

Town of East Gwillimbury

Economic Development Strategy



2021 - 2026





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Introduction





The Town of East Gwillimbury is a designated growth Municipality in Northern York Region, with a population expected to grow to 86,500 by 2031¹. EG has already experienced rapid population growth in recent years, as evidenced by the addition of new housing developments, residents, and businesses and is poised to transition from a small, rural community to a mid-sized town. This growth offers an important opportunity to shape the design, inter-connectivity and sense of place that will allow EG to become a truly Complete Community.

An economic development strategy offers a roadmap to a desired future state. It is a tool through which local governments can influence and support the types of development they want to see, seizing the opportunities that larger demographic, economic and social forces reveal. The Town of East Gwillimbury's articulated vision will guide and support sustainable growth. The Town's goal has been set; now, the purpose of the economic development strategy is to identify the opportunities and actions for the Town to successfully pursue the goal in alignment with the communities' values.

EG benefits from a diverse economic base that has demonstrated resiliency through the recent pandemic. Businesses continue to demonstrate optimism despite the myriad challenges of Covid restrictions. In a recent survey, 98% of local businesses indicated they are satisfied with East Gwillimbury as a place to business, with 26% indicating their level of satisfaction was more positive than 12 months ago. EG also benefits from a strong alignment of municipal economic development efforts and business growth objectives. The majority of businesses surveyed were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the business recovery supports provided by the Town of East Gwillimbury during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recent research and data analysis such as the Target Industry Snapshot, Updated Community Profile, and Triage Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Survey have provided important direction to help shape this strategy. The Target Industry Snapshot provided an important analysis of EG's value proposition and investment attraction opportunities that will help to guide future investment attraction efforts. The updated Community Profile provides a timely analysis of community demographics and labour force assets that assist in planning and supporting the location decisions of businesses and prospective investors. The BRE survey provided important feedback that has helped to shape future strategic priorities.

When considering which factors are statistically most likely to lead to improved business satisfaction, for example, we know that efforts to enhance the availability of skilled labour, development charges and other planning fees, availability of unskilled labour, availability of adequate housing are likely to have the most significant impact on EG businesses.

This strategy also considered the economic and demographic forces expected to impact the community in the coming years significantly. Housing constraints driven by shortages, lack of diversity of housing stock, and affordability combined with a shift to work from home have fueled an exodus from major cities to neighbouring communities.

Amid these changes, the Town has set straightforward employment and job growth targets based on one job for every two residents. These targets set how the community will grow as a complete community where residents can work where they live. Business and job growth are fundamental to economic vitality. Attracting and retaining high-quality, good-paying jobs across a broad range of sectors promotes economic resilience. The decision to embrace investment attraction and job growth is

¹ <https://www.eastgwillimbury.ca/en/government/economic-development.aspx>



significant and necessary as residential development alone does not support a diversified tax base that maintains low residential rates.

There is a desire to be bold and consider strategic investments that catalyze job growth and community revitalization. The strategy acknowledges that effectively managing growth means managing change and building for the future while preserving and celebrating the elements of our communities that make East Gwillimbury unique.

Significant progress has already been made towards the community’s goals through investment and initiatives undertaken by the Economic Development department. This strategy enhances these initiatives while leveraging available regional, provincial, and federal programs and resources.

Strategic priorities identified during research and engagement were grouped into five strategic themes, and a series of activities are proposed to achieve the community’s economic development goals. The following figure provides a high-level overview of the economic development strategy.

Figure 1: Strategic Themes and Objectives

Strategic Themes	Objectives
1. Investment Readiness and Infrastructure	1.1 Build on the Advantage EG Marketing Platform
	1.2 Workforce Development
	1.3 Land Development and Infrastructure
	1.4 Enhance Broadband Infrastructure
2. Investment Attraction	2.1 Focus on Primary Target Sectors
	2.2 Focus on Secondary Target Sectors
	2.3 Lead Generation
	2.4 Promote Priority Sites
3. Business Retention and Expansion	3.1 Continue to support and promote the Business Advantage Program for both existing business and prospective investors.
	3.2 Support business development and job creation in East Gwillimbury
	3.3 Support Downtown Revitalization & Placemaking
	3.4 Engage EDAC volunteers to prioritize direct support to businesses red flagged through Triage BRE survey
4. Entrepreneurship Development	4.1 Improve Access to Capital
	4.2 Develop Co-working and Incubator Space
	4.3 Facilitate Access to Support Programming
5. Enhanced Communications	5.1 Design and Implement a business focused communications strategy
	5.2 Design and Implement a resident focused communications strategy



Methodology



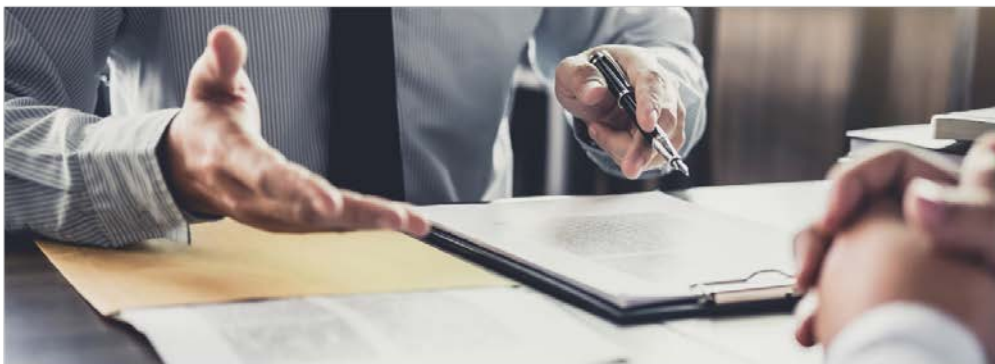


Building an effective economic development strategy that is responsive and impactful is complex. It necessitates a strong understanding of local influences and regional context.

The comprehensive primary and secondary research to support this strategy is presented separately in an accompanying technical report. An effort has been made to provide relevant content in this strategic plan report in a summarized format to support readability and showcase strategic goals, objectives, and tactical actions.

Presented in this section is:

- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Outlines the approach used to gather information captured in the technical report and the rationale for employing each tool.
- **Stakeholder Consultation:** An explanation of the various stakeholder engagement techniques employed during the strategic planning process and relevant considerations.





2.1 Data Collection and Analysis

Various scales of analysis have been used to assess the Town's strengths, opportunities, and economic capacity. Input has been gathered through data collection and engagement activities. A summary of each assessed component is presented in the following list, with detailed results available in the technical reports.



Background Document Review and Common Themes Matrix: Relevant strategic and policy documents from participating communities and the region were assessed to understand the critical and common themes summarized in the matrix.



Literature Review and Trends Analysis: The literature review includes relevant industry publications, leading research related to regional development issues, technology impacts, talent attraction, and retention in a globalized and evolving market.



Community Profile: Statistics Canada data from various sources paints a portrait of the Town's social and economic composition, including population, housing, living, income, education, employment, industries and occupations, and business characteristics.



SWOT Report: A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Assessment has been applied to the results of all research and engagement activities.



Target Industry Snapshot: Completed by ROI, the report assessed the business growth opportunities for the Town of East Gwillimbury.



