



GEORGINA



2019 Year in Review

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Economic and local highlights

Georgina’s Economic Development and Tourism Division made gains on the Town’s goal to “grow our economy” by increasing employment and investment, assisting with efforts to improve broadband connectivity (high-speed internet), enhancing customer service delivery and by promoting the Town’s opportunities for growth and development.

Our staff celebrated 31 new business openings, six relocations, two expansions and one re-opening - up from 2018 numbers. Employment growth also increased by 2.5 per cent from 2018 to 2019, slightly above York Region’s average at 2.2 per cent.

A \$2 million investment from the federal government for new high-speed internet infrastructure marks a positive step towards improved internet connectivity in our community. The investment will help to ensure rural and remote businesses across Georgina are in an optimal position to take advantage of online opportunities and sufficiently utilize the ones they currently depend on.

We continued to build our identity by showcasing our thriving agriculture community and tourism assets, and by highlighting our investment advantages through new and increased communication channels.

With 3,500 new housing units approved for build in 2020 and multiple applications for commercial, office and industrial developments, Georgina is positioned for growth. Evolving Town programs and supports designed to attract and retain business prove that Georgina is prepared for the future and an ideal place to do business.

Economic Development and Tourism



Town of Georgina



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Growing Community

8,122
Jobs

748
Businesses Surveyed

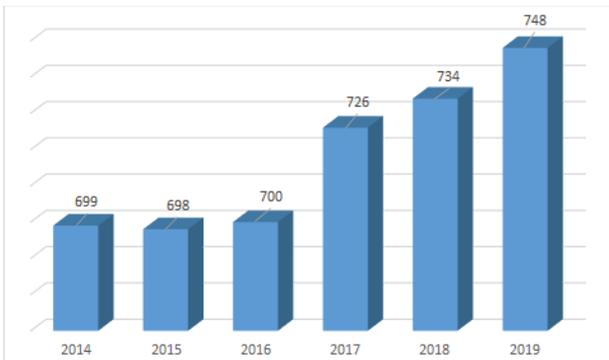
2.5%
Employment Growth

2019 York Region Employment Survey results indicate that Georgina experienced a 2.5 per cent increase in employment growth from 2018 to 2019. The average employment growth in York Region was 2.2 per cent, compared to 2.5 per cent provincially and 2.2 per cent nationally.

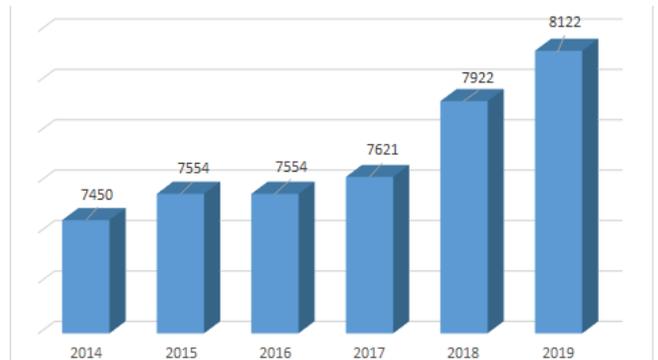
- ⬆️ Since 2009, the Town of Georgina has added almost 1,500 jobs to its employment base
- ⬆️ Arts, entertainment and recreation, and construction were the top growth sectors between 2018-2019, each increasing by 131 and 49 jobs respectively
- ⬆️ The retail trade (20%), accommodation and food services (16%), and educational services (16%) sectors account for the three largest shares of employment in Georgina
- ⬆️ Since 2009, full-time employment in Georgina has grown by almost 800 jobs and accounted for 58% of the employment in 2019

Numbers contained within this profile include surveyed data collected from the 2019 York Region Employment Survey. The 2019 survey was a comprehensive Region-wide survey of all businesses with a physical location across York Region and excludes farm and home-based businesses.

