



GEORGINA

Economic Development and Tourism Strategy

2024



Economic Development and Tourism Strategy

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Acknowledgments

A sincere appreciation is extended to Georgina residents, volunteers, business owners, community partners, staff and elected officials for their participation and feedback throughout the consultation process. Your commitment and willingness to collaborate and share knowledge provided an opportunity to develop a strong plan with achievable goals and realistic actions that will help the Town create jobs, support existing businesses and encourage new investment in Georgina.

Land Acknowledgement

The Town of Georgina recognizes and acknowledges that we are on lands originally used and occupied by the First Peoples of the Williams Treaties First Nations and other Indigenous Peoples, and we would like to thank them for sharing this land. We would also like to acknowledge the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation as our close neighbour and friend, one with which we strive to build a cooperative and respectful relationship.

We also recognize the unique relationship the Chippewas have with the lands and waters of this territory. They are the water protectors and environmental stewards of these lands, and we join them in these responsibilities.



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Executive Summary

The Town of Georgina is home to a population of approximately 50,000 residents and 4,210 businesses¹. Located in southern Ontario, at the most northern part of the GTA, Georgina is situated along 52 kilometres of Lake Simcoe's southern shores. It is home to historic main streets and three Business Improvement Areas or "BIAs" in the communities of Keswick, Sutton and Jackson's Point, and rural hamlets. The Town falls within The Regional Municipality of York and serves as its most northern community.

The Town of Georgina is in a period of growth, rising from just over 42,000 residents in 2006 to its current population of approximately 50,000. It is forecast to have a population of 70,500 and 20,700 jobs by 2051². As the Town manages this influx of residents, economic development opportunities abound. The Town commissioned the undertaking of this five-year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy to outline strategic directions, goals and actions that will guide the work of Georgina's Economic Development and Tourism Division as it collaborates with its partners and stakeholders to build a strong and sustainable economy. Although this strategy should shape the work plans for the next five years, it is intended to be iterative and can be updated, as required. It is aligned with areas of focus identified in the Corporate Strategic Plan.

The process for the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy began with a quantitative analysis through a document review and data analysis of the Town, presenting a thorough introductory understanding of the economic and social situation in Georgina. Deliverables associated with this assessment included a Situational and Target Market Analysis. Following this initial assessment, additional qualitative context was gathered through community consultations, which provided valuable local insight into the strengths, challenges, opportunities and aspirations that residents and stakeholders in Georgina feel exist within their community.

¹ Source: McSweeney & Associates, Situational Analysis & Target Market Analysis for the Town of Georgina, 2023.

² Source: York Region, 2023.



Following this consultation and discovery process, building the plan began by establishing key themes that emerged from this initial work. Once those themes were identified, stakeholders were again consulted during a working session to develop potential actions related to those themes that were realistic, achievable and supported by the community. These actions, along with findings from the situational analysis, concluded in four goals with a total of 42 actions. This strategy is the culmination of all these inputs and will be followed by a detailed implementation plan.

The outcome is that the Town of Georgina will have the reputation of a community that is 'open for business.' It will continue to be a unique municipality within York Region, offering its cottage lifestyle and diversified agricultural sector with a small-town feel and urban amenities. It will have evolved from a bedroom community to a full-service community where residents can live, work, play and shop.





Process followed

The process followed to develop the Town of Georgina's Economic Development and Tourism Strategy began with a comprehensive understanding of Georgina through quantitative and qualitative research. The development of the strategy followed a structured process:

- 1. Quantitative analysis:** A comprehensive quantitative analysis involving a document and data review of the town, presenting a thorough introductory understanding of the economic and social situation in Georgina.
- 2. Community consultation:** In addition to the quantitative analysis, qualitative context was gathered in community consultations through online input, focus groups and interviews, which provided valuable local insight into the strengths, challenges, opportunities and aspirations in Georgina. This input was invaluable in shaping the strategy.
- 3. Identifying key themes:** Based on the information gathered from both the quantitative analysis and community consultations, key themes emerged. These themes encompassed various aspects of economic development and tourism in Georgina.
- 4. Stakeholder validation:** After identifying these key themes, stakeholders were once again consulted. During working sessions, stakeholders collaboratively developed a set of potential actions related to the identified themes.
- 5. Building the actions:** McSweeney and Associates worked closely with staff to develop goals and actions derived from the quantitative data and engagement feedback while ensuring they were realistic and doable within the timeframe of the strategy.
- 6. Presentation to Town Council:** The final stage of the process includes one-on-ones and a presentation of the strategy, including its goals and actions to Council. Once the strategy is officially adopted, it will become a guiding document for the Economic Development and Tourism Division's efforts over the next five years.





Step 1: Discover

Research the community

As an entry point into understanding the Town of Georgina, a quantitative review of the community was undertaken. This research included the completion of a Situational and Target Market Analysis alongside a document review and informal Investment Readiness Assessment.