Stakeholder Engagement and Consultations: A variety of stakeholder engagement activities conducted to understand workforce challenges, opportunities, solutions, and aspirations.



2.2 Stakeholder Consultations

Stakeholder consultation is essential to understanding the needs and perspectives of stakeholders in the region. It shapes the nuanced understanding of the region and assists in grounding elements of the strategic planning process. The following engagement and consultation activities have contributed to this initiative and are reflected in the SWOT Analysis found on the following pages.



Business Survey: The Town completed a business satisfaction survey to understand how to best support local businesses. A total of 88 businesses were engaged, allowing for identifying potential expansion or retention opportunities for follow-up.



Council Engagement: Workshops and interviews were conducted with the council to develop key themes and support the SWOT analysis.



Key Informant Interviews: Key informant interviews were completed with identified stakeholders in the Town; these included educational representatives, businesses, local government, and service providers.





Overview





3.1 National / Global Trends

Economic Growth Likely to Rebound

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the global economy is expected to expand 6% in 2021, the fastest expansion in the global economy in IMF records dating back to 1980². However, the IMF estimated the economy shrank 3.3% in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and could have been significantly worse without government intervention. Within Canada, growth is expected to hit 5.5% in 2021 and 4% in 2022, while interest rates are expected to remain static until 2023. Over the long term, the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBRE)³ predicts that Canada will climb to 8th position in terms of the top world economies by 2025, fuelled skilled labour force for the tech economy and the outlook for global demand for natural resource exports. This macro analysis indicates that although growth is occurring, labour shortages and mismatches are happening across Canada⁴. National talent trends make it more difficult for businesses to source the workers they need to compete, particularly in the tech sector, where companies desperately seek talent⁵.

Talent Trends and Municipalities

Businesses face challenges attracting and retaining talent globally, with 42% of employers reporting difficulty filling jobs due to talent attraction issues⁶. Canada, in particular, faces the real risk of brain drain as only two of the top ten companies identified by Engineering/I.T. as their most preferred place to work were Canadian Companies⁷.

These challenges have led to cities and regions, rather than countries, developing more substantial roles as talent hubs. The growing importance of these sub-regions is their greater flexibility and ability to adapt to new trends and patterns where policy can be changed swiftly. In addition, entrepreneurial talent can interact more readily with municipal systems than national policymakers⁸.

This focus on more specific regions and firms has increased with the modern workforce's mobility and desire to qualify better where and how they work, creating opportunities for communities like East Gwillimbury, naturally attracting high-earning talent. The recent business survey indicated that the availability of skilled and unskilled labour is a top priority to the local business community.

² IMF upgrades forecast for 2021 global growth to a record 6%, advisor.ca/news/economic/imf-upgrades-forecast-for-2021-global-growth-to-a-record-6/

³ World Economic League Table, cebr.com/service/macro-economic-forecasting/

⁴ Manpower Talent Survey, manpowergroup.com/media-center/news-releases/talent-shortages-at-record-high-45-of-employers-around-the-world-report-difficulty-filling-roles

⁵ Canadian Tech Companies Desperately Seeking Talent, theglobeandmail.com/business/careers/management/article-canadian-tech-companies-desperately-seeking-talent/

⁶ Gartner Emerging Risks Survey, www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2019-01-17-gartner-survey-shows-global-talent-shortage-is-now-the-top-emerging-risk-facing-organizations Global Talent Shortage Survey

⁷ Universum Canada Rankings 2019, universumglobal.com/rankings/canada/

⁸ The Global Talent Competitiveness Index, 2019 Entrepreneurial Talent and Global Competitiveness, gtcistudy.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/GTCI-2019-Report.pdf



Housing, Zoning and Balance

Cities across North America face a backlash against single-family zoning, with many perceiving it as restrictive and constricting the housing market. The city of Minneapolis has taken a unique approach to address this challenge. Minneapolis has ended single-family zoning on 70 percent of the city's residential land, or 53 percent of all land⁹. Housing density is another emerging consideration. Unbalanced commercial, residential, and industrial revenue and a lack of growth have led some communities to disincorporate and become part of larger regional governments; both Grande Cache¹⁰ (2019) and the Village of Hythe¹¹ (2021) have decided to dissolve due to a declining population and a lack of revenue to maintain infrastructure and cover the costs of services. These are just a few examples of communities that were unsuccessful in managing revenue, growth, and infrastructure costs. Other communities have responded to these challenges by raising residential taxes to cover rising costs¹².

It is understood that rising taxes reduce the attractiveness of municipalities to new residents and businesses. East Gwillimbury has maintained 0% tax increases for the second consecutive year in response to the economic challenges imposed by the pandemic. Still, it should be noted that the continuation of this policy will depend on the community's ability to attract balanced commercial and industrial growth to offset the rising costs of infrastructure.

3.2 Regional Trends

York Region

The York Region 2020 Growth and Development Review identified several regional trends, including:

- York Region's population is growing through net immigration, natural increase, and net non-permanent immigration. More Ontarians moved out of York Region in recent years than in as home prices have risen dramatically, net intra-provincial migration has fallen.¹³
- York Region remains a solid contributor to development activity in Southern Ontario, accounting for 11% of the GTHA's residential building permit activity.
- The change in the composition of communities has created a need to shift service delivery to become increasingly inclusive and accessible.

⁹ Cities Start to Question an American Ideal: A House With a Yard on Every Lot, [nytimes.com/interactive/2019/06/18/upshot/cities-across-america-question-single-family-zoning.html](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/06/18/upshot/cities-across-america-question-single-family-zoning.html)

¹⁰ Grande Cache officially dissolves into hamlet, [dailyheraldtribune.com/news/local-news/grande-cache-officially-dissolves-into-hamlet](https://www.dailyheraldtribune.com/news/local-news/grande-cache-officially-dissolves-into-hamlet)

¹¹ Hythe residents overwhelmingly vote to dissolve into County of Grande Prairie, [everythinggp.com/2021/03/31/hythe-residents-overwhelmingly-vote-to-dissolve-into-county-of-grande-prairie/](https://www.everythinggp.com/2021/03/31/hythe-residents-overwhelmingly-vote-to-dissolve-into-county-of-grande-prairie/)

¹² Fleeing the city for the suburbs? Watch out for higher property taxes, more cars and other costs,, [theglobeandmail.com/investing/personal-finance/household-finances/article-fleeing-the-city-for-the-suburbs-watch-out-for-higher-property-taxes/](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/investing/personal-finance/household-finances/article-fleeing-the-city-for-the-suburbs-watch-out-for-higher-property-taxes/)

¹³ York Region 2020 Growth and Development Review, [york.ca/wps/wcm/connect/yorkpublic/26c7ede5-86d6-4798-a21a-015c683ee5d2/21029_gdr2020accessible.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=nAA4K3I](https://www.york.ca/wps/wcm/connect/yorkpublic/26c7ede5-86d6-4798-a21a-015c683ee5d2/21029_gdr2020accessible.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=nAA4K3I)



- The Region is a significant contributor to the provincial and national economies, ranking 8th in 2020 (down from 6th in 2019) for total construction among Canadian municipalities, with a value of \$2.63 billion.

