-technology-park-allyant

York Region Economic Indicators

yorklink.ca/economic-indicators

2024 York Region Economy Facts



1.2M

Residents



624K

Local Jobs

2024 York Region
Employment Survey



1,200

New Businesses

Annual Average 2014 - 2024



120

Languages Spoken

238 Distinct Ethnicities



\$90.8B

Nominal GDP

2024 Forecast



57K+

Businesses



73%

Post-Secondary
Education

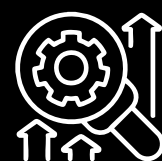
Ages 25-64



750K

Local Labour
Force

(Estimated 2024)



3 of the top 5

Corporate R&D
Spenders

in the Greater Toronto Area



13

Fortune 100
Companies

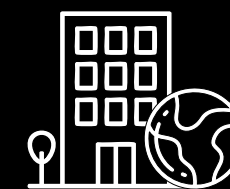
with operations
in York Region



20%

of GTA's STEM and
Business Graduates

reside in York Region



600

Foreign Companies
have Operations

in York Region

BY THE NUMBERS

Employers in York Region by Industry Sector

INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION (NAICS)		BUSINESS COUNT
54	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	10,118
23	Construction	6,824
44-45	Retail trade	5,366
62	Health care and social assistance	5,224
81	Other services (except public administration)	3,769
41	Wholesale trade	3,331
72	Accommodation and food services	3,260
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	3,187
31-33	Manufacturing	2,637
56	Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	2,507
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	2,124
52	Finance and insurance	2,051
61	Educational services	845
51	Information and cultural industries	682
71	Arts, entertainment and recreation	508
Other*		5,027
TOTAL		57,460

* Multiple other sectors under 500 each including Management of companies and enterprises, Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction, Utilities, Public administration and Unclassified

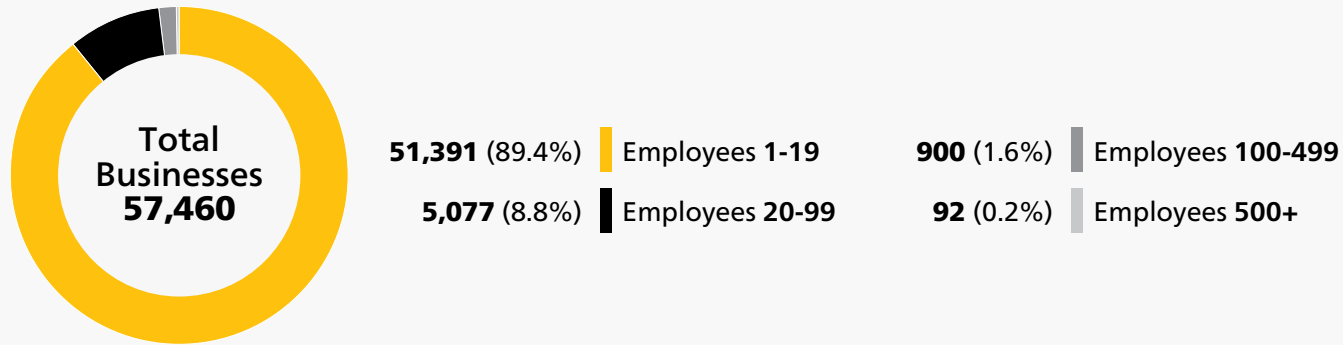
Source: York Region, Planning & Economic Development analysis by NAICs; Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Counts by Location with Employees, June 2024

Canada’s Top 10 Tech Hubs

CITY OR REGION	Business Establishment
City of Toronto	7,280
Peel Region	4,995
York Region	4,857
Greater Vancouver Region	4,617
Montréal	4,464
Calgary	3,090
Ottawa	3,026
Halton Region	2,220
Durham Region	1,601
Edmonton	1,519