Document review

The following documents were reviewed to provide background information on The Town of Georgina:

- Georgina's Game Plan 2023-2027 Corporate Strategic Plan.
- Community Snapshot 2021.
- Environmental Scan, 2022/2023 Business Planning Process.
- Town of Georgina Strategic Initiatives slideshow presentation.
- Town of Georgina Broadband Roadmap.
- Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2016.
- Community Tourism Plan 2019.
- Town of Georgina Public Art Plan 2014.
- Town of Georgina Websites (Community Profiles, Economic Development Programs and Initiatives, Waterfront Parks Master Plan, Investment Attraction).
- Town of Georgina's 2017 Investment Attraction Strategy Update.
- Economic Development Committee minutes and meeting documents.



Investment Readiness Assessment

Investment attraction and retention for economic development is focused on Industrial Commercial Institutional (ICI) development. Frequently, time means money for investors, and therefore, the process of handling the ICI developments, needs to be seamless, professional, and timely. There needs to be a concerted effort across all departments to value the ICI investments made in the community and to work together to be efficient and effective.

The benefits of attracting and expanding ICI development in Georgina include:

- **Strengthening the local economy** through the creation of new jobs, generating economic impact, increasing the non-residential tax base, adaptive reuse of older buildings and attracting people to live in the community.
- **Improved infrastructure** with upgrades needed for the new and existing ICI development, including improved sidewalks, roads, traffic flow, sewers, water, electricity and internet.
- **Providing for a growing community** and enhancing the demands that a growing community expects through growth in professional services, retail, and community amenities.

An Investment Readiness Assessment was undertaken, which reviewed the Town of Georgina's web presence (including current community profiles, economic development programs and initiatives, Waterfront Parks Master Plan, and investment attraction sites/links), land availability and resource allocation, adequacy of available lands, and how current investment opportunities are handled.

The Investment Readiness Assessment was discussed with Town staff, so they were aware of where the strengths and challenges are with regard to their level of investment readiness.

The assessment identified investment-readiness actions that have already been implemented and suggested the following activities to further this progress:

- **Marketing:**
 - Producing a pitch deck to be used during tradeshow and investment meetings.



- Building a labour force marketing document outlining strengths in the current labour force (within a recruitable area).
- Enhancing the Town's Community Profile with comprehensive and up-to-date information.
- Enhancing the key commercial/industrial property inventory.
- Developing sales sheets for available ICI properties.

It is suggested that with the Keswick Business Park in the first phase of development, investment attraction efforts should be designed to reach the greatest number of potential investors possible. As additional lands are fully serviced and shovel-ready and/or additional lease space becomes available, sector-specific targeting can be explored through further assessment to ensure the needs of investors can be accommodated within expected timelines.

- **Enhanced customer service:**

- Improving and streamlining the development process and a coordinated effort between all departments to move the ICI developments through the development process is a number one priority.
- Establishing an inquiry tracking system through all Town departments.
- Proactively approaching investment opportunities.
- Developing an enhanced Business Concierge Program.
- Formalizing a Business Visitation Program.

These suggested actions are reflected in the goals and actions within the strategy.





Situational and Target Market Analysis

The Situational and Target Market Analysis was developed to present a statistical perspective of the Town. The complete reports are data-heavy background documents, meant to provide Town staff with a statistical underpinning of the Town with data that is of significant value when discussed with potential investors and future businesses.

The report consists of a Labour Force Profile and Analysis conducted for the population of Georgina, an Economic Base Analysis providing an overview of Georgina's industries and their current profile, and a section focused specifically on the tourism industry within Georgina to outline its impact on the local economy. Information presented includes:

- Key labour force indicators and quality of life (household income) statistics.
- Occupations and industries of employment for Georgina residents.
- Commuting patterns.
- Talent/skills by occupation and industry for the local job market.
- Sales, average wages, exports, and similar relevant data for different Georgina industries.

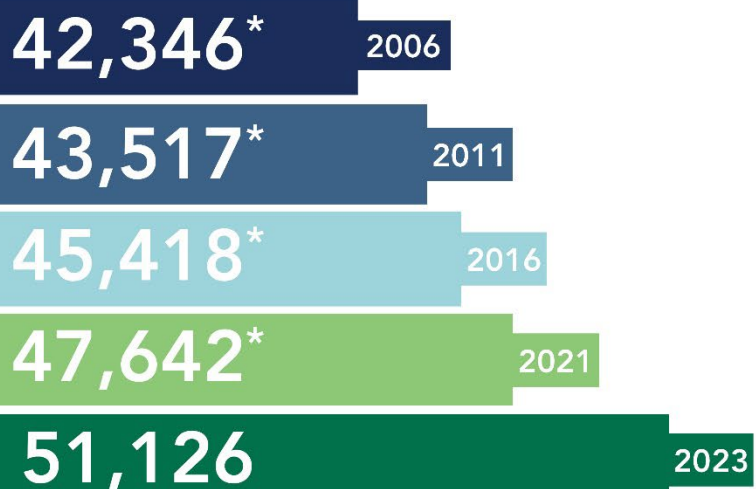
A snapshot and key findings are highlighted below. It is important to note that data used within this report is from Manifold Data Mining, a leading data and analytics company. As a projection system, Manifold is trusted by many businesses and government agencies across Canada, but naturally due to differing methodologies, its numbers will differ from other sources. While the numbers are trusted and respected, they should not be taken as definitive in the event other sources do not provide the exact same figures.





GEORGINA

Economic SNAPSHOT



Population Profile

MEDIAN AGE



*Statistics Canada Census data.