Remote Work Winners

As a result of technological change, industrial adaptations, and the impacts of COVID-19, more employees and businesses have incorporated remote work. There has also been an increasing trend of employees wanting more flexibility in the location and timing of their work. According to a 2019 report by Mercer¹⁴, a consultancy, adaptive work schedules is growing in importance, with 54% of employees indicating that managing work/life balance is one of the top 5 things their employer can do to help them thrive at work (compared to 40% in 2018 and 26% in 2017). Similarly, LinkedIn¹⁵ found that there has been a 78% increase in job posts on LinkedIn that mention work flexibility over the past two years and a 24% increase over the past four years in the number of people who consider flexible work arrangements as being a critical factor when choosing a new job. Thus, in the post-COVID-19 era, adaptive work schedules are increasingly being viewed favourably.

EG's Workforce Development efforts will be impacted by the increasing prevalence of technology, resulting in a flatter world that allows for more immediate responses. Millennial workers specifically are attracted to leaders who are relatable and accessible and thrive in teams working towards a common goal¹⁶. With research from Mercer indicating that two in five employees are planning to leave their organization in the next 12 months, it is increasingly important for firms to craft a compelling value proposition to attract and retain valuable staff. As a result, employers are increasingly focusing on providing in-house training and development resources to help ensure staff have the skill set they need. These emerging trends will shape EG's workforce development efforts going forward.

The Town of East Gwillimbury is seeing the benefit of these regional trends, but the rapid growth of residential development has the potential to be a double-edged sword. Residential growth requires an investment into the installation and upkeep of infrastructure that can sometimes outweigh the benefits of increased tax revenue. New residential development can cost municipalities as much as \$1.39 for every dollar of tax revenue if not managed effectively¹⁷. As a result, new services required by development are provided in a fiscally responsible manner¹⁸. Allocation of servicing remains a primary constraint to growth in East Gwillimbury. Still, the key message is the need for a balanced approach to development by focusing on job creation and complete communities.

¹⁴ Mercer 2019, Global Talent Trends 2019, <https://www.mercer.com/content/dam/mercer/attachments/private/gl-2019-global-talent-trends-study.pdf>

¹⁵ LinkedIn 2019, Global Talent Trends 2019, <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/recruiting-tips/global-talent-trends-2019?trk=bl-po>

¹⁶ Adobe 2019, What Will The Future of Work Look Like? <https://cmo.adobe.com/articles/2018/6/cwtk-what-will-the-work-place-of-the-future-look-like.html#gs.1fd8e4>

¹⁷ Development doesn't pay for itself, pro-Amendment 4 group claims, politifact.com/factchecks/2010/sep/09/florida-hometown-democracy/development-doesnt-pay-itself-pro-amendment-4-grou/

¹⁸ HEMSON CONSULTING Ltd., winnipeg.ca/finance/pdfs/growth/HEMSON-DeterminationOfRegulatoryFeesToFinanceGrowth.pdf



3.3 Community Profile

The Town of East Gwillimbury is rapidly growing. The community has been designated a growth municipality and is projected to grow to 86,500 residents by 2031¹⁹. The Town is well-positioned for growth with excellent access to the 404 and 400 highways and opportunities for extensive public transit infrastructure branching out from the G.O. Transit Station, including commuter trains, buses, and VIVA Transit. In addition to the significant retail centre emerging at Yonge Street and Green Lane, the Town's industrial and commercial land development will focus on the strategic economic corridors along the Green Lane and the Highway 404 extension. Longer-term opportunities will be associated with the future east-west connection between Highways 404 and 400.

Servicing of Employment Lands

Interest in development in EG remains high as a result of its locational advantages and available land. Development, however, is likely to continue to be impeded by the lack of certainty around a regional servicing solution. The recently announced Bill 306 suspends any ministerial decision on York Region's 2014 proposal to build a \$715-million sewage treatment plant in East Gwillimbury²⁰. The delay in new infrastructure has the potential to severely limit growth due to a lack of capacity in the absence of Upper York Sewage Solutions (UYSS) or other solutions. While self-servicing options may be an interim measure to prospective investors, they place constraints on the size of development and nature of the industry that can be located in EG. Prospective investors recognize that self-servicing options become a throw-away cost once permanent infrastructure comes online. They are required to make a further investment to tie their facilities into that infrastructure.



¹⁹ Town of East Gwillimbury, eastgwillimbury.ca/en/government/economic-development.aspx

²⁰ Frustration mounts as Yurek dithers on solving sewage crisis in York Region, politicstoday.news/queens-park-today/frustration-mounts-as-yurek-dithers-on-solving-sewage-crisis-in-york-region



SWOT Analysis





The SWOT Analysis was developed through interviews and workshops with the Town of East Gwillimbury Council and stakeholder interviews. The analysis resulted in the development of some key recommendations, including:

- Proactively kick-starting development and attraction of specifically targeted employers and future development through:
 - Strategic land acquisition and servicing.
 - Remediation of derelict properties to attract new investment.
 - Shared-cost programs to encourage façade improvement.
- Consideration of strategic investments to bridge existing broadband service gaps.
- Development of a clearly articulated Town of East Gwillimbury value proposition to support business attraction initiatives.
- Prioritizing the attraction of new businesses that can meet the specific needs of our changing demographics.
- Prioritizing engagement with the community in ongoing conversations about growth.
- Identify opportunities to leverage changes in commuter out-flows post-COVID 19.

4.1.1 Strengths

Strengths are what the community can build on, what are we doing well and what we are proud we have achieved.

- East Gwillimbury is a great place to live and attracts many new residents and housing development.
- The Town has four distinct communities (Sharon, Holland Landing, Queensville and Mount Albert), offering various lifestyle options to potential residents.
- The community has a supply of competitively priced land, a comparative advantage over neighbouring municipalities.
- The Town of East Gwillimbury is home to a highly skilled and educated workforce and easy access to the larger workforce in the GTA.
- The Town has a strong agriculture sector with a significant concentration of workforce and businesses.
- Proximity to Southlake Hospital and associated medical community.
- Transportation Infrastructure; Hwy 404, Hwy 400; future 404/400 connector.
- Growth is contributing to expanding markets for local businesses.
- Council and staff are approachable.



4.1.2 Weaknesses

Weaknesses are what stand in the way of opportunities, what are our barriers to growth, what could hinder our future sustainability?

- The Town lacks available 'shovel-ready' serviced lands and will likely be delayed in bringing more lands online due to infrastructure challenges.
- The Town does not have adequate broadband.
- The Town has a lack of cultural amenities and community-building activities and events.
- The Town is not pedestrian-friendly and very automobile-focused.
- The Town's corporate culture is not yet customer-centric concerning responsiveness and seeking solutions. "Doors need to be opened wider."
- Lack of secondary, post-secondary education facilities. No existing "centre of excellence."
- Lack of anchor employers to stimulate cluster development.
- Lack of affordable housing, lack of diversity in housing options in both type and price.
- Lack of public transportation options.
- Much of the available employment land is owned by companies that prefer to lease, which has caused a mismatch with market demand.
- Business loss, frequent turn-over of local businesses.
- The current levels of fees and development charges required by the Town are prohibitive.
- Long-time residents may object to change, anti-growth sentiments.