Source: Statistics Canada, CBC June 2024

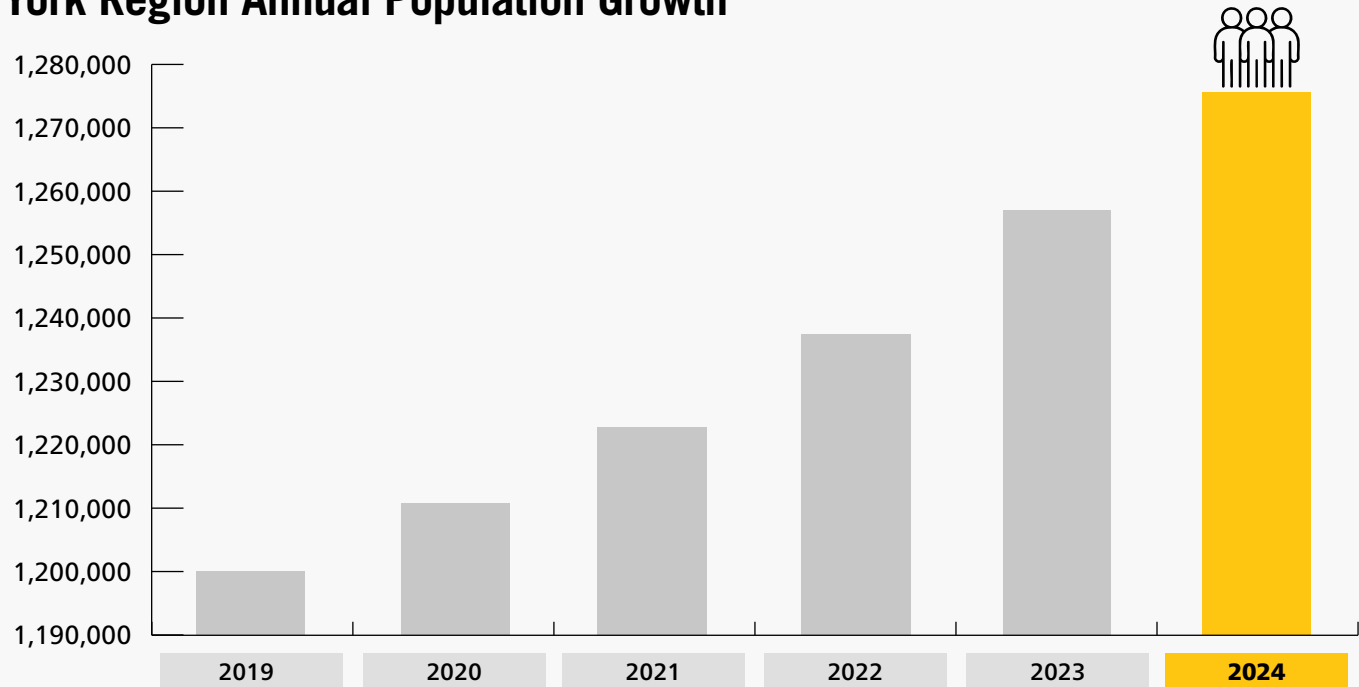
Business Distribution by Employee Size Range, 2024