Apprenticeship/trades certificate/diploma 9%

No certificate, diploma/degree 11%

University diploma/degree - bachelor or above 21%

College or other non-university certificate 27%

High school certificate or equivalent 31%

Highest Education

Population ages 25-64



31%
Secondary

57%
Post-secondary

Household & Earnings



23% **ONTARIO** 24%

of Georgina's population spends 30% or more of household gross income on shelter costs.



Average Dwelling Value** \$912,221

Median Dwelling Value** \$883,406

**These figures are sourced from Manifold SuperDemographics and should not be compared directly to other sources, as their methodologies are different.

83%
Single detached house

9%
Apartment / detached duplex

4%
Rowhouse

2%
Semi-detached house

Total number of households

19,145

All data sourced from Manifold SuperDemographics 2023, unless otherwise specified.



GEORGINA

Economic SNAPSHOT

Labour Force & Local Economy

Median Employment Income | Average Employment Income

\$43,497

\$54,263

ONTARIO MEDIAN

\$42,539

ONTARIO AVERAGE

\$57,693

PARTICIPATION RATE

ONTARIO
64.9%

68.5%

EMPLOYMENT RATE

ONTARIO
61.4%

65.5%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

ONTARIO
5.4%

4.4%

Top 5 Sectors by Industry***



Construction
(15%)



Retail Trade
(12%)



Health Care &
Social Assistance
(10%)



Manufacturing
(8%)



Educational
Services
(7%)

Top 5 Sectors by Occupation***

*** By labour force employment.



Education, Law &
Social, Community &
Government Services
(26%)



Health
Occupations
(24%)



Art, Culture,
Recreation
& Sport
(16%)



Natural Resources,
Agriculture &
Related Production
(11%)



Applied Sciences
& Related
Occupations
(6%)

While the Situational Analysis document is intended for use by Town staff as a statistical underpinning for their economic development efforts, a few key findings are highlighted here.

Demographics

First, to gain an understanding of historic trends, Georgina's population trends from 2006 through to 2023 were analyzed. Trends show that while local growth was below the provincial mark from 2006 to 2011, it has since caught up and is expected to continue growing at this accelerated rate through to 2033, bringing with it opportunities for new business and local employment.

Actionable findings

- Georgina is lagging behind the provincial benchmark in young adults (20 to 29 years). Promoting the Town's appealing lifestyle through talent-attraction campaigns and establishing partnerships that can bring credited opportunities through colleges and universities should be pursued.
- Georgina has slightly more newly retired or adults nearing retirement (50-69 years). Given the aging senior population, the Town should continue to work with investors currently going through the application process to ensure adult lifestyle and senior care developments are completed.

Employment and household incomes were also assessed alongside cost-of-living standards for Georgina's population. This information is relevant within the context of economic development planning because it provides an understanding of whether a region has attainable housing for resident labour – a key factor in residential and labour force attraction and retention. Considering average and median employment and household incomes, residents in Georgina have very similar levels of employment and household income compared to Ontario.

Notwithstanding that housing in Georgina is relatively affordable in comparison to many of the municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area, Georgina is not alone, with many residents finding the rising cost of housing, food and overall cost of living challenging. Similar to many other municipalities, particularly those in rural areas, Georgina residents also struggle to find healthcare services in their community. As many levels of government must come together to address issues related to healthcare, rental housing stock and food insecurity, the Town is committed to being at the table to help mitigate these challenges and when



possible should leverage and encourage private/public investments that are focused on the provision of these services.

2023 Household and Dwelling Attainability		
Housing Characteristics	Georgina	Ontario
Total Number of Households	19,145	5,941,308
Average value of dwelling \$	\$912,221	\$934,642
Median value of dwellings (\$)	\$883,406	\$797,175
Median monthly shelter costs for owned dwellings	\$1,727	\$1,477
Average monthly shelter costs for owned dwellings	\$1,789	\$1,748
% Owned	81%	68%
% Rented	19%	32%
Percent of the population spending 30% or more of household total income on shelter costs	23%	24%

Source: McSweeney & Associates from Manifold Data Mining Inc. SuperDemographics. 2023.

Education levels for Georgina residents were also measured, as these figures provide an understanding of the skills and training that potential employees have for current and future businesses in the Town. A total of 16,100 residents aged 25 to 64 have post-secondary education. A college degree is the most common type of education; attained by nearly half (47.9 per cent - 7,709 residents) of residents with a post-secondary education, aged 25 to 64.

Actionable findings

- Georgina residents are more likely to have a college or other non-university certificate or degree than their Ontario counterparts (27 per cent compared to 24 per cent) and correspondingly less likely to have a university certificate, diploma or degree (21 per cent compared to 37 per cent). This suggests that businesses relying on more technical skills learned at non-university post-secondary institutions are more likely to find relevant skills and educational levels among the available labour pool. As investors begin to fill out the designated employment lands, targeted labour force attraction for university accredited talent should be explored.



Labour force

Georgina has a labour force of 29,486. It has slightly higher participation and employment rates, and a slightly lower unemployment rate relative to Ontario. These are positive indicators across the board, as they suggest the labour force in the Town of Georgina is more active (participation rate) and able to find work (employment and unemployment rates) when compared to the provincial economy as a whole.