4.1.3 Opportunities

What are our best possible future opportunities, what changes do we expect to see in the future and what external forces or trends may positively affect development?

- Leverage the growing desire of GTA residents seeking greener pastures and better value in housing. E.G. will be at least "60% green" even when fully built out.
- Invest in broadband infrastructure.
- Available land purchases and servicing should be considered catalysts to kick-start development and adopt a 'new model.'
- Highway 48 commuters attract them to spend money locally.
- Leverage ethnic and cultural diversity of our community.
- Need to help promote local businesses and shopping locally.
- Supporting existing businesses to expansion, incubation, acceleration and job creation.
- Affordable transit options for seniors (and other vulnerable populations).



- Ongoing engagement with the community to solicit input and help them prepare for and embrace the changes that result from growth.
- Address anti-growth concerns with education on the benefits of Complete Communities; reduced pollution, less driving, more time with family, etc.
- Leverage increasing trend to work remotely / from home with a business centre or co-working space.
- Maintain large parcels of land to attract more significant users (who will serve as major employers and 'anchor' companies)
- Tell the East Gwillimbury Story, need for a refresh tell an inclusive and welcoming story to prospective residents and investors.
- Applying a 'Green Economy Lens' to business expansion and attraction efforts
- Explore District Energy when we have sufficient user density

4.1.4 Threats

How will we recognize and mitigate or eliminate potential threats, what are the things that could hinder our ability to capitalize on our opportunities?

- There is currently a mismatch between population skill sets and demand for workforce skills, exacerbated by the large numbers of residents who commute or telecommute out of the community for work.
- UYSS limitations
- Other things over which East Gwillimbury has little control (those determined by the Region, the Province, the general economy)
- Loss of individual community identity for the member hamlets of East Gwillimbury.
- Water supply.
- Geographic location; 'northern end of the chain.'
- Lack of high-level transit and 400/404 link at present.



Business Survey Key Findings





The Town of East Gwillimbury Economic Development Department completed a business satisfaction survey to understand how to best support local businesses.

A random telephone/online survey was conducted with 88 businesses out of an initial sample of 357. The rigorous survey approach resulted in a response rate of 29.1%, which is exceptionally high in the market research industry, where response rates average in the 1%-2% range.

This scientific approach ensures that the results have a high level of accuracy (with a 10.4% margin of error at a 95% confidence level) and statistically represents the business community in East Gwillimbury.

Key Findings

- Overall business satisfaction in the Town is very strong at 98% with 57% very satisfied and 41% somewhat satisfied.
- The majority of businesses surveyed are locally owned and operated (82%), have less than ten employees (80%) and have been in business for more than six years (60%).
- 76% of businesses surveyed were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the business recovery supports provided by the Town of East Gwillimbury during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Throughout the survey process, Triage cases that represented green or red flags were tracked. Out of the 88 businesses surveyed, 42 businesses presented an opportunity for intervention.
- 26% of businesses indicated their level of satisfaction was more positive than 12 months ago, compared to 10% indicating more negative, representing a net increase of 16%.
- Businesses were asked to rate their satisfaction on 20 different local factors affecting their business performance. Responses were positive, with only 1 of these factors having a less than 60% satisfaction level.
- The factors with the highest satisfaction levels were support from residents, cellular phone service, and parking availability.
- When considering which factors are statistically most likely to lead to improved business satisfaction, the top priorities are the availability of skilled labour, development charges and other planning fees, availability of unskilled labour, availability of adequate housing.
- Review, adaptation, or sustained attention will likely lead to higher business satisfaction by addressing top-priority business factors.



Primary Target Sectors





A “Target Industry Snapshot” was completed by the consulting firm ROI Research on Investment. This research was undertaken to understand better the types of companies (in terms of industry, size, and markets) that were most likely align with EG’s value proposition. The analysis identified specific target sectors with a demonstrated benefit to expanding into EG due to existing strengths, attributes, and locational advantages. This research allows the Town to focus our efforts where they will be most effective in the context of limited time and resources.

Recommendations in this report were anchored in an analysis of data from economic development documents in the region, industry, occupational activity in East Gwillimbury and the wider region, and post-secondary regional educational trends.

The following table summarizes the essential findings and recommendations by ROI for industry targets, focusing on industries within sectors demonstrating strength in the region. The recommendations also consider those industries that have shown growth in recent years and have already produced successful companies. The full report is included in Appendix B.

Food Processing & Supply Chain

East Gwillimbury combines a rural location with access to food growers and agricultural assets to major urban centers such as Toronto. Freight and logistics firms are among the biggest employers in the region, which presents excellent "take to market" opportunities.

As York's top producer of agriculture, East Gwillimbury accounts for 32 percent of agricultural production in the region, with gross farm receipts totalling \$96,797,280 (2016 Census of Agriculture). As well, representing 15% of the region's employment.

Figure 2: Food Processing & Supply Chain

Food Processing & Supply Chain Target Sectors	Key Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Packaging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flexible packaging ▪ Niche food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong agricultural sector ▪ The increased supply chain needs for packaging across Ontario ▪ Growth of niche food products

Construction Products and Services

The 2019–2028 outlook scenario for Ontario projects overall employment will be sustained at high levels over the decade. Overall, non-residential employment is anticipated to rise by 14,000 jobs (+8%) over the next four years and by 17,000 over the entire coming decade, compared to the 2018 starting point (Construction Forecasts).

In this context, East Gwillimbury's promising niche sectors are **architectural and engineering services**, given the concentration of jobs in construction, graphic design, and HVAC mechanics. Overall, the Town's workforce strength lies in assembly workers and material handling occupations together with several significant construction-related company assets.

The construction sector is significant in East Gwillimbury, with over 500 registered contractors and construction businesses (Statistics Canada, Dec. 2019 Business Count). The York region represented \$3.3



billion in new construction value in 2018, the second-largest construction market in Ontario and the 6th largest in Canada.

Figure 3: Construction Products and Services

Construction Products and Services Target Sectors	Key Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engineering ▪ Structural metals ▪ Prefabricated housing ▪ Concrete products ▪ HVAC and advanced building components 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong construction industry base ▪ Architectural and engineering services can be capitalized upon ▪ Rising demand for HVAC and structural/architectural metals for prefab buildings

Manufacturing

The region of York is Ontario's second-largest manufacturing hub and fourth-largest in Canada. East Gwillimbury itself has a relatively high concentration of manufacturing businesses and workforce and is home to Multimatic (Dynamic Suspensions), a global supplier of automotive parts, as well as Inscape Office Interiors, an office furniture company established in 1888 that has been serving the Government of Canada as well as U.S. National, Federal and State levels. Inscape is one of the Town's largest employers, employing around 350 people.

The manufacturing sector can support the construction products and services and the food processing and supply chain sectors.

Figure 4: Manufacturing

Manufacturing Target Sectors	Key Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Industrial Products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong agricultural sector ▪ Strong construction industry base ▪ Rising demand for HVAC and structural/architectural metals for prefab buildings

Industry Supply Wholesale/Distribution

The York region is home to over 4,000 electrical, plumbing, heating and air-conditioning equipment and supplies merchant wholesalers and over 2,700 construction, forestry, mining, industrial machinery, equipment, and merchant wholesalers. While the impact of the pandemic has slowed down industrial production and construction, some industrial supplies wholesalers have benefited from increased demand for equipment and supplies needed to manufacture medical devices, a key employer in York.

