

1 | INTRODUCTION



POPULATION
24,512



BUSINESSES
4,157



In 2013, the Township of King approved its first Economic Development Strategy to provide direction for its economic and business development efforts. Intended as a five year strategy, it has been reviewed and updated to ensure that the goals, objectives, and actions contained in the strategy reflect the needs and aspirations of the King community. Presently, there are a number of regional initiatives that have the potential to further improve the economic fortunes of King, including the completion of the expansion of Seneca King City Campus, the implementation of the York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector Strategy, and the continued implementation of the York Region Economic Development Action Plan. York Region continues to see several high-value initiatives impacting the growth of its communities—such as improvements to the 400-series highways, the expansion and planned improvements of public transportation including GO Transit, and the recently updated Greenbelt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

2 | APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

A critical component to the update of the economic development strategy is a solid understanding of a community's performance against a range of local and regional socio-economic indicators, combined with an analysis of current and emerging trends related to its impact. The update process began in the fall of 2017, comprised of the following steps:

- Creation of an Economic Task Force comprised of elected officials and community stakeholders, providing insight and direction to the updating of the strategy
- Comprehensive analysis of the local and broader regional economy
- Review of shifts in business and industry sector performance combined with relevant background studies and reports
- Stakeholder consultation interviews with business leaders, local community organizations, government agencies, elected officials and senior staff from the Township
- Launch of business and community surveys to engage residents and business owners in identifying current business needs, the level and quality of business support programs, and changes envisioned for the future
- SOAR Analysis (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) used to examine the Township's current economic strengths and vision of the future for developing its strategic goals

“The Seneca Campus expansion will introduce new academic and extra curricular facilities that will allow Seneca to increase the range of programs offered and provide space for an additional 1,450 students in King Township.”



3 | STAKEHOLDER INPUT

More than 200 business owners and stakeholders provided their input towards the update of the King Township Economic Development Strategy. Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (SOAR Analysis) most frequently mentioned were as follows;

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CIP’s significant impact and growing momentum ▪ ExperienceKing brand is a strong resource for the general public/business community ▪ Proximity to large population centres and highways ▪ Core continues to redevelop ▪ Sustainability Plan has continued to shape prosperous growth in King ▪ Attracting higher income households in King ▪ Growth in younger age groups (30-34) ▪ Collaboration with the Chamber and Library to improve business services ▪ Resilient and diversified agriculture/equine sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growth, protection and enhancement of cultural, recreational, and heritage assets as levers to attracting residents, visitors and businesses ▪ Continued promotion and expansion of the CIP ▪ Promotion of ExperienceKing as a community tool ▪ Encouragement of diverse uses in rural/greenbelt and moraine lands to complement business growth ▪ Advancement of office-commercial/industrial lands ▪ Advancement of business support programs ▪ Leveraging regional infrastructure investments to support local innovation ▪ The spillover effects emerging from recent post-secondary investments
Aspirations	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protection and development of employment lands ▪ Attracting food processing and agri-food business opportunities ▪ Research and development opportunities, with particular emphasis on local innovation ▪ Higher residential densities in the core areas ▪ Walkable commercial corridors and improved pedestrian connections ▪ Greater collaboration with potential investors and landowners and better promotion of King as an easy place to do business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase in the number of businesses leveraging business support programming ▪ Increase in number of quality job opportunities ▪ Increase in usage of Township incentives ▪ Investment in up to date efficient residential and non-residential infrastructure ▪ Investments in advancement of agriculture sector ▪ Enhanced pedestrian network across cores ▪ Enhanced tourism and cultural offerings ▪ Built out employment lands with corporate tenants

“King Township is an idyllic countryside community of communities, proud of its rural, cultural and agricultural heritage. We are respected for treasuring nature, encouraging a responsible local economy, and celebrating our vibrant quality of life.”





“King’s strength in agriculture has dual benefits, namely, in the development of value-added businesses and as a factor in the Township’s cultural identity. Exploring the possibility for value-added businesses will promote local farms and create businesses for the community.”