Actionable findings

- Georgina has a slightly higher youth unemployment rate (ages 15 to 24), being 15.5 per cent in Georgina and 12.1 per cent across the province. However, this gap is lessened by the higher local participation rate. These figures suggest that local youth are engaged more than their provincial counterparts, though they are finding it slightly harder to find work. Supporting and encouraging programs and initiatives specific to reducing the youth unemployment rates is suggested.

Georgina has larger labour concentrations relative to Ontario in several sectors, but most prominently in construction (14.7 per cent of residents are employed within this sector locally, compared to only 7.6 per cent across the province).

Labour force commuter data indicates that two of every three employed residents commute outside of Georgina for work, with the top two destinations being Newmarket followed by Toronto. As the 500+ acre business park develops in Keswick, more jobs will be available within the municipality.

We also looked at emerging and in-demand occupations within Georgina's labour-recruiting area, which is Brock, East Gwillimbury, Newmarket and Kawartha Lakes. The data breaks down which occupations are concentrated, growing and emerging and could possibly be leveraged to drive local growth.



Economic base

The primary employment sectors in Georgina are retail trade, health care, and professional, scientific and technical services.

Elementary and secondary schools and full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places were the two largest industries of employment in 2022, both employing approximately 1,000 positions.

Between 2017 and 2022, the local economy grew by 3,925 jobs (31 per cent) to a total of 16,387 jobs, a significantly faster rate than the province as a whole (which saw a 6 per cent growth).

Another key consideration within the Situational Analysis is business counts by size. Specific to Georgina, the Canadian Business Registry notes that Georgina had 4,210 businesses as of December 2022, of which 1,155 (27.4 per cent) had employees. Of these 1,155 businesses, the majority had between one and nine employees (948, or 82.1 per cent).

This information is especially relevant as people can often confuse economic development to be primarily focused on an activity that focuses on looking to attract large-scale businesses with thousands of employees as anchor tenants to an area.

While there is nothing wrong with attracting businesses of that size and stature, Table 1 makes it clear they are not currently the foundation of Georgina's local economy. Not unlike many areas within Ontario, the local economy is instead supported by thousands of small or single-individual businesses generating economic impact in the community.

Table 1: Business Counts by Size, Georgina, December 2022

2022 Georgina Business Counts by Size						
	1 to 9 Employees	10 to 49 Employees	50-99 Employees	100+ Employees	Indeterminate	Total
Number of Businesses	948	180	20	7	3,055	4,210

Source: Canadian Business Patterns December 2022 from EMSI Analyst.



As the Keswick Business Park lands become shovel-ready, and there are additional opportunities for large format office and industrial development, the statistics within the Situation Analysis can help determine which sectors to target for investment. However, it is recommended that any marketing designed to target specific sectors for investment be delayed until such time as additional lands become serviced and ready for development. At this time, investment attraction marketing efforts should continue to focus on a broader range of sectors in order to ensure the greatest opportunity return on investment.

Actionable findings

- A detailed labour force investment attraction assessment and sector analysis is suggested to better understand the current and future state of Georgina's labour force and related sector specific investment opportunities once additional serviced lands in the Keswick Business Park are available.
- As the employment lands develop, there is an opportunity to work closely with lead generation experts to assist in bringing large companies that provide more jobs for local residents.
- Continuing to support emerging entrepreneurs and micro-businesses that provide opportunities for job growth and expansion is suggested.



Tourism

Data suggests that, in 2021, 9.9 per cent, or one out of every 10 jobs in Georgina are directly or indirectly related to the tourism sector and that tourism-related businesses are responsible for 4.3 per cent of sales within Georgina. While the full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places industry employs the largest number of people (998 jobs) within Georgina, other amusement and recreation industries (363 jobs) are the most heavily concentrated when compared to both Ontario and Canada as a whole.

In December 2022, there were 203 businesses in the tourism sector, most predominantly within the full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places. Please note that these businesses do not entirely depend upon tourists. Instead, they are considered to be at least substantively impacted by tourism, as per Industry Canada's definitions.



Step 2: Define

Consult with the community

The development of this strategy was community based. Input was gathered from more than 344 community stakeholders from throughout Georgina including Town staff and elected officials, and representatives from local post-secondary institutions, the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, business community, arts and culture organizations, York Region staff, developers, and residents. Consultation methods included an online survey, one-on-one interviews, and focus groups. The interviews, online survey and focus groups were based on six questions about the broader future and economic development taking place within the Town of Georgina.

1. What makes the Town of Georgina a great community to do business (For example, location, services, community support)?
2. What makes it challenging to do business in the Town of Georgina?
3. What are the top opportunities for attracting and retaining business and improving the future economic growth of the Town of Georgina?
4. If the Town could resolve only one issue/challenge to encourage sustained business growth and investment in the local economy, what would be the priority?
5. Describe your vision of Georgina's economy over the next 5–10 years. (For example, types of businesses, industry, employment).
6. What do you value most about the quality of life in Town of Georgina? How could the quality of life be enhanced?





Online survey, phone interviews and focus groups

An online survey was available to the public from early July to August 2023, and saw 281 people respond.

