



# GEORGINA

Improved internet for  
Georgina

**PAGE 1**

2019-2023 Corporate  
Strategic Plan

**PAGE 2**

First Development Rebate  
Program applicant's  
success story

**PAGE 3**

Georgina's tourism impact

**PAGE 4**

Accessibility Grant  
helps businesses with  
compliance deadline

**PAGE 5**

Grants cover costs of  
downtown improvements

**PAGE 6**

Town improving planning  
and development process

**PAGE 8**

Boosting Georgina's  
agriculture awareness

**PAGE 9**

Economic and local  
highlights

**PAGE 10**

## Improved internet for 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. This program is a collaboration between the Town and York Region (YorkNet) to install more than 100 kilometres of publicly owned 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.

We are encouraging all residents and businesses to assist with the gathering of data by taking part in an internet speed test. The research will provide a better understanding of the opportunities available for internet service providers to utilize the Connect to Innovate infrastructure to provide enhanced internet services to residents and businesses. The speed test will be available for the month of November.

For more information on the program and how to get involved, visit [georgina.ca/broadband](http://georgina.ca/broadband).

Economic Development and  
Tourism Newsletter

**Fall**  
**2019**



Town of Georgina



GeorginaEconomicDevelopment



[choosegeorgina.ca](http://choosegeorgina.ca)



# 2019-2023 Corporate Strategic Plan

On May 29, 2019, Council endorsed the Town's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. It lays out a vision and mission for the organization, as well as four priorities:

1. Grow our economy
2. Promote a high quality of life
3. Engage our community and build partnerships
4. Deliver exceptional service



The Economic Development and Tourism Division is committed to delivering on the Town's goal to "grow our economy" by increasing employment and investment, improving both transportation and broadband connectivity, and by promoting our Town's identity.

The division continues to focus on the following four key strategies as they have the most potential to create employment growth and increase the non-residential tax base:



## **Support existing businesses and target new investment**

- ↑ Increased program and support awareness through new communication channels
- ↑ Secured \$30,000 in funding for Business Improvement Areas to access training to improve their online presence



## **Leverage economic impact of agriculture, food and agri-tourism**

- ↑ Hosted the second annual Field to Table event in August with approximately 1,600 attendees
- ↑ Continued support of the Georgina Farmers' Market and promotion of agri-tourism operators



## **Enhance and diversify the Tourism industry**

- ↑ Supported the Chamber of Commerce to implement an Ambassador Program
- ↑ Worked with tourism stakeholders and the Chamber of Commerce to develop a Community Tourism Plan



## **Boost investment readiness**

- ↑ Implemented the Business Class Program to streamline the planning and development process
- ↑ Connect to Innovate Program provided \$2M for the installation of infrastructure for service providers to improve internet



# BUSINESS

*Success*

## Weller Tree Service (since 1917)

If you're a longtime Georgina resident, you more than likely know someone who worked for Weller Tree Service growing up. The business is deeply rooted in the Town's identity, being one of the longest family-run businesses in the area.

The company was founded by Robert Franklin Weller in 1917 and is now being run by a third generation. They are one of the largest privately owned tree companies in all of Ontario with more than 150 employees, working for different municipalities from Toronto to Midland and Hydro Commissions across Ontario. They sit on many industry boards and are a key partner in assisting the Canadian Food and Drug Agency deal with the Asian Long-Horned Beetle infestation.

Rapid growth moved the company into a new phase of their story: expansion. Their first location near Keswick's uptown business area outgrew their needs. A new location on McCowan Road in Georgina's rural landscape was purchased and an exciting chapter began.

The Economic Development and Tourism office worked closely with the Weller family to assist them in their new expansion plans. Weller Tree Service was one of the Town's first Development Fee Rebate applications processed since the program's approval by Council in 2018.

A sense of pride — Weller Tree Service is a true Georgina business success story. Their rooted history and impressive portfolio of work will forever be part of the Town's identity.

Learn more about the Development Fee Rebate Program by contacting Sean Columbus at (905) 476-4301 ext. 2330.

Has your business made an impact? If you've won an award or made an impact locally or even globally, we want to hear from you. Submit your business spotlight questionnaire at [georgina.ca/business](http://georgina.ca/business).



# Georgina's Tourism Impact

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



The purpose of this 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. For information on the Economic Development and Community Betterment Grant, visit [georgina.ca/Grants](http://georgina.ca/Grants).



Keswick Uptown Harvest Festival

## Why Tourism?

Every \$1M spent by visitors in Ontario generates 13 new jobs and \$604,800 in wages. Tourism also represents the largest employer of young people, accounting for 23 per cent of the workforce aged 15 – 24. Additionally, tourism supports the growth of year-round positions in Ontario, with 60 per cent of tourism workers in full time positions.

Ontario Canada, Open for Business, Tourism Statistics

## Top three reasons why tourists visit Georgina

Event goers were surveyed over the summer to gain more insight on what the public thinks Georgina is best known for. Our team will continue to gather data at upcoming events to be used to inform future initiatives undertaken by the Economic Development and Tourism Division.