A typical industrial supply company may serve more than 1,000 customers. It may buy materials from hundreds of suppliers, either manufacturers or other wholesalers. Large distributors may carry more than 1 million different items. York is the 3rd largest manufacturing region in Ontario, the fifth-largest country, with a substantial customer market.

With East Gwillimbury's manufacturing and logistics assets, the mix of skilled trades and business and service occupations lends itself well to these technical distribution centers. These companies are also



more likely to look for leasable space, which is advantageous for East Gwillimbury with its high share of leasable land options. For example, applied Industrial Technologies with a Newmarket branch provides technical expertise, repair services, and an extensive industrial product catalogue. Alphaterm in Markham is another example of a major importer, exporter, and distributor of industrial goods such as corrosion/abrasion-resistant and refractory materials since 1982.

Figure 5: Industry Supply Wholesale/Distribution

Industry Supply Wholesale/Distribution	Key Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Industrial Products ▪ Trucking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong agricultural sector ▪ Strong construction industry base ▪ The highly skilled concentration of trade skills ▪ Strong logistics sector

Healthcare

Healthcare workers are an integral part of the East Gwillimbury economy, with many commuting to healthcare facilities in Newmarket and beyond. The region can offer hospital-affiliated health tech innovation and accelerator programs, including CreateIT Now at Southlake Regional Health Centre, Mackenzie Innovation Institute, and ventureLAB Health Ecosphere. The area is home to four world-class regional hospitals, including Canada's first fully integrated 'Smart Hospital' (Mackenzie Health Vaughan) opening in 2020. Southlake doubled its Emergency Care capacity in 2018. Its strategic plan highlights the expected continued acceleration and potential expansion in demand for the region due to population growth and an ageing population in the York Region²¹.

Investments in primary healthcare depend on population growth and are driven by innovative local healthcare systems such as Southlake Hospital. Increasingly, healthcare services may try to locate ambulatory and outpatient facilities on properties along the edges of their primary territory. Expanding in proximate but less dense urban areas can provide substantial cost savings for project developments regarding project approval and construction complexity. Given the regional rural communities and demographic changes, telehealth, and health I.T. trends in the community and within the Seneca campus offering could provide technology opportunities for East Gwillimbury. The focus would be on entry-level technologies and creating strong local partnerships with healthcare institutions and providers.

Figure 6: Healthcare

Healthcare Target Sectors	Key Rationale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seniors Housing ▪ I.T. Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Large healthcare facilities ▪ A significant concentration of the workforce

²¹ 'Dramatically outgrown': Southlake launches website to advocate for new hospital in Newmarket, newmarkettoday.ca/local-news/dramatically-outgrown-southlake-launches-website-to-advocate-for-new-hospital-in-newmarket-3933199



Secondary Target Sectors





The secondary target sectors are those with potential opportunities that are less likely to yield short-term wins and will require longer-term planning, additional groundwork and effort to become investment-ready.

Education

Education is an essential component of East Gwillimbury's economy; the community has a high concentration of businesses (relative to Ontario) in educational services, with 51 businesses and over 1,500 residents employed in the sector.

Previous strategies have identified the attraction of a post-secondary institution as a key objective. It is recognized that this would be a significant contributor to achieving EG's vision of becoming a Complete Community. While the attraction of a post-secondary institution is typically reliant on factors such as a robust public transit system, available rental housing, and vibrant downtowns, much can be done to lay the foundation and begin building the strategic partnerships that will support post-secondary education development. Attracting post-secondary satellite institutions, field schools, research, and development facilities can increase the community's ability to develop talent and attract significant economic activity. Population growth, increased diversity of housing stock, and enhanced access to recreation amenities such as the planned Health and Active Living Plaza will contribute to this investment target's successful attraction.

Partnerships with York Region, post-secondary institutions and the business community will be essential to securing these types of investment.

Tourism

East Gwillimbury's nascent tourism sector has leveraged agritourism and plentiful outdoor recreation opportunities typically. Expanding on these strengths and facilitating strategic investment into accommodation and event space will position EG to benefit from Ontario's robust tourism industry more effectively. In 2017 (latest data available), the total Gross Domestic Product attributed to tourism was \$34.8 billion (including over \$11.6 billion from the U.S. and overseas), employing 401,206 and generating \$12.5 billion in government tax revenues.

For the Town of East Gwillimbury's Regional Tourism Region (RTO), Number 6, known as York, Durham and Headwaters Tourism Region, visitors spent \$751 million in 2017, with \$101 million spent by overseas travellers.

A survey conducted in October 2020 by Destination Canada reported 65% of Ontarians feel safe when thinking about travelling to nearby communities, and 53% feel safe when thinking of travelling within Ontario¹². However, at the same time, Ontarians' sentiment toward visitors decreased: 47% would welcome visitors from nearby communities, and 37% would welcome visitors from other parts of Ontario.

A report by CIBC published in November 2020 indicates Canadian households are holding on to more than \$90 billion in excess cash likely being held by higher-income Canadians saving money on services like dining out. The head of portfolio management for investment company PIMCO Canada Corp. commented that consumers could "unleash a torrent of cash into the domestic economy once the Covid-19 pandemic is firmly in the rear-view mirror".



Continued efforts to work with strategic regional partners like Central Counties Tourism, The EG Chamber of Commerce, and Experience EG will provide opportunities to capitalize on a growing interest in city breaks and day trips in a post-pandemic environment.

Film Location Development

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic directly affecting Ontario's film and TV industry, decreasing spending 30% compared to 2019. However, the industry still contributed \$1.5 billion to Ontario's economy in 2020, creating almost 29,667 high-value full-time equivalent direct and spin-off jobs for Ontarians²².

The industry enjoys robust provincial support through six programs, including:

- Ontario Production Services Tax Credit
- Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit
- Ontario Computer Animation and Special Effects Tax Credit
- OFTTC Regional Bonus
- Ontario Film Fund²³

By virtue of its proximity to major Toronto studios and production facilities, EG is well-positioned to leverage this expanding industry. Becoming a location of choice for film and television productions creates economic opportunity for local businesses and offers a significant potential return on a very minimal investment. The community significantly increases the likelihood of attracting productions by collaborating with the Ontario Film Commission to ensure bylaws and permitting are updated to support film locations and actively updating listings on the Ontario Locations Library.

²² Ontario Film and Television Production 2018 – 2020, ontariocreates.ca/assets/images/research/Statistics/Eng/Ontario_Creates_Prod_Stats_Combosheet_2021-04-14.pdf

²³ Ontario Film Commission, digitallibrary.ontariocreates.ca/DigitalLibrary/FinancialIncentives.aspx



Corporate Strategic Values





The Town of East Gwillimbury’s “Strategic Plan 2019-2022” clearly articulates the corporate strategic values listed below. Every effort has been made to incorporate these values into the broader economic development strategy, with selected examples listed below.



Responsible Growth & Environmental Protection

This value recognizes the importance of attracting quality jobs and growing the community in a balanced, sustainable way that respects EG’s commitment to heritage and environmental stewardship.