Business Growth



Employment Growth



Residential Growth

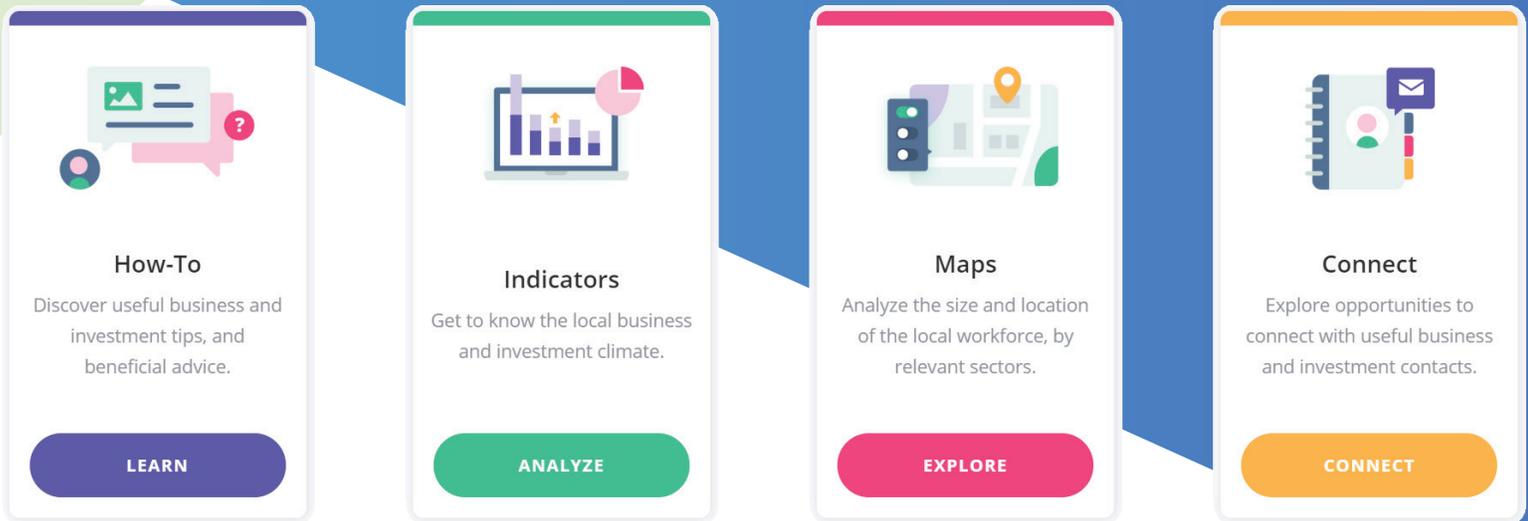


Commercial and Industrial Growth



Georgina launches interactive business dashboard tool

The tool provides a snapshot into Georgina's growing economy and provides how-to business and investment tips.



The Economic Development and Tourism office launched a new online dashboard tool to help local businesses and prospective investors ease the time-consuming steps of acquiring up-to-date statistics and business information.

Indicators break down resident demographics, labour force and industry statistics, while the interactive maps allow for sector size and location analysis. The data is current and accurate, automatically pulling from a range of proprietary and public sources, such as Statistics Canada.

Small business entrepreneurs are further supported with how-to business and investment tips such as how to write a business plan and how to apply for licensing and permits. They can easily access local business and investment contacts through the 'Connect' resource.

"The Business and Investment Assistant tool gives local businesses and potential investors a snapshot into Georgina's growing economy with the ability to filter the information they need that relates to their industry," says Karyn Stone, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism.

"Users will be able to obtain essential business planning data which is regularly requested through our office, create reports and make more informed decisions."

"Georgina is poised for growth over the next few years, so we're thrilled to be able to provide our business community and potential investors with a service tool that eases their business planning and provides new resources to help them grow and thrive."

Explore the Business and Investment Assistant dashboard at choosegeorgina.ca



Shovels will be in the ground sooner for development projects

The timeframe in which it takes to get a shovel in the ground is a key determining factor for when developers are choosing where to build.

For this reason, the Development Services Department has been working to evolve the site plan application process to improve service delivery and reduce the timeframes for development approvals.

Proposed amendments to the Site Plan Control By-law will not only delegate the approval authority to staff for specific applications, but will also introduce securities relative to the scale of development and reduce the site plan inspection fees.

Staff have developed an easy-to-read workflow diagram for applicants to understand the process better and to identify the point of contact for each stage of the process to ensure improved communications. These changes will all contribute to shortening the length of time taken for applicants to receive their site plan approval, potentially saving developers thousands of dollars.

“These recent updates, combined with the Town’s [Business Class Program](#), position the Town of Georgina as a welcoming and viable location to invest,” says Karyn Stone, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism.