Beaches      Watersports      Agri-tourism

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Military Day

Take a Kid Fishing

CountryFest

Painted Perch Festival

Field to Table

The Town was present at many events throughout the summer. It was an opportunity to reach residents, visitors and business owners to share information on programs and services offered in Georgina.



## Will your business be AODA compliant by the 2025 deadline?

### Georgina's Grant Program can help cover improvement costs.

Accommodating the individual needs of people with disabilities is a legal duty under the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). This enables people to benefit equally and take part fully in the workplace and all parts of life.

The Georgina Accessibility Improvement Grant Program was created to promote improved accessibility to existing buildings within the Keswick, Sutton and Jackson's Point Business Improvement Areas (BIA's).

The grant program provides a maximum of \$2,000 in funding or 50 per cent of the cost of the improvement, whichever is less.

Eligibility for accessibility improvements include minimizing curb cuts, barrier-free storefront access, ramps or the improvement of business access (eliminating stairs), enhanced lighting in pedestrian walkways and additional accessibility improvements as approved by the Town and Economic Development Committee (EDC). Accessibility Improvements must follow the Accessibility Requirements in the Ontario Building Code in order to be approved.

Learn more about the Community Improvement Program by contacting Sean Columbus at (905) 476-4301 ext. 2330.



Georgina's Accessibility Committee introduced a new AODA Award this year, which recognizes a business that has gone above and beyond ensuring the minimum requirements of accessibility for individuals with disabilities in Georgina.



For businesses in Keswick, Sutton and Jackson's Point Business Improvement Areas

# Town's grant program helps downtown businesses cover cost of improvements

The Community Improvement Plan (CIP) grants are intended to improve a defined area within a community that has been identified as in need of revitalization. The purpose of the CIP is to establish an environment that can support an evolution in the structure and image of these downtown commercial areas in Georgina. This evolution is necessary to ensure they can all serve as assets for the entire Town, for their individual communities, and to ensure they achieve their potential to attract tourists and new businesses.

Since 2015, the Town has recieved more than 25 CIP grant applications from all three identified areas to incentivize the preservation and improvement of Georgina's historic downtowns.

For a business to be eligible, it must be commercially assessed and located in the Keswick, Sutton or Jackson's Point Business Improvement Area (BIA). To learn more about the program, it's boundaries and eligibility, contact Sean Columbus at (905) 476-4301 ext. 2330.

Since the program's inception in 2015, more than \$40,000 in grant funding has been given to businesses in the designated Business Improvement Areas (BIA).



# 238 BIA businesses



There are four CIP grants that business owners and commercial property owners within the designated CIP boundaries can apply for:

### **Facade Building Grant**

The Facade Building Grant promotes the redesign of existing building façades to enhance the existing image of the area. The grant will be up to a maximum of \$5,000 or 50 per cent of the cost of the improvement, whichever is less.

### **Heritage Building Grant**

The Heritage Building Grant provides a financial incentive to improve the appearance of existing heritage building façades. The grant will be up to a maximum of \$5,000 or 50 per cent of the cost of the improvement, whichever is less.

### **Landscape Improvement**

The Landscape Grant promotes the establishment of enhanced landscaping, such as reconstruction of pedestrian pathways, sustainable landscape initiatives, and portable and permanent planters, to improve the existing image of the area. The grant will be up to a maximum of \$2,000 or 50 per cent of the cost of the improvement, whichever is less.

### **Accessibility Improvement Grant**

The Accessibility Improvement Grant supports building enhancements required to improve the accessibility to existing buildings. Accessibility Improvements must follow the Accessibility Requirements in the Ontario Building Code in order to be approved. The grant would be up to a maximum of \$2,000 or 50 per cent of the cost of the improvement, whichever is less.

## **How to apply for a grant**

### **Mandatory pre-application consultation**

Prior to completing the application, applicants will arrange a meeting with Town staff.

### **Submission**

Applicants will submit a completed form online and supply all supporting documents.

### **Application review and evaluation**

Town staff and members of the Economic Development Committee (EDC) who meet monthly will review and evaluate applications.

### **Grant approval**

The EDC will endorse the grant request at an upcoming Council meeting for final approval.

### **Construction and grant payment**

Within six months of approval, work must begin and be completed within one year of the date of the grant approval.

### **Release of grant funding**

Once the improvements are completed and all invoices have been paid by the applicant, invoices are submitted to the Town for review and reimbursement.

\*Applications must be submitted and approved before any work begins.

# Town improving planning and development process

The Town recognizes that timelines and a seamless approval process are important to the success of business in Georgina.

This year, the Town implemented the second phase of the **Business Class Program**, which is designed to assist businesses with the planning and development process.

Staff are committed to fine-tuning the process to serve you better.