One-on-one phone interviews were undertaken with key staff, elected officials and Town stakeholders. A total of 21 interviews were held providing significant insight into the Town of Georgina.

Focus groups took place in July 2023 and were broken down into five areas targeted to: agriculture, downtowns, industrial and manufacturing, innovation ecosystem, and tourism. There was participation from 32 key community representatives as well as representation from staff and elected officials.

Following the five targeted focus groups a public open house was also held, opening the questions and discussion forum to any residents interested in offering additional thoughts. Sixteen participants attended this open house session.

Upon completion of this phase of community outreach, work began on the development of key themes, as discussed in Step 3.

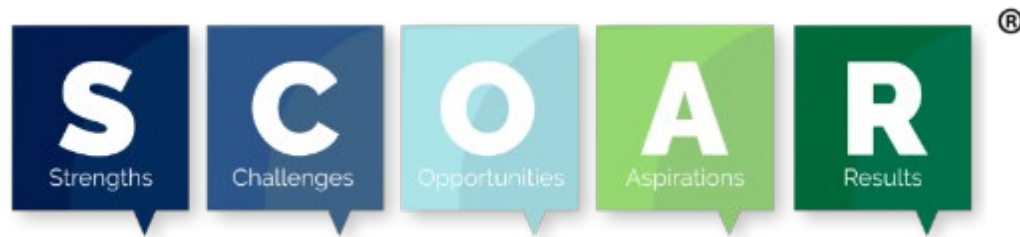


Step 3: Develop

Build the plan

SCOAR® Analysis

Once the background research and initial consultations were completed, the ‘developing’ process began with a summation of the findings of the initial consultations and data collection. This summation is presented through a Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (SCOAR®) Analysis. The SCOAR® was used as the fundamental basis to determine the five themes and came directly from the background research and inputs received from the public and community stakeholders.



The SCOAR® is a detailed analysis of the current situation involving statistical analysis of the local economy, regional competitive outlook, trends and forecasts, investment readiness assessment, strengths/weaknesses/opportunities review using the McSweeney exclusive SCOAR® analysis.

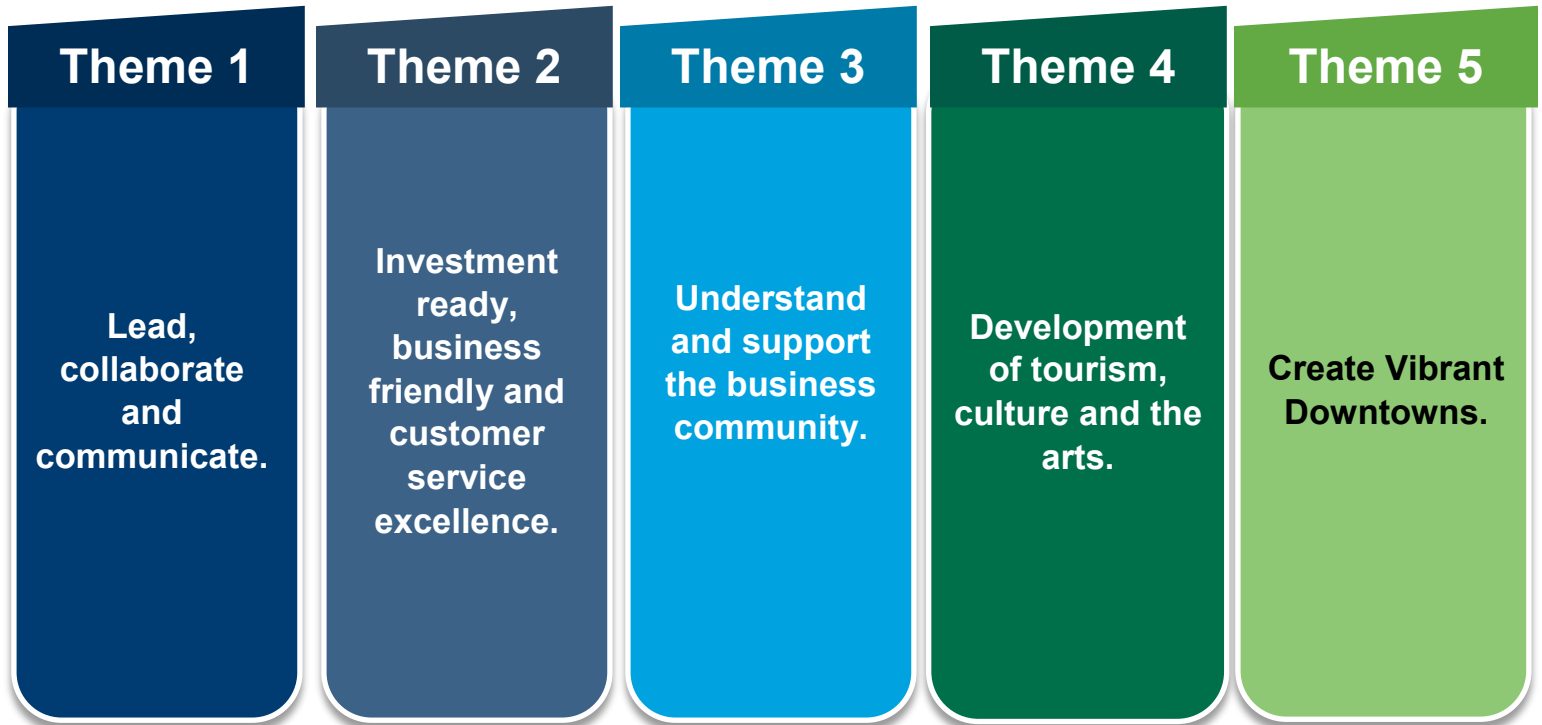
A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis has a “50 per cent” focus on “negative” aspects of analysis. A Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (SOAR) analysis emphasizes the positive, though it fails to address barriers or challenges to economic growth that every community faces. Our SCOAR® Analysis provides greater balance than either SWOT or SOAR analysis.