Source: Statistics Canada, CBC June 2024

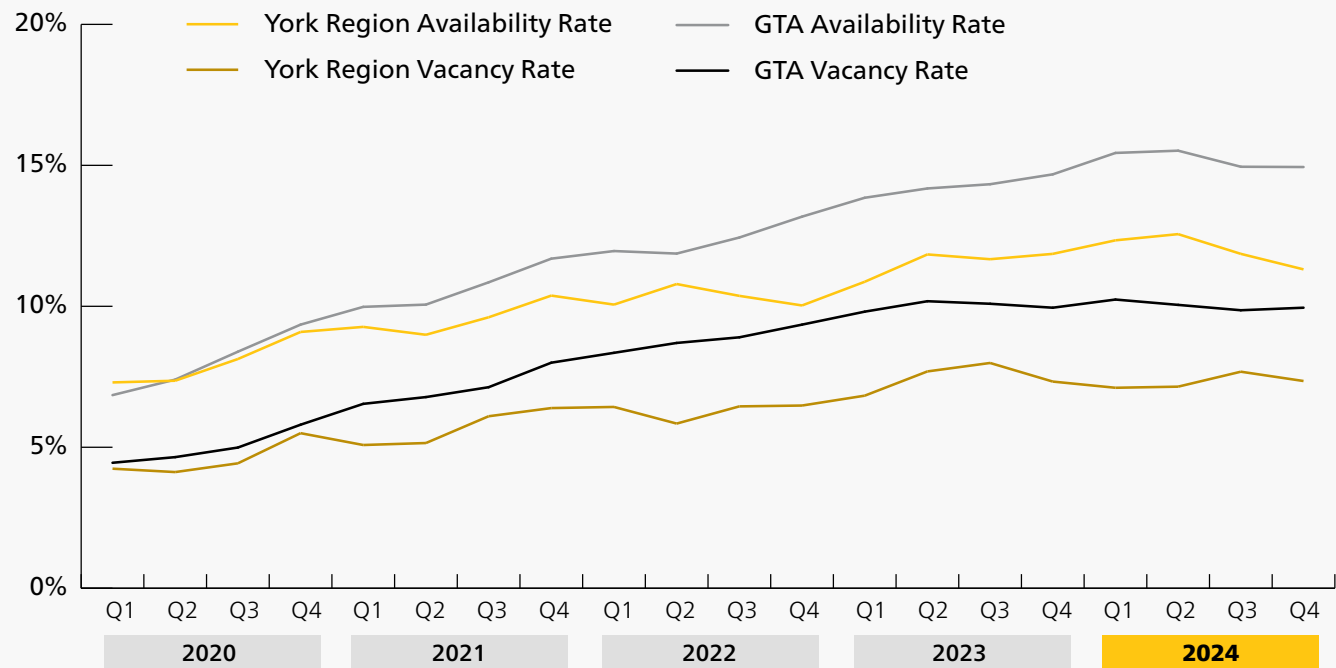


York Region Annual Population Growth



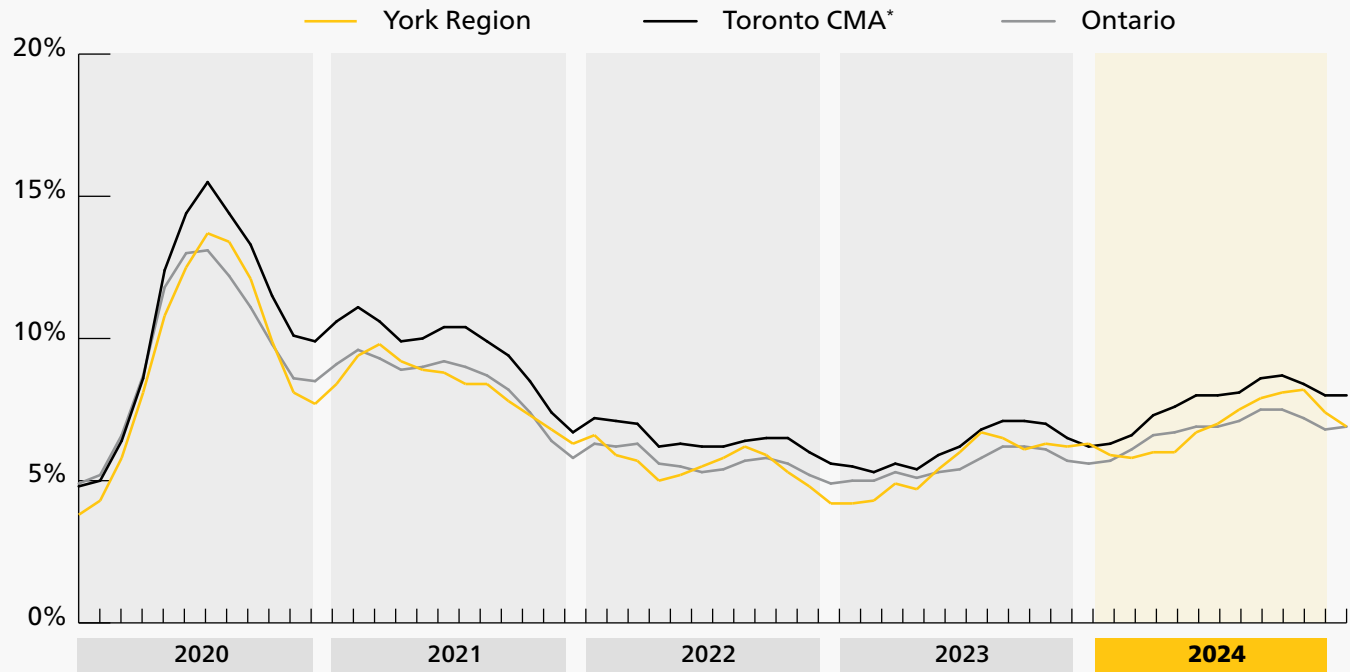
Source: York Region, Economic and Development Services