4 | HIGH LEVEL GOALS

The Economic Development Strategy is underpinned by four high level goals, intended to anchor and qualify all ensuing actions on the part of the Township. These goals support the Township’s overarching vision as stated in the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan and remain relevant in the context of the local economy and input from key stakeholders. The four goals and objectives for King Township’s Economic Development Strategy Update are:

GOAL 1: Investment Readiness

- Enhance the opportunities to attract new business investment and entrepreneurs, and the expansion of existing businesses in King Township
- Pursue collaborative partnerships that demonstrate leadership in economic development

GOAL 2: A Commitment to Community and Sustainability

- Support the growth of a viable local economy by enhancing the quality of place of our villages and hamlets
- Position King Township as a model rural/urban community that strives to balance economic growth with environmental responsibility and agricultural development

GOAL 3: A Culture of Entrepreneurship

- Leverage an emerging creative economy to generate new investment and innovation in our economy

GOAL 4: A Strong Innovative Rural Brand

- Build awareness of the Township’s economic potential

5 | PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

The effective implementation of the recommended actions for the King Township’s Economic Development Office must be accompanied by effective performance measurement and monitoring. Performance measures are a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of an organization’s activities. By tracking and reporting on its efforts, the economic development office will be:

- Responsive to the expectations of its stakeholders
- Demonstrates the return on investment into the function and the programs it supports;
- Improve its performance by learning from prior efforts, and;
- Secure additional support (in the form of staff, funding and other resources) to pursue its mandate

To that end, this strategy provides a series of potential performance measurements associated with each goal statement. These performance measures are preliminary suggestions to inform a more detailed accounting and evaluation of the office’s activities.

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The complete strategy is available for review on the website.



6 | ACTION ITEMS

GOAL 1: Investment Readiness

1. Maintain an inventory of available services and serviced commercial and industrial land, as well as commercial and industrial buildings in the Township
2. Undertake an Employment Lands Needs Study
3. Create a business park designation in King City on the lands fronting King Road, east of Jane Street
4. Review the Community Improvement Program and determine whether the existing incentive zones need to be expanded to other areas of the community and resourced adequately
5. Conduct a development feasibility study on Greenbelt protected lands at the interchanges of King Road/400 (east of 400), Highway 9/400 (west of 400) and Lloydtown Road/400 (east of 400)
6. Continue to support and promote York Region's efforts to improve and leverage broadband connectivity in the region
7. Continue to promote and expand the King Township Library system as a designated centre for business support, programming and networking
8. Continue to promote the services of the York Small Business Enterprise Centre and encourage opportunities to host events in King Township
9. Explore co-working space opportunities for businesses as a tool to support local entrepreneurs who require occasional or shared work space
10. Give consideration to creating economic development working groups, comprised of key members of the business community and regional economic development organizations, to support specific economic development and tourism development projects

GOAL 2: A Commitment to Community and Sustainability

11. Continue to support the Public Art Policy in the Township's village cores
12. Hire an additional economic development staff person
13. Undertake a cultural asset mapping exercise to identify cultural, tourism, and heritage assets in the Township
14. Prepare a Cultural Master Plan

15. Consider the completion of a Heritage Conservation Strategy
16. Explore opportunities for senior housing or lifestyle age in place facilities in the village cores
17. Conduct a statistically valid community satisfaction survey
18. Conduct a statistically valid community survey to inform municipal budgeting processes
19. Working with the Region, undertake an equine industry study
20. Working with the Region, establish an agri-entrepreneur mentor program in conjunction with YSBEC
21. Working with the Region, investigate and identify opportunities to develop a regional food hub

GOAL 3: A Culture of Entrepreneurship

22. Introduce a new BR+E program that uses a statistically valid survey tool to measure the health of businesses
23. Develop a stronger partnership with VentureLAB in Markham
24. Introduce appropriate policies in the Township's forthcoming Official Plan to support agri-tourism or agri-entertainment opportunities
25. Work with Seneca College and its HELIX incubator program

GOAL 4: A Strong Innovative Rural Brand

26. Continue to identify opportunities to leverage the Municipal Streetscape Partnership Program
27. Continue to support local tourism stakeholders by hosting workshops
28. Prepare an updated investment and community profile
29. Administer and actively promote the Tourism & Agri-Business way finding signage program
30. Build on existing efforts to celebrate and showcase local innovators/champions
31. Enhance marketing efforts to showcase King as a cultural tourism destination
32. As part of the Tourism Plan Update, consider reviewing King as an alternative accommodations destination through unique experiences, such as farm stays, bed and breakfasts, glamping, or cycle pods
33. Prepare a marketing strategy for the targeted attraction of retail/commercial development