The results of the Town of Georgina SCOAR® analysis have been provided to Town staff as a background document.



Strategic working session

A strategic working session was held at Georgina Skills Training Centre. It provided an opportunity for stakeholders, Council and staff to validate the SCOAR® themes and collaboratively develop potential actions to be implemented as part of the final strategy by the Economic Development and Tourism Division.



What we heard

Through the public engagement process, we heard the following, which has been taken into consideration while developing the strategy:

Get back to basics: Pursue the fundamentals of economic development, such as business retention and expansion, investment attraction, and tourism and workforce development, to continue to support the solid base upon which to build.

Become an investment-ready community: Being ‘investment ready’ means understanding the needs of the business community while ensuring that the community offers a competitive, business-friendly environment. Creating a competitive business climate is a process of forming a secure and cost-effective environment for businesses to remain in or expand in.

Lead: The Town of Georgina should act as the primary resource for economic development in the community and take a proactive approach, which will allow Georgina to stay on a steady and focused path forward. Examples of proactive leadership can include the Town leading the recognition of Georgina’s brand, internally and externally to ensure consistent messaging and recognition on a regional, provincial, national and international level.

Communicate: Communicating the successes and the opportunities for Georgina in a positive and collaborative manner, both internally and externally, will help build civic pride and support for Town initiatives.

Revitalize downtowns: Downtowns are commercial centres, cultural centres, gathering places and places of community pride. Creating vibrant downtowns in Georgina’s historical urban centres will improve local quality of life, small business support and economic engagement.



Help build collaborative community partnerships and cohesive

relationships: There is a benefit to being collaborative and striving for mutual goals together as one Georgina. The Economic Development and Tourism Division will seek to lead the way in connecting different stakeholders to build support for one another and pride for Georgina. Development and business support should strive to build on the strengths of one another in order to minimize duplication.

Building the actions

Following the working session, McSweeney and Associates took the potential actions and the findings from the qualitative data to develop the first draft of proposed goals and actions, all while ensuring they aligned with the Town's Corporate Strategic Plan.

Georgina's economic development team then worked closely with McSweeney and Associates to perfect the language, goals and actions to best align the needs of the community. Together, Georgina staff and McSweeney and Associates have crafted the goals and actions presented in this document.



Step 4: Deliver

Delivering the strategy

The development of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy was overseen by the Economic Development and Tourism Division. It was completed in late 2023. Once adopted by Council, staff will finalize and execute an implementation plan.

It is acknowledged that with the current workload associated with existing and ongoing initiatives, additional resources will be required to commence all actions within five years.

Annual progress updates will be presented to the Town's Economic Development Advisory Committee and Council to keep them informed of the division's progress.





Goals and actions

The Town of Georgina is currently undergoing transformative and positive changes as its population and employment base grows. After having spent the last few years responding in real-time to support businesses through the impacts of COVID-19, there is now an opportunity to become strategic and return to the fundamentals of economic development in order to focus on economic growth through leadership and collaboration across the community.

The goals outlined within this section are designed to be realistic, supported by the community and aspirational in nature. They are forward thinking, built around the idea of a collaborative, supportive Georgina with the Economic Development and Tourism Division helping drive Georgina's economy to "the next level." An implementation plan that supports the four goals with clearly defined actions and timelines will support the efficient use of resources and capabilities.



Goal 1

Grow the economy through investment attraction



Goal 2

Grow the economy through the retention and expansion of the existing business community



Goal 3

Grow tourism, arts and culture with a focus on leveraging these assets to create economic impact



Goal 4

Create lively downtowns and public gathering spaces

Timeline

Legend



Short Term
(1-2 years)



Mid Term
(2-4 years)



Long Term
(4+ years)



Immediate
and ongoing

Expected results within term





Goal 1: Grow the economy through investment attraction.

Investment readiness is about being prepared for investors with key community information available, infrastructure and policies in place, and locations (land and buildings) for businesses to open and grow. Promoting a ‘business-first’ approach where investors understand there is a commitment to economic development should be a focus if Georgina is serious about attracting new investment. A solid foundation to support investment and setting clear expectations is key to supporting a positive image and helps to build a positive image. Understanding the needs of the business community while ensuring that Georgina offers a competitive, business-friendly environment will help the Town capitalize on the strengths Georgina has to offer. Creating a competitive business climate will help form a secure and cost-effective environment for businesses to remain in or expand in.


How does this goal align with the Town’s Corporate Strategic Plan?