[View Site Plan workflow diagram](#)

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High-speed internet coming to remote Georgina

The Government of Canada announced a major investment in new high-speed internet infrastructure for Georgina and the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nations that will be delivered through the Connect to Innovate Program. It is a collaboration between the Town and York Region (YorkNet) to install more than 100 kilometres of publicly owned dark fiber across Georgina.

The program will help ensure rural and remote communities across Georgina are well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the digital age.

This need has been heightened more than ever as we experience a global pandemic that requires social distancing, leaving internet connectivity a vital link to engage and participate in society.

Council agreed on a vision for the plan: all businesses and residents have access to affordable and reliable broadband connectivity options at the service levels they require based on technology advancements, private market forces and funding commitments from senior levels of government.

The top priorities for the plan include connectivity for everyone, leveraging broadband to foster economic

development and providing community Wi-Fi in areas such as libraries, tourist destinations and other public facilities.

The direction of the strategy and action plan include leveraging private-public partnerships, establishing policies to promote broadband deployment, and earmarking reserve funds to leverage external funding opportunities.

“Everyone in our growing community should have access to high-speed internet and we are working toward that goal,” said Mayor Margaret Quirk.

“The internet is often referred to as the fourth utility and has become a critical tool in our daily lives. It is essential in today’s economy and necessary for us to continue to grow Georgina’s business community. It shouldn’t matter where you live, our residents and businesses need access to affordable high-speed internet connectivity. It’s a local economic development driver and we need to be competitive in today’s digital world.”

For more information on the program and how to get involved, visit georgina.ca/broadband.



The Facts

- \$5.2M in total funding
- 100 kilometres across Georgina
- Expected to be completed by 2021



Paving the way in sustainable agriculture

Georgina is home to more than 100 farms covering 17,371 acres of farmland, with many who sell direct to consumers. There are a variety of agricultural products available through farm gate sales, stands and kiosks. The top three areas of cash crops in the municipality are corn, soybean and hay.



**CLEARWATER
FARM**

Georgina plays an important part in York Region's Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy. [ClearWater Farm](#) has been featured by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and Dine magazine, among others. The farm's contribution to our local economy, their experiential learning activities, sustainable growing and agri-preneur training program has shone a spotlight on Georgina. A work in progress - ClearWater Farm is part of a forward-thinking movement that will continue to pave the way in agri-tourism and innovative outdoor learning experiences.



The Field to Table event brings awareness to Georgina's vibrant agriculture community in late August. Local farms open their gates to the public where they can purchase fresh products and learn about sustainable agriculture. In its second year, local and out-of-town attendance nearly doubled, increasing awareness of the farmers who sell direct to consumers. Visit georgina.ca/field-to-table for more information.



The [Georgina Farmers' Market](#) features more than 30 vendors offering a wide range of local products including produce, meats, baked goods and crafts. Market ambassadors Natalia Zammiti and Donna Callfas believe that working together and supporting local businesses is crucial in building a strong, vibrant community, and that the Farmers' Market will undoubtedly double as an amazing outlet to gather, learn and connect regularly.



GEORGINA

The Town is committed to working with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) to support our local farmers and encourage innovation to meet the needs of our community now and in the future. Awareness campaigns connect and educate residents about the importance and impact of the agriculture sector. More information can be found at georgina.ca/agri-tourism.

Population Growth

Georgina's current population is approximately 50,000, expected to increase 30 per cent in the next 10 years.

Over the past 10 years, Georgina has seen a significant increase in residential and commercial growth.

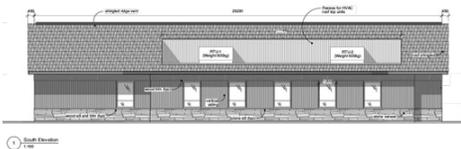
At year-end, Development Services was processing planning applications to facilitate the construction of more than 3,500 new housing units. These applications represent the need for a range of housing types, including single-detached, townhouses and condominium units. The Town is also processing a number of applications for seniors care facilities and adult living.

"As we head into 2020 there is a renewed sense of excitement and energy in Georgina, and this next decade promises to be a transformative time for our community." - Mayor Margaret Quirk.

Supporting population growth...

With the recent and imminent future development comes the need for additional infrastructure and amenities to serve our growing community.

Healthcare



Georgina Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic and Health Georgina will re-build the Georgina Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic at its former Dalton Road site. This facility will provide and expand health services in Georgina.

Amenities



The new Multi-use Recreational Complex is planned for Keswick on Woodbine Avenue and will include a number of amenities: a lap and leisure pool, gymnasium, meeting and multi-purpose rooms, and a Discovery Library branch.