## Georgina's Business Class Program includes:

- 1 Introductory meeting with staff who will be involved in the development process
- 2 Formal pre-consultation meeting with staff and agencies to find out more about the requirements from planning approvals to building permit issuance
- 3 Grants available through the Town's Community Improvement Plan for the three historic business districts in Sutton, Jackson's Point and Keswick
- 4 Development Application Fee Rebate Program rebates are up to 50 per cent of the application fee to a maximum of \$10,000 for a single application or \$20,000 for multiple applications
- 5 Referrals to Small Business Support Services and funding programs
- 6 Whenever possible, approvals for office, industrial and institutional development applications will be expedited







## Why is boosting Georgina's agriculture awareness important?

As the population increases, more pressure is put on our food and agriculture community to meet demand. Although the majority of our food is produced by corporate farms, the population is looking for alternatives. Moving to a sustainable system is the way of our future.

So, what is sustainable agriculture and how do we get there? Sustainable agriculture is supporting local and providing natural farming methods that are profitable and environmentally friendly. Rome wasn't built in a day, nor is the vision of sustainable agriculture. First, we need to create awareness of the sustainable movement by educating our community, particularly young people.

Georgina is committed to supporting our local farmers and encouraging innovation in order to meet the needs of our community now and in the future. Visit [georgina.ca/agri-tourism](http://georgina.ca/agri-tourism) for more information on how Georgina is bringing awareness to our agriculture sector and how you can support our local agri-businesses.

Based on the 2016 census there was \$20+ million gross farm receipts in Georgina. Up 23 per cent from 2011.



3,843 acres of corn

4,410 acres of soybeans

4,793 acres of hay

 **103**  
Farms  
17,371 acres of farmland

### Potential funding opportunity

Do you have an innovative business project that embraces technology in Georgina? If so, South Lake Community Futures is accepting applications for the Eastern Ontario Rural Innovation Initiative for projects that foster innovation, new technology adoption and digital connectivity. For a copy of the application or more information, contact Amir Doo at [adoo@southlakefutures.ca](mailto:adoo@southlakefutures.ca)



### Local businesses collaborate

Kewick businesses, Elpida Cafe & Roastery and the Corner House Bistro, recently teamed up setting the small business bar just a little higher. Elpida espresso beans, creatively called “Bold Beginning” is now being sold at the award-winning bistro. “A great name [coffee bean] for a great beginning,” says the Corner House Bistro restaurant.

The selected highlights you see in this section are a snapshot of the news that was shared through Economic Development and Tourism’s Facebook page and the Town’s LinkedIn account.

# Economic News



### Streetscaping project brings new opportunity for businesses

The Town’s Streetscape Design Standards collected feedback from residents and businesses over the summer. Results will be brought to Council in the new 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](http://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 company announces new leading technology

Brouwer Kesmac is one of the largest turf equipment companies specializing in equipment for turf farms globally. This fall they announced a new, innovative technology that will continue to place them as leaders in their field. Learn more at [brouwerkesmac.com](http://brouwerkesmac.com).



### ClearWater Farm featured by Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

Georgina’s very own ClearWater Farm was featured in Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor’s first story about sustainability. The stories include projects and initiatives in communities that bring hope and promise for the future. Learn more at [lgontario.ca](http://lgontario.ca)

### 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 the city. Georgina is poised to be a hot-spot for new buyers and businesses looking for a work/life balance.

# Economic and local business highlights



## 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. Additional way-finding signage is proposed for 2020.



## Farmers' Market celebrates another successful season

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.

Visit [georginafarmersmarket.ca](http://georginafarmersmarket.ca) for more information and 2020 vendor applications.

## Highway 400/404-Link given green light

Minister of Transportation, Caroline Mulroney announced that the Bradford Bypass, also known as the Highway 400-404 link, will be moving forward. This is great news for our residents and business community.



## Tourism booth re-opens on Highway 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.



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

Eight local farms opened their gates to approximately 1,600 event goers, 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. If you weren't able to get out and meet our participants, you can still visit them and shop local. Visit [georgina.ca/Agri-tourism](http://georgina.ca/Agri-tourism) for more information.

## Funding secured for local businesses to increase digital presence

Jackson's Point, Keswick and Sutton's business improvement areas received \$10,000 each in funding to help better promote their businesses online. Toby James, York Region's Digital Mainstreet Squad member and owner of Cats Cove Communications, was at the Link in Sutton to offer a free social media workshop and promote the Digital Mainstreet Program. To learn more visit [digitalmainstreet.ca](http://digitalmainstreet.ca).



## New-build units available in prime Keswick commercial park

Units are currently available in Georgina's busiest urban area with further opportunities becoming available in 2020. Subscribe to Economic Development and Tourism's eNewsletter for notifications at [choosegeorgina.ca](http://choosegeorgina.ca).



# GEORGINA

## **Economic Development and Tourism Office**

Karyn Stone, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism ext. 2312

Sean Columbus, Economic Development Officer ext. 2330

Katrina Ellis, Marketing and Promotions Coordinator ext. 2300

Jamie-Lee Warner, Administrative Assistant ext. 2298



Town of Georgina



GeorginaEconomicDevelopment



[choosegeorgina.ca](http://choosegeorgina.ca)