This goal is aligned with the Corporate Strategic Plan’s goal to diversify our local economy through the support of investment attraction and job creation, which will be measured by the number of new businesses, number of development applications, increase in ICI floor area and the employment growth rate.

How are we going to achieve it?








1. Host targeted specific workshops and round tables to identify opportunities and challenges for business growth and investment. The focus of these discussions will be based on work plans and alignment with annual initiatives. 
2. Create a pitch deck for investors referencing the Town’s community profile and up-to-date statistics. 
3. Initiate an exercise to develop key messaging around Georgina’s brand (value proposition as a place to live, work, play and invest) and develop a communications strategy to solidify recognition of the Town as a



whole and create an identity of how Georgina wants to be recognized in consultation with the Communications Division. 

4. Working with the Planning Division, maintain an up-to-date list of major projects and assets currently underway and in various stages of the development approvals process. 
5. Formalize a site-selection checklist and identify significant investment opportunities. 
6. Build on the existing “Choose Georgina” campaign by sharing success stories of new and expanding businesses and of residents describing their positive experiences with the Town.  
7. Continue to enhance and update choosegeorgina.ca with current and applicable information relevant to investors’ requirements.  
8. Maintain and annually update the Town’s community profile that provides a comprehensive outline of Georgina.  
9. Work with Development Services to help streamline the non-residential development process and create and provide education on the development approval process and timelines.  
 - a. Provide support through an enhanced ‘concierge program’ designed to support non-residential developments that increase full time employment and the non-residential tax base with a single point of contact. Once there are improvements made, promote the new process.
 - b. Review and advocate for any required amendments to the current land use policy framework and zoning to best encourage growth in the rural economy (for example, home industry and on farm diversified uses).
10. Collaborate with York Region and/or partner with a company that provides investment-attraction services to provide qualified investment leads. 
11. Undertake a detailed labour force and sector analysis to better understand the need to target certain sectors once additional lands are readily serviced and available for development. 



12. Identify opportunities for regular touchpoints with ICI realtors and developers. 
13. Continue to work with developers to market their properties and attract tenants. 
14. Continue to update and promote available properties: industrial commercial land and building inventory; available serviced, shovel-ready lands. 
15. Continue to work with York Region to increase water/wastewater infrastructure and capacity to support business development in Georgina. 
16. Continue to work with York Region (York Net) and local service providers to ensure 100 per cent internet and cell coverage throughout Georgina. 
17. Continue to work with the Province of Ontario, in collaboration with York Region, to extend Hwy 404 into and through the business park lands. 
18. Research opportunities with upper tiers of government for funding for business park developments regarding opportunities that are of a regional and provincial significance. 



Goal 2: Grow the economy through the retention and expansion of the existing business community.


This strategy is being created at a time when Georgina's businesses have had to accelerate the use of technology, transition business operations as a result of the worldwide pandemic and are now working to recover revenue losses and rebuild. Georgina is also responding to the province's provincial growth targets and is now seeing the first building constructed within the 500+ acre Keswick Business Park. Georgina is on the radar as many businesses move north in favour of more affordable opportunities. At this point in time, there is significant opportunity to redefine what economic development is and the role that the Economic Development and Tourism Division plays in Georgina.

To be effective, the Economic Development and Tourism Division needs to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated, and that the core fundamentals of economic development are prioritized as the key to building a foundation for attracting and growing current and future non-residential development. These include supporting existing businesses across all sectors, being open for new business opportunities and delivering on high customer service standards for the Industrial Commercial Institutional (ICI) sector.







How does this goal align with the Town's Corporate Strategic Plan?

This goal is aligned with the Corporate Strategic Plan's goal to diversify our local economy through business retention and expansion, which will be measured by entrepreneurship programming participation, the employment growth rate and the increase in ICI floor area. Insights gained through the launch of a formalized visitation program will also assist in providing measurement.

How are we going to achieve it?

1. Formalize a business visitation program, consisting of candid frontline meetings with employers to gain a better understanding of the trends and issues for individual businesses and facilitate the connection to resources for retention and expansion. 



- a. Based on the feedback received, it may be necessary to review and make modifications to existing programs.
- 2. Continue to support the YSpace Entrepreneurship Hub by developing an information package that provides entrepreneurs with all of the local and regional business support available to them and who to contact, as well as resources available to help grow and promote their businesses. 
- 3. Continue to work with York University to assess the possibility of expanding their presence in Georgina within and beyond YSpace (for example, accredited post-secondary and skills training programs offered locally) and to develop a longer-term sustainability/business plan.  
- 4. Collaborate with community organizations that provide workforce training and small business support to increase awareness and streamline and avoid duplication of services. 
 - a. Host regular meetings to review roles and responsibilities and opportunities for collaboration to strengthen a unified voice while minimizing duplication of work.
 - b. Continue to support and encourage those programs and initiatives specific to reducing the youth (age 15-24) unemployment rates.
- 5. Continue to leverage York Link's economic development programs and staff resources to ensure access to program opportunities, including funding and relevant activities that can impact Georgina. 
- 6. Support the work of the Health Care Task force to expand health care services with a focus on the economic impact these services have on a community. 





Goal 3: Grow and diversify tourism, arts and culture with a focus on leveraging these assets to create economic impact.