Quality Programs & Services

The Business Advantage program is designed to enhance service delivery to businesses and investors, enhancing EG’s overall business-friendliness and ability to attract investment.



Culture of Municipal Excellence

Corporate-wide adoption of the Business Advantage philosophy with its emphasis on responsive, customer-centric program and service delivery and efficient collaboration among municipal departments is a critical component of achieving municipal excellence.



Build Complete Communities

A major focus is attracting development and jobs to the community that allow residents to work and play where they live.



Strategic Priorities and Action Plan





The figure below shows the playbooks and strategic themes that emerged as priorities through research and engagement activities.

Figure 7: Strategic Themes and Objectives

Strategic Themes	Objectives
1. Investment Readiness and Infrastructure	1.1 Build on the Advantage EG Marketing Platform
	1.2 Workforce Development
	1.3 Land Development and Infrastructure
	1.4 Enhance Broadband Infrastructure
2. Investment Attraction	2.1 Focus on Primary Target Sectors
	2.2 Focus on Secondary Target Sectors
	2.3 Lead Generation
	2.4 Promote Priority Sites
3. Business Retention and Expansion	3.1 Continue to support and promote the Business Advantage Program for both existing business and prospective investors.
	3.2 Support business development and job creation in East Gwillimbury
	3.3 Support Downtown Revitalization & Placemaking
	3.4 Engage EDAC volunteers to prioritize direct support to businesses red flagged through Triage BRE survey
4. Entrepreneurship Development	4.1 Improve Access to Capital
	4.2 Develop Co-working and Incubator Space
	4.3 Facilitate Access to Support Programming
5. Enhanced Communications	5.1 Design and Implement a business focused communications strategy
	5.2 Design and Implement a resident focused communications strategy

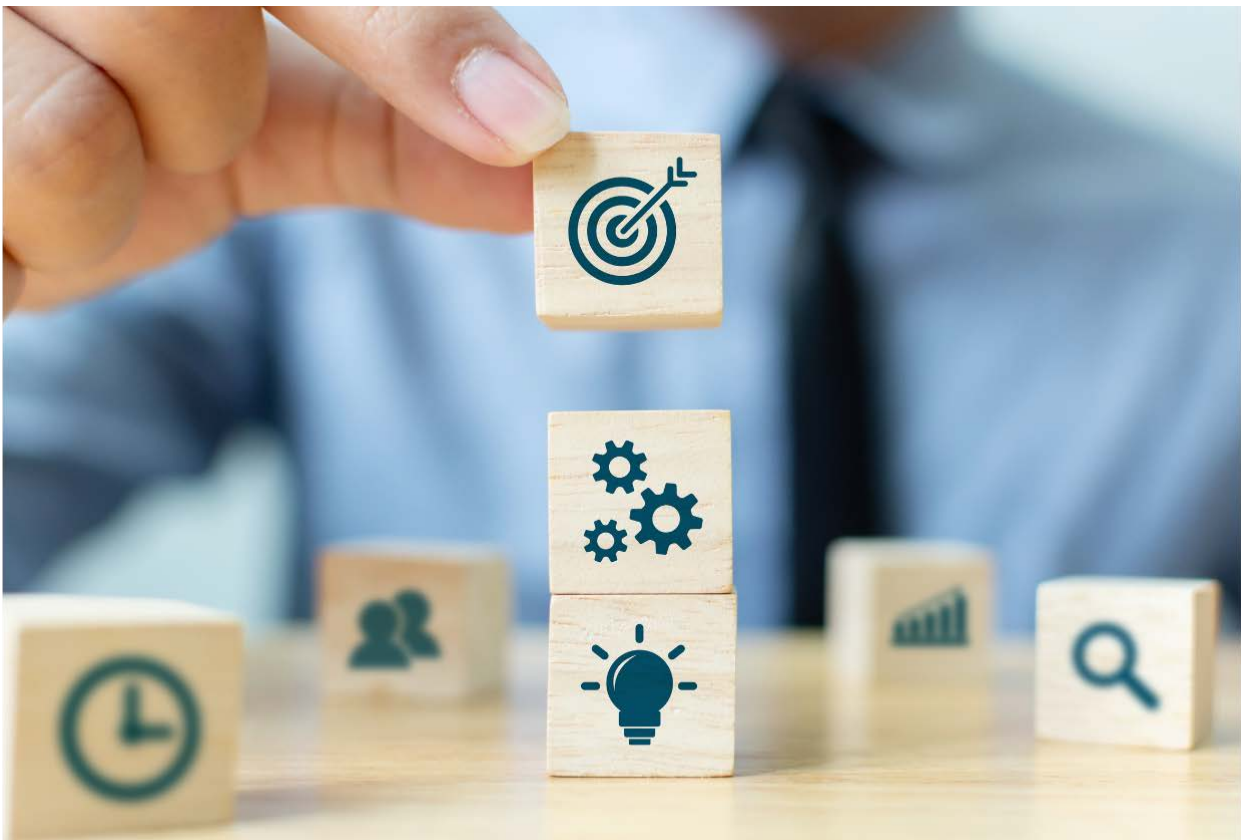


9.1 Framework for Action Plan

Strategic themes organize the Economic Development Strategy to anchor and qualify all objectives and ensuing actions. These recommendations support the stated priorities of the Town of East Gwillimbury and the desired outcomes of the strategic development process.

It should be noted that the list of objectives and actions represents a prioritized starting point based on community input, research, and professional opinion. New actions will emerge and will need to be assessed against the priorities of the strategy. The objectives and actions are presented in the following manner:

1. **Strategic Themes:** The high-level themes that have emerged through research and consultation.
2. **Objectives:** Refer to directions that, when implemented, will lead to achieving the goals of the strategic themes.
3. **Tactics:** Refer to the specific tactical actions that support the objectives





Investment Readiness and Infrastructure

Investment readiness and infrastructure are focused on enhancing the ability of the Town to support business investment by implementing and promoting business-friendly policies, increasing awareness of the Town in target markets, and ensuring a selection of investment-ready lands are available to lease or purchase. The development of client-facing data sets with detailed breakdowns of the cost of available properties, servicing timelines, engineering reports and required permitting. Having this data accessible reduces ambiguity and improves the investment case for the community. Improving investment readiness will include developing business-centric value propositions in target sectors that leverage existing clusters, supply chains, and workforce strengths.

Municipalities effective at attracting investment have established a client-centric corporate culture that actively supports investment, including ensuring institutional structures are streamlined to make the process of land selection and acquisition easy for investors. These thriving communities are proficient at promoting their community and available sites through online portals that continually update property availability and infrastructure that targeted companies require. This is particularly pertinent for the Town of East Gwillimbury, as the previous website and GIS partnership with the Y6 have just been updated to the new Advantage EG²⁴ website. The new website provides a platform for promoting business-friendly processes, fee structures, and services that focus on business success through the Business Advantage Program that differentiates the community from competitors. These activities align with the policies of the provincial government and the Making Ontario Open for Business Act focusing on reducing red tape for businesses.

Infrastructure

Reduced capacity in the region related to water servicing has put some investment opportunities on hold, limiting growth opportunities and causing potential investors to consider self-servicing. Continuing to lobby the region to upgrade these services is essential in the long term and pivoting to opportunities and investments that do not require large-scale servicing.