Transportation



The Hwy 400/404-Link was given the green light in 2019 to move forward. The first steps will be to update the environmental assessment for the proposed route. Once complete, it will further improve transportation for residents and businesses.

Bringing Georgina businesses online



The Jackson's Point, Keswick, Sutton business improvements areas (BIAs) and Pefferlaw Main Street received a total of \$30,000 in funding to help better promote their businesses online.

The funding was received after our Economic Development office in partnership with York Region submitted an application for a Digital Service Squad Grant through the provincial government.

The Digital Service Squad helps small main street businesses better promote themselves online and adopt digital tools and technology. They are a highly trained team of digital marketing specialists who have a wealth of experience working with small businesses. Toby James, York Region's Digital Mainstreet Squad member and co-owner of Cats Cove Communications, offered a free social media workshop at the Link in Sutton to help promote the program and connect with as many businesses as possible. He then hit the streets with his team in July to connect with businesses one-on-one.

The Squad connected with 170 businesses and provided 41 of them with additional service, including Uptown Keswick's BIA board. Like others who benefited from the program, the Digital Service Squad first met with the Keswick BIA Board one-on-one to build a wish list of priority items and do an analysis of their current online presence. Depending on the business or organization's needs, the Squad assisted with website setup and

optimization, social media, point of sale systems, email marketing, inventory management and more.

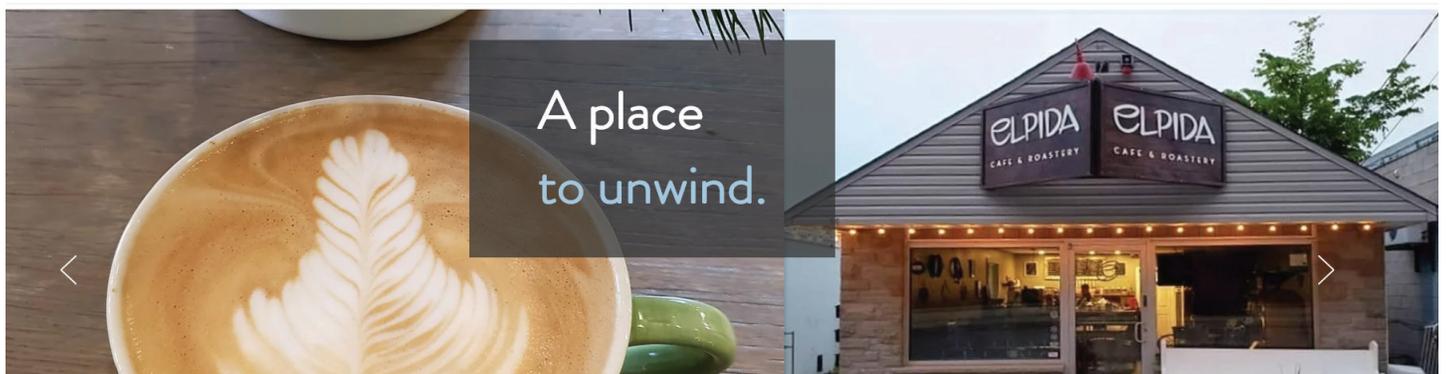
Karin, Board Chair of Uptown Keswick BIA, worked closely with Toby's team to create a new website. With an already established social media channel, they decided that a website would be the best action to increase their online presence.

"We lacked presence and the ability to connect with people who don't regularly visit our downtown area. Having access to this service provides an opportunity to reach more residents in Georgina and let them know about the variety of businesses that are here," says Karin.

"The website will provide access to all of our businesses sites under one umbrella. We look forward to the growth of the new community resource page, that will continue to bring you back to experience all that Uptown Keswick BIA has to offer."

Individual businesses took advantage of the program in many different ways. Some businesses have an online presence with a website and social media channels, but there were many who required guidance. One of the biggest impacts from the program was the Google My Business presence and getting it setup for many business owners.

Small businesses can take still take advantage of other aspects of the Digital Main Street program, such as digital assessments and online training by visiting digitalmainstreet.ca.



Economic incentives bring investment to Georgina



Georgina Military Day 2019

The Town of Georgina offers grants to help achieve social, economic and cultural goals for our communities.