Office Vacancy and Availability



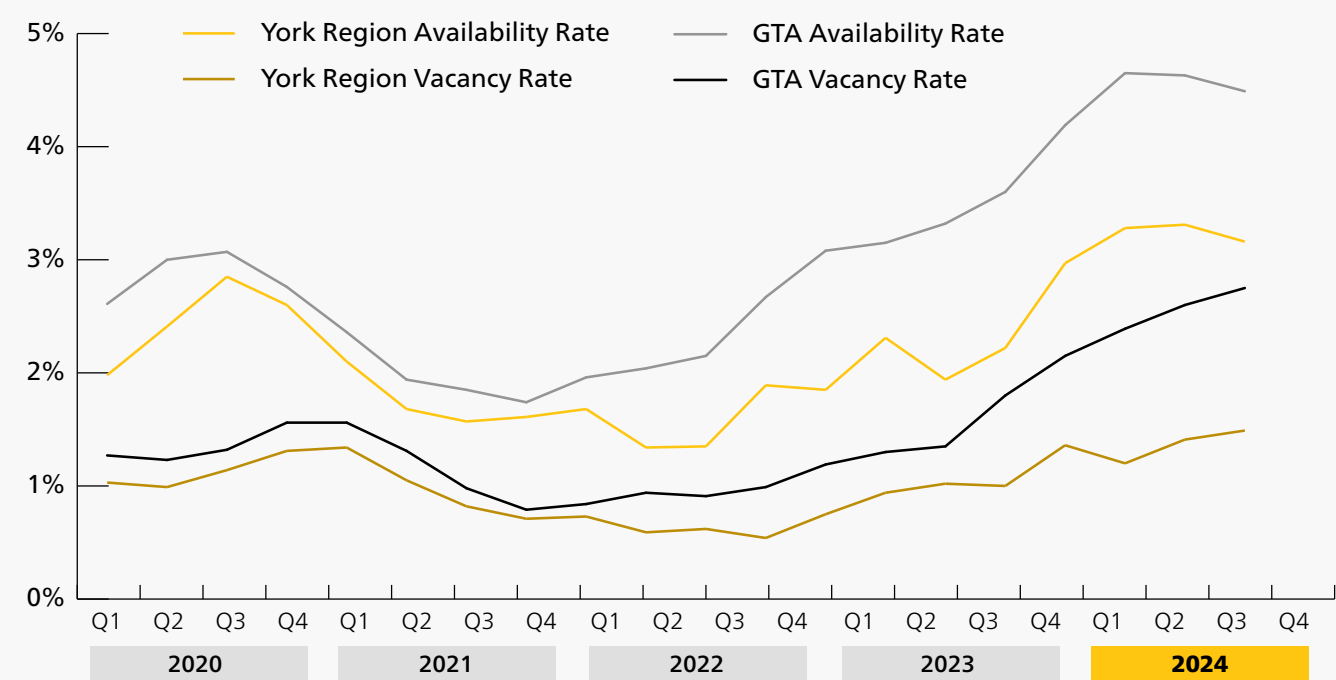
Source: CoStar, February 2025
Statistics Note: Office building space at a minimum of 20,000 sq. ft.

Unemployment Rate



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Characteristics, 3-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality, NOC 2021, custom tabulation
*CMA – Census Metropolitan Area

Industrial Vacancy and Availability



Source: CoStar, February 2025
Statistics Note: Industrial properties include flex building space