East Gwillimbury has made significant progress in enhancing broadband connectivity in the community. The Broadband Working Group (BWG) has supported the implementation of East Gwillimbury Broadband Strategy 2020-2025, leading to working with the Region-owned YorkNet Telecom Network Inc. to grow the Region's high-speed dark-fibre network across York Region. East Gwillimbury has also supported accessing \$192,000 through the Universal Broadband Fund to bring high-speed internet to residents of rural communities in East Gwillimbury and Vaughan in partnership with Bell. The East Gwillimbury portion of the project will provide fibre-based, high-speed internet to 44 underserved homes in the Callwood Court area of Ward Three.

²⁴ Advantage EG, advantageeg.ca



Workforce and Community Development

Community development is a significant component of investment readiness; beyond complex infrastructure, developing a solid sense of place that supports the overall quality of life is essential in talent attraction. Initiatives and policies that support affordable housing development invite new residents to become part of the community and develop vibrant public spaces all support workforce attraction and retention.

Figure 8: Investment Readiness and Infrastructure Action Plan

Objectives	Tactics
1.1 Build on the Advantage EG Marketing Platform	Develop clearly defined processes and protocols for producing investment attraction materials.
	Utilize target sector profiles to support investment attraction
	Develop a process for lead sharing and collaboration with N6 partners
1.2 Workforce Development	In collaboration with the workforce planning board, showcase local employment opportunities, training, and career paths for new and existing residents to retain and attract talent.
	Support businesses in attracting the workforce by developing materials that highlight the benefits of living in East Gwillimbury.
1.3 Land Development and Infrastructure	Continue to work with regional partners to secure commitments for funding and grants to support utility infrastructure investment for targeted employment lands.
	Continue working with internal departments to streamline development processes, enhance customer service focus, and reduce barriers to growth.
1.4 Enhance Broadband Infrastructure	Continue to work with the Broadband Working Group to implement the East Gwillimbury Broadband Strategy 2020-2025
	Continue to work collaboratively with ISPs to secure the development of new broadband infrastructure (Towers, Fibre).
	Support and inform proactive infrastructure development policy
	Continue to assess broadband access, identify gaps, and continually review protocols.
Performance Metrics	
<p>Quantitative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Materials Developed (Number, Quality) ▪ Reach of materials (Number of Views) ▪ Influenced investment ▪ Increased volume of investor inquiries 	<p>Qualitative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhanced capacity to develop materials that respond to investor needs ▪ Enhanced ability to market the community to potential investors ▪ Enhanced engagement of the business community in supporting broader community objectives ▪ Improved awareness of the community ▪ Enhanced ability to attract and retain investment



Investment Attraction

Attracting new jobs and investment dollars to the Town of East Gwillimbury depends on generating and pursuing leads in target sectors. The Town needs to articulate a clear vision and value proposition focused on traditional and emerging sectors that will drive investment activity and establish protocols to manage the leads. The investment attraction effort should build the Town’s momentum and the broader economic development activities in the York Region, Toronto Global and the Province of Ontario and relevant agencies and organizations. East Gwillimbury will need to be highly targeted in its investment attraction activities to avoid duplication and confusion in the broader market and effectively use resources.

The Town has a significant value proposition with large plots of available land lower than the GTA. However, there is a lack of servicing and an absence of confirmed commitment. An opportunity to stand out is through responsive service and relationship-based marketing.

This area has completed significant work through the Target Industry Snapshot report by ROI, identifying specific targets for lead generation. The next step is a targeted outreach program that identifies and engaging with firms within the identified sectors in the region and target markets leveraging updated web resources.

Figure 9: Investment Attraction Action Plan

Objectives	Tactics
2.1 Focus on Primary Target Sectors	Continue to update investment attraction content on Advantage EG to support investment attraction in the target sectors: Food Processing & Supply Chain, Construction Products and Services, Industry Supply Wholesale/Distribution, Manufacturing and Healthcare. Continue to target engagement with businesses in the target sectors to refine the value proposition and identify expansion and supply chain opportunities.
2.2 Focus on Secondary Target Sectors	Continue to articulate and expand on the value proposition for secondary sectors Establish strategic partnerships to support sector development
2.3 Lead Generation	Implement a lead tracking system using the new CRM. Through ongoing business engagement, identify new leads and supply chain gaps in the community. Continue to generate leads through partnerships with local, regional, provincial and federal investment attraction agencies. Provide these partners with the community’s target sectors and investment sites. Pilot a targeted lead generation campaign specific to East Gwillimbury.



2.4 Promote Priority Sites	Identify priority development sites and promote them in conjunction with target sectors working towards Ontario Certified Site ²⁵ designation
Ensure internal policies and processes support growth objectives in employment lands.	
Performance Metrics	
<p>Quantitative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of Investment Leads ▪ Number of Qualified Projects ▪ Number of successful new investments ▪ Total Investment Dollars ▪ Total New Jobs Created 	<p>Qualitative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved awareness of East Gwillimbury’s Primary and Secondary Target Sectors ▪ Improved reputation of East Gwillimbury as an investment location ▪ Increased awareness of East Gwillimbury’s Value Proposition

²⁵ Ontario Certified Site, ontario.ca/page/get-investment-ready-certified-site-designation-your-industrial-property#section-0



Business Retention and Expansion

Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) identified the core economic development service activity, with the highest return on investment with approximately 80% of all new job growth stemming from existing businesses²⁶. Ongoing support through facilitation and connectivity to programming based on long-term relationships are the basis of these programs. Business retention and expansion activities support an “Economic Gardening” approach to business development by growing existing businesses and finding opportunities for collaboration. Well-established communication and continually updated key performance indicators through feedback are essential, including business satisfaction, the number of business expansions, new jobs supported, businesses and jobs retained, and investment dollars influenced.

Maintaining extensive databases on the business community and their needs is essential to identify ways to improve local policies and services that support business growth; the Town’s recently established client relationship management system TIEIN is an essential tool. Enabling the success of local businesses supports investment attraction efforts by refining the community value proposition and improving services. The Town of East Gwillimbury’s economic development department’s Business Advantage programming leverages regional support programming and services to support local businesses, including:

- East Gwillimbury Shop Local Programming²⁷
- The East Gwillimbury business directory partnership with the N6²⁸
- TIEIT customer relationship management system tracks businesses' connections and access to provincial programs and data to support businesses.
- Ongoing business engagement, including a business survey completed in June of 2021, improved the business directory, tracked business satisfaction with the Town of East Gwillimbury and identified opportunities to support businesses directly.

The Business Bounce Back Program In partnership with the Town of Georgina and York University's YSpace. This new three-month program is designed to support businesses and individuals primarily but not exclusively within the hospitality and tourism sector who require the entrepreneurial and digital skills needed to pivot their existing business or create a new venture. The program will provide founders with the tools, skills, and connections to scale and thrive in the industry.