Tourism: Located on Lake Simcoe, Georgina is known for its beaches, waterfront, trails and outdoor lakefront recreation. Historically, Jackson's Point has been a cottage destination for the GTA and has earned the name as "Ontario's First Cottage Country". Georgina has an influx of summer day-trippers visiting the beaches and a significant agriculture sector where agri-tourism is an opportunity.


Culture and the arts: Georgina has significant arts and culture assets including the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture, the Stephen Leacock Theatre of Performing Arts, Georgina Pioneer Village and Archives, Eildon Hall Museum, and the Georgina Military Museum. Creating interaction and synergy between these organizations represents an opportunity to position it to attract a niche visitor audience.

Managing the influx of day visitors is important so the Town can encourage engagement with businesses in order to increase visitor spending. This will sustain and enhance the experience of both residents and visitors and maintain the well-being of natural assets and the Town's quality of life.












How does this goal align with the Town's Corporate Strategic Plan?

This goal is aligned with the Corporate Strategic Plan's goal to diversify our local economy by continuing to support Georgina's tourism sector as an economic driver, which will be measured by the number of partnerships, infrastructure improvements and events targeting audiences outside of Georgina, along with acquired data that supports impact.

How are we going to achieve it?

1. Create a dedicated digital presence that is easily accessible through digital platform(s) to promote tourism, arts and culture. 
2. Review and update the inventory of location assets on Ontario Creates and other marketing channels and liaise with York Region and other local



- municipalities to determine the best permitting approach in order to launch a formalized filming in Georgina program. 
3. Enhance partnerships with private and public sector tourism stakeholders on marketing initiatives that extend visitor stays/overnight stays (ex: packages). 
 4. Enhance collaborations with tourism agencies and destination marketing organizations to promote Georgina as a destination, targeting audiences from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and beyond. 
 5. Collaborate with Community Services to create and promote public art initiatives that support place-making, including those that celebrate diversity and Indigenous culture. 
 6. Continue to work with the agriculture sector to build on agri-tourism opportunities and investigate the current agri-related and on-farm diversified use policies to ensure they support these opportunities.  
 7. Support the implementation of the Waterfront Master Plan and leverage recommendations that create an economic impact for the local businesses and community as a whole. 
 8. Continue to implement wayfinding signage to enhance the overall tourism experience, encourage visitation to the business areas and tourism assets, and increase repeat tourism (ex: routes from beaches and provincial park to shopping areas).  
 9. Review Georgina's tourism and cultural assets to best understand the motivations for attracting visitors and opportunities to enhance these assets and attract investment to the sector (ex: accommodation sector). 
 10. Collaborate with tourism stakeholders to establish an annual tourism event, consisting of private and public business and organizations that deliver tourism products, to foster collaboration and the creation of future tourism products and experiences. 
 11. Continue to administer, support and promote the Economic, Culture and Community Betterment Program and its recipients. Review the application and review process and update accordingly to ensure that



events and programs being funded provide the highest economic impact possible. ↻

12. Explore opportunities to attract established festival and event organizers from outside of the community that create a significant economic impact. 📺

13. Continue to create and enhance the official Town of Georgina tourism publication and marketing collateral, and coordinate distribution to educate visitors about the Town's tourism assets and increase economic spending. ↻

a. Enhance distribution at facilities to capitalize on sports tourism.



Goal 4: Create lively downtowns and public gathering spaces.




Downtowns project the image of a community. They are commercial centres, cultural centres, gathering places and places of community pride. Georgina has four distinct historic downtown areas including three Business Improvement Areas (BIAs): Uptown Keswick BIA, Sutton BIA and Jackson's Point Village Association BIA and downtown Pefferlaw. These three BIAs have very limited resources with small budgets and heavy reliance on the Town of Georgina and volunteers to do their administration, implement programs, marketing, and events.

Downtowns remain the heart of their communities and a beautified main street helps create pride as a hallmark of a community. Creating vibrant downtowns in Georgina's historical urban centres will improve local quality of life, small business support and economic engagement and help attract and retain talent and investment.

How does this goal align with the Town's Corporate Strategic Plan?

This goal is aligned with the Corporate Strategic Plan's goal to diversify our local economy by continuing to support Georgina's historic downtowns and tourism sector as an economic driver specifically through beautification and place making which will be measured by the number of infrastructure improvements, number of events and participation, and through findings from a formalized visitation program.

How are we going to achieve it?

1. Continue to promote to the BIAs the opportunities related to the Town's Community Improvement Plan (CIP) grants.  
 - a. Review the current CIP funding model to ensure it is adequately funded to support revitalization projects and place making.
2. Continue to source grants that fund infrastructure improvements within the downtowns. 



3. Encourage BIA boards to enhance their annual budget in order to enhance marketing initiatives, events and other programs that have the greatest economic impact on their business communities. ↻
4. Leverage Town and Regional infrastructure projects to support streetscape enhancements. 📄 ↻
5. Continue to provide a liaison role between the BIA and Town departments and create a work plan for the responsibilities of the role. 📄 ↻
 - a. Define the role of the Town with respect to supporting festivals and special events designed to draw people to Georgina's downtowns.
 - b. Develop Memorandum of Understandings between the Town and the BIAs to clarify municipal and BIA roles and levels of services.