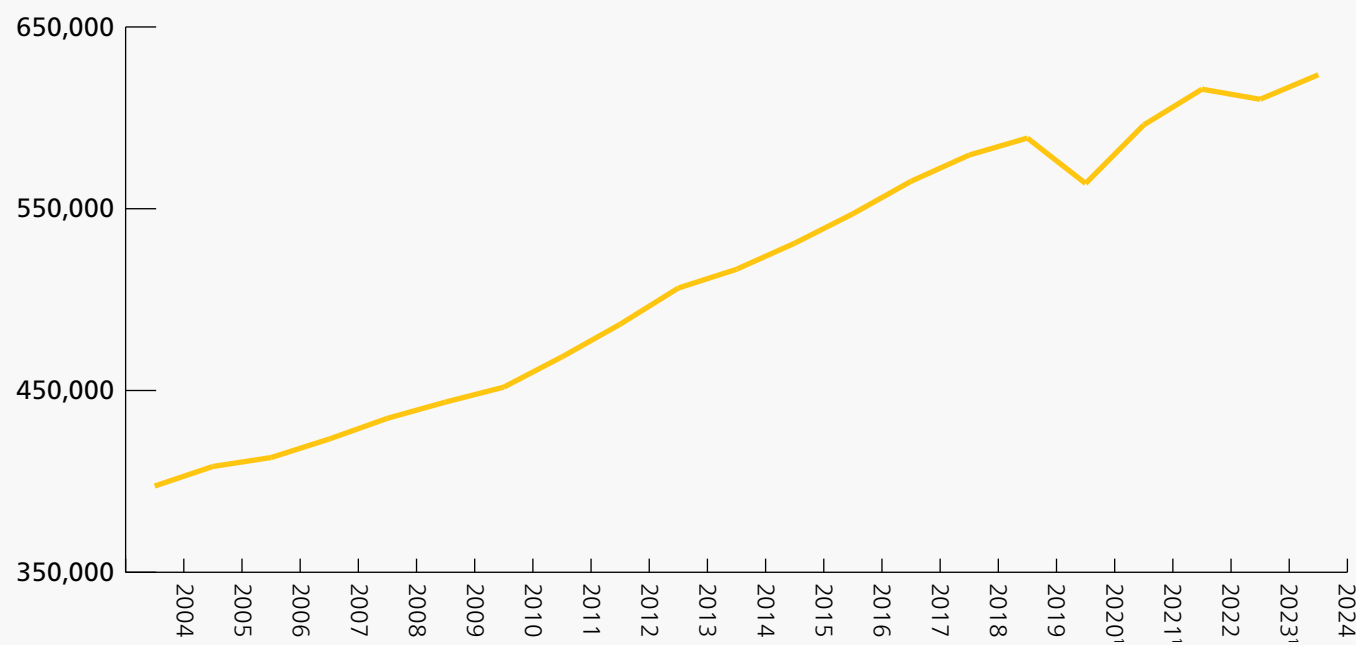
YORK REGION EMPLOYMENT

Employment Estimate, 2024

EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATE TYPE	EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATE ¹
Surveyed Employment	411,840
No Contract Estimate	209,325
Agriculture Employment	2,515
TOTAL	623,680

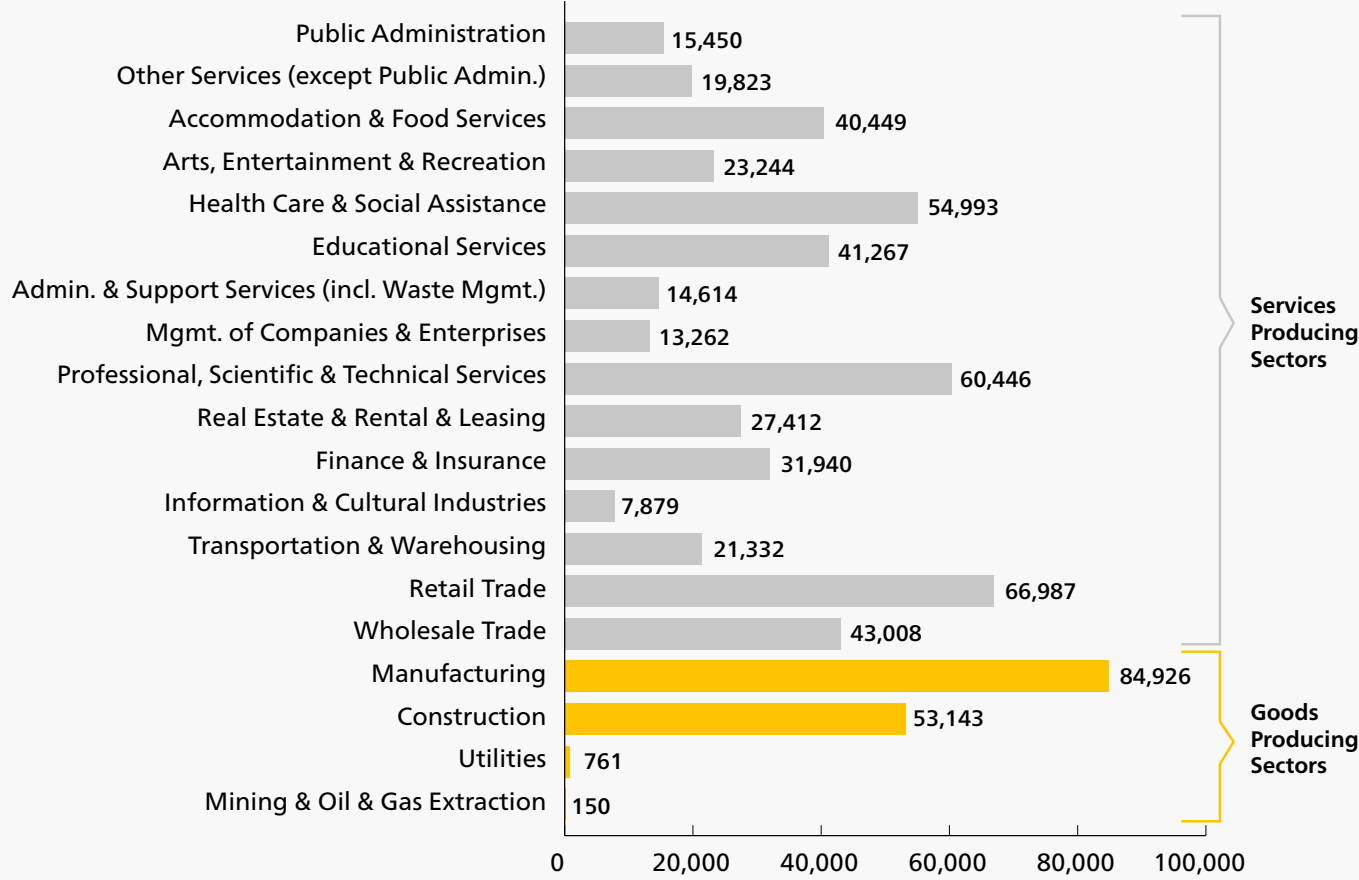
Source: York Region Economic and Development Services Branch, 2024 Employment Survey
Note: ¹Employment estimate excludes home-based businesses and work at home estimates