²⁶ Job Creation in America, Birch 1987, papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1496185

²⁷ Shop & Support Local, eastgwillimbury.ca/en/living-in-eg/shop-and-support-local.aspx

²⁸ East Gwillimbury’s Business Directory, ww6.yorkmaps.ca/Html5Viewer24/Index.html?viewer=eastgwillimbury



Figure 10: Business Retention and Expansion Action Plan

Objectives	Tactics
3.1 Continue to support and promote the Business Advantage Program for both existing business and prospective investors.	Continue to refine processes and protocols for responding to investor inquiries and lead nurturing that ensure communication consistently reflects a customer-centric focus across the corporation.
	Review and document customer service activities to support ongoing training with staff to maintain a level of excellence.
	Continue to develop enhanced tools to support businesses and investors as they navigate the permitting and zoning process.
	Continue to engage the business community regularly while collecting feedback from clients to support process improvement.
3.2 Support business development and job creation in East Gwillimbury	Identify retention and expansion opportunities through ongoing business engagement.
	Track and dashboard projects in the CRM to develop key performance indicators.
3.3 Support Downtown Revitalization & Placemaking	Support the remediation of derelict properties to attract new investment.
	Continue to identify and fill commercial and retail gaps in community cores within East Gwillimbury.
	Inform update to the Official Plan, zoning and permitting and use regulations to support a broader range of development options, including mixed-use and multi-residential.
	Develop programming to enhance placemaking initiatives, including signage and beautification of the community cores and gathering places.
Explore options such as a shared-cost program to encourage façade improvement.	
3.4 Engage EDAC volunteers to prioritize direct support to businesses red-flagged through Triage BRE survey	Direct outreach to and coordination of support for businesses at risk of closure or relocation
	Direct outreach to and coordination of support for businesses with identified expansion opportunities
	Leverage EDAC volunteer skills to assist in business outreach.
Performance Metrics	
<p>Quantitative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhanced capacity to track and effectively respond to leads ▪ Reduced response times and a seamless approach to serving business clients ▪ Enhanced ability to attract and retain investment ▪ Enhanced job retention and creation ▪ Jobs and Investment Supported 	<p>Qualitative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town’s reputation as friendly to business ▪ Enhanced capacity to develop policy and programs that respond to investor needs ▪ Maintain Customer Service Excellence through ‘Business Advantage’ Program ▪ Enhanced ability of business and investors to navigate the development process



Entrepreneurship Development

Entrepreneurship development means enabling new businesses to launch successfully through business planning, networking, and accessing resources. While incubation, acceleration and technology transfer ensure communities remain competitive by encouraging and supporting structures that facilitate innovation and knowledge sharing. These activities also include finding locations that serve as ecosystems for resource-sharing, networking, and scaling-up operations, providing training or guidance to innovators.

Entrepreneurship support is an important strategic goal for the Town of East Gwillimbury and a significant aspect of “Economic Gardening,” exploring opportunities for mentorship, skill development, access to capital, business incubation & acceleration. These activities help identify the ‘hidden’ professionals currently living and working in East Gwillimbury. By understanding the composition of the local workforce, including skills and commuting patterns, the Town can identify niches for the development or support of micro-enterprises and satellite offices. The Town recognizes the value of skilled talent moving to the community, and these individuals are bringing a large number of micro-businesses with them to the community. Finding these individuals and small tech companies and linking them to larger businesses in the region supports import substitution and improves the stability of the Town’s economy.

The role of municipalities in supporting entrepreneurship is often as facilitators, connecting businesses to investors, programming, facilities and networking opportunities. For example, the Town of East Gwillimbury supports a business incubator program in collaboration with Georgina The Link²⁹; this facility can be a focal point for entrepreneurs in the region. The Business Bounce Back program in partnership with the Town of Georgina and the Town of East Gwillimbury is an excellent example of an initiative that can not only provide training to locals but get them connected to support to pivot their existing business or create a new venture. The Town needs to continue to leverage regional programs offered by partners like the York Small Business Enterprise Centre (YSBEC) to foster a culture of entrepreneurship and ensure no duplication of services. Other support in the region includes:

Examples of Support Programming

South Lake Futures³⁰

York Region ventureLAB Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund³¹

CreateIT³²

NewMakelt³³

²⁹ The Link, georgina.ca/discover-georgina/arts-and-culture/link

³⁰ South Lake Futures, southlakefutures.ca/

³¹ York Region, yorklink.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/york-region-economic-development-action-plan-2020-2023.pdf

³² CreateIT, createitnow.ca/about/

³³ NewMakelt, newmakeit.com/



Figure 11: Entrepreneurship Development Action Plan

Objectives	Tactics
4.1 Improve Access to Capital	Develop defined processes and protocols for responding to entrepreneur inquiries and connecting them to support programming.
	Develop an updated menu of capital programs to support entrepreneurs' access to funding.
4.2 Develop Co-working and Incubator Space	Continue to work with Georgina and other project partners to pilot space for entrepreneurs, investors, and remote workers to meet and build the local startup network.
	Reach out to the "hidden professionals" in Town and connect them to opportunities to establish or grow their business locally.
	Based on the success of the pilot program, establish satellite co-working facilities in East Gwillimbury.
4.3 Facilitate Access to Support Programming	Develop enhanced tools and events to facilitate entrepreneurs' connection/exposure to prospective investors.
	Concentrate support services around incubators as a focal point for programming and angel investors.
Performance Metrics	
<p>Quantitative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of Startups Supported ▪ Amount of investment and grant funding secured ▪ Establishment of Co-working and Incubator Spaces 	<p>Qualitative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved awareness of East Gwillimbury's Startup Community ▪ Improved access to capital ▪ Improved awareness and access to support programming



Enhanced Communications

The Town of East Gwillimbury is changing rapidly; the community’s identity, residents, and business community will be different in the next few years. For the Town to thrive and adapt to this change, proactive and responsive communication will be critical.

Change is occurring so fast that it can be difficult for individuals to fully understand the scale and benefits of economic development, business growth, and job creation. In many communities, the lack of effective communication has stalled projects that would ultimately benefit residents had the message been more explicit. The best example of this is BREXIT, where large swaths of the population were unaware of the split's actual ramifications, causing a spike in Google searches of “What does it mean to leave the E.U.?” and “What is BREXIT.”

Preparing residents for growth, densification and changing community composition with a consistent and well-understood vision for growth.

Communications will need to run through every aspect of the economic development strategy, from informing businesses and entrepreneurs how to access support programming, providing an easily accessible and searchable database of investment-ready sites, and promoting the community’s unique value proposition in targeted sectors. The Town also needs to incorporate communication into internal processes to better leverage cross-department support of economic development initiatives and improved customer service.

Figure 12: Enhanced Communications Action Plan

Objectives	Tactics
5.1 Design and Implement a business-focused communications strategy	Develop and host in-person and online growth seminars that articulate the benefits of growth. Promote key performance indicators and development successes through events and multi-channel public engagement.
5.2 Design and Implement a resident-focused communications strategy	Enhance community understanding and engagement with economic growth objectives through events and multi-channel public engagement.
Performance Metrics	
<p>Quantitative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advantage EG website engagement metrics ▪ Event attendance ▪ Reach of messaging in community ▪ Direct business inquiries and referrals. 	<p>Qualitative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhanced engagement and support for sustainable growth objectives. ▪ Perception of East Gwillimbury as business-friendly ▪ Enhanced awareness of the benefits of development ▪ Improved awareness of economic development initiatives