Economic, Culture and Community Betterment Grant Program

Established: 2005

In 2019, the Economic Development and Tourism Division supported 18 community events by providing \$45,000 in grant funding.

The purpose of the Community Betterment Grant Program is to support festivals and events that serve to promote the Town to markets outside Georgina, generate economic opportunities for the local business community and provide for the betterment of the community. Applicants may receive up to 50 per cent of their total eligible expenses, up to a maximum of \$5,000.



Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Program Grants

Established: 2015

Since the program's inception, more than \$75,000 has been granted to businesses in the designated Business Improvement Areas (BIA's) in Keswick, Jackson's Point and Sutton.

This program has generated \$660,000 of private investment into the the historic BIA's on business improvements.

The CIP was established to improve a defined area within the community that has been identified as in need of revitalization.

Four grants are available to business owners and commercial property owners within the designated CIP boundaries: Facade, Heritage, Landscape and Accessibility. Applicants may receive up to \$5,000 or 50 per cent of the cost of their improvement, whichever is less.



Development Application Fee Rebate Program

Established: 2018

The Development Rebate Program is to encourage development and redevelopment in the industrial, commercial (excluding retail and service commercial) and institutional Sectors. To date, \$50,000 has been approved to assist business owners.

The rebates are up to 50 per cent of the application fee to a maximum of \$10,000. A rebate may also be requested for multiple applications to a maximum of \$20,000 per property.



Economic and local business highlights

Farmers' Market part of Town's budget

Council approved adding support of the Georgina Farmers' Market to the Town's annual budget in 2020. This change will allow the Town to further support our thriving agriculture community.



Streetscaping project brings new opportunity for businesses

The Town's Streetscape Design Standards collected feedback from residents and businesses over the summer of 2019. Results will be brought to Council this year. The project will establish standards and inform revitalization of downtown streets in order to enhance the dining and shopping experience. Visit georgina.ca/Streetscape for more information.

Waterfront Parks Master Plan being developed

Georgina's waterfronts are a key asset in our community. They drive a large part of the Town's tourism, which supports our local businesses. The master plan will help Georgina ensure it can meet the demands of the Town as a growing and desirable lakefront destination.



Georgina's New Radio Station

Ed Torres from Torres media announced that he would be investing in Georgina's first radio station with

plans to launch Spring 2020. The new 93.7 FM station will cover all of Georgina and reach 1.7 million people from Newmarket to south of Orillia.

Launching Spring 2020



Georgina's 2nd annual Field to Table brings awareness to vibrant agriculture community

Eight local farms opened their gates to approximately 1,600 people, to purchase fresh products and learn more about agriculture. More than 450 ballot entries were received in hopes of winning a basket of delicious farm produce. Visit georgina.ca/Agri-tourism for more information.



Business Panel

Economic Development hosted a Business Panel at the Briars Resort and Spa to connect with local businesses and potential investors. Town staff answered questions about starting or expanding a new business in Georgina.



New Tourism Signage

Through the First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE) program, it was recognized that tourism signage

was needed to connect tourists with our business communities, to boost the tourism impact. New tourism and wayfinding signs were installed throughout the municipality with plans for the instillation of additional signage in 2020.



Georgina housing costs still the most affordable in York Region

The cost of housing makes Georgina a desirable location to buy real estate in York Region. Other key factors driving new residents are lakeside living and the less than one-hour commute to Toronto. Georgina is poised to be a hot-spot for new buyers and businesses looking for a work/life balance.

First Development Application Fee Rebate applicant breaks ground

Weller Tree Service is expanding and moving to a new location. The Economic Development and Tourism office at the Town worked closely with the Weller family to assist them with their plans. They were one of the Town's first Development Fee Rebate applications processed since the program's approval by Council in 2018.



Mayor and Council's Milestone Awards

Since 2016, the Chamber's Business Excellence Awards have joined forces

with the Town of Georgina's Mayor and Council's Milestone Awards. This year, we celebrated businesses and their families that have operated in Georgina for more than 40 years.

These families help form the foundation of our local economy. They provide products and services that have made an impact locally, regionally, nationally and even globally, and also provide jobs and financial sponsorship for causes that make a difference in our community. Congratulations to all of this year's recipients.



Tourism booth re-opens on Hwy. 48

Georgina's Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Centre celebrated the re-opening of the tourism information kiosk on Highway 48 after 10 years of the building being vacant. This was a pilot project over the summer months to welcome tourists to the area and direct them to local businesses and events.



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