Estimated Employment Growth, 2004 to 2024



Source: York Region Economic and Development Services Branch, 2024 and the Conference Board of Canada
Notes: ²Employment estimates based on York Region Employment survey data except 2020, 2021 and 2023, which are based on Conference Board of Canada employment growth rates for York Region. ³Employment for all years excludes work at home estimates.

Distribution of Surveyed Employment, 2024



Source: York Region Economic and Development Services Branch 2024.
Notes: Employment excludes farm-based businesses and at home estimates.

FOR MORE ECONOMIC DATA,
reports and publications, startup
and entrepreneurship supports, and
other resources related to economic
development in York Region visit:
yorklink.ca/economic-indicators



York Region Economic Strategy Team

yorklink.ca/contact

Is Your Business Considering Investment and Expansion?

In partnership with York Region's nine local cities and towns, York Region's Economic Strategy team provides advisory and support services to companies looking to establish operations in York Region – part of the Greater Toronto Area – as well as supporting established York Region businesses seeking to expand.

We provide a range of complimentary services to help retain, grow, and attract businesses and talent in York Region.

COMPLIMENTARY SERVICES

- Industry sector data and advisory
- Location selection assistance
- Entrepreneurship and small business support programs
- Strategic B2B/B2G introductions
- Marketing and promotion support
- Access to government incentives
- Soft landing
- Talent acquisition support

We're here to help! To speak with a member of the team, email: edo@york.ca



YORK REGION ECONOMIC STRATEGY TEAM

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Jonathan Wheatle
Director, Economic Strategy

Bessie Mallia
Administrative Assistant

Diane Chase
Administrative Assistant*

INVESTMENT & MARKETING

Robert Unterman
Manager, Investment & Marketing

Gordon Scheel
Senior Business Development Advisor

Katie Maginn
Senior Business Development Advisor

Nadia Sacco
Marketing Assistant

Nathan Allen
Web & Social Media Communications Specialist

Sally Chau
Economic Business Analyst

STRATEGIC ECONOMIC INITIATIVES

Charles Banfield
Manager, Strategic Economic Initiatives

Meena Hassanali
Program Manager, Rural & Agri-Food Initiatives

Jenifer Benakis
Policy & Project Development Specialist

Rotha Seng
Policy & Project Development Specialist*

YORK SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTRE

Daniela Mazzaferro
Senior Small Business Consultant

Vivian Ho-Tam
Small Business Consultant*

Pauline Nagelmakers
Small Business Assistant*

2024 TEMPORARY STAFF

Ashraf Ahmed
Economic Business Analyst

Eman Ali
Communications Advisor

Siddiq Majidi
Policy & Project Development Specialist

Maryam Mirza
Marketing Specialist

Nadia Mohammed
Rural & Agri-Food Business Development Specialist

Ammar Rizvi
Small Business Consultant

Alisha Walter
Graphic Designer

Annie Whitfield
Small Business Assistant

** Indicates on approved leave or retired in 2024.*

