

# JUST THE FACTS ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

## Diversity of Residents Living in York Region: Ethnic Origin and Visible Minorities

### Introduction

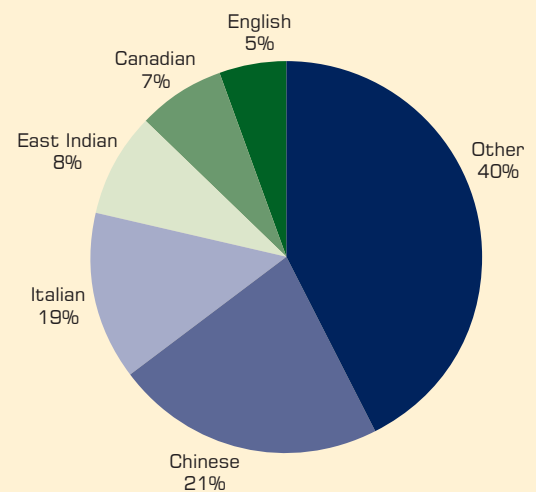
In 1901, there were 25 distinct ethnic groups in Canada. According to Statistics Canada's 2006 Census, there are now approximately 226. In York Region alone which is rich with multicultural diversity, there were more than 200 distinct ethnic groups identified in the 2006 Census.

Also as of 2006, almost two out of five York Region residents were visible minorities. Three out of 10 visible minorities in York Region are Canadian-born and seven are immigrants. The ethnic diversity and changing face of York Region has made our communities rich in cultures that span the globe.

### Ethnic Origins in 2006<sup>1</sup>

- 616,150 York Region residents identified themselves as having one ethnic origin. The top five ethnic groups were Chinese, Italian, East Indian, Canadian and English.
- In 2006, there were 204 ethnic groups across York Region. The extent of ethnic diversity varied in each of the nine local municipalities. For example, East Gwillimbury, King and Whitchurch-Stouffville each had 83 different ethnic groups. In Markham, there were 174 and Vaughan had 171.
- Canadian descent was identified as the most common ethnic group in Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, Newmarket and Whitchurch-Stouffville.
- People of Chinese descent were the most common ethnic group in Markham and Richmond Hill. Italian was the most common in King and Vaughan.

Chart 1  
Top Five Ethnic Origins, Single Response

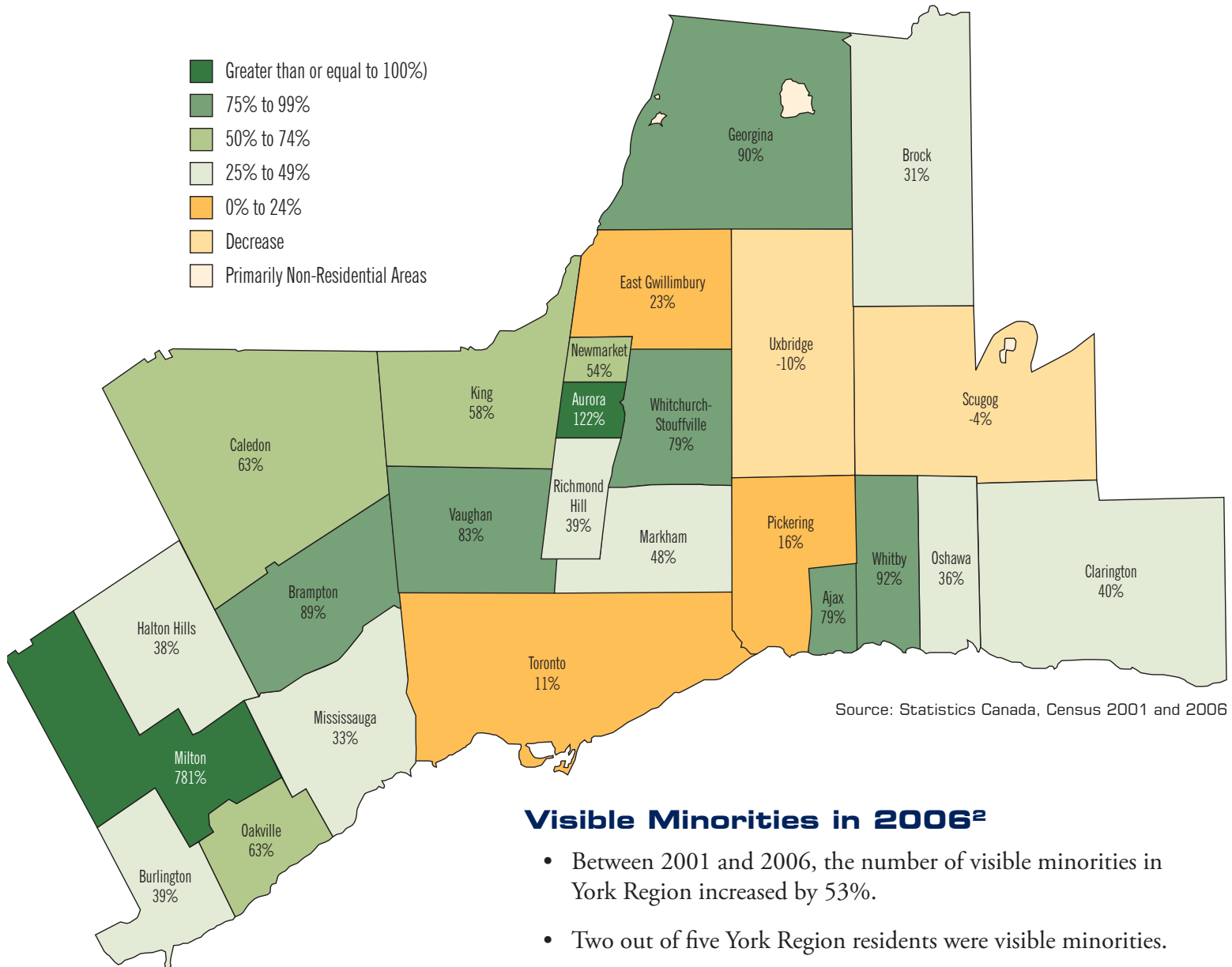


Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006

<sup>1</sup>Ethnic Origin refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of the respondent's ancestors. Over time, changes have been made to the wording, instructions and format of the ethnic origins question used in the Census survey which limits the ability to do historical comparisons of this variable.

## Map 1 Change in Visible Minority Population, 2001 - 2006

This map shows the percentage of growth between 2001 and 2006 of the visible minority population in the Greater Toronto Area.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001 and 2006

### Visible Minorities in 2006<sup>2</sup>

- Between 2001 and 2006, the number of visible minorities in York Region increased by 53%.
- Two out of five York Region residents were visible minorities.
- As of 2006, there were 329,955 visible minorities living in York Region, representing 7% of all visible minorities in Canada. This was the third largest number of visible minorities in the GTA. In proportion to the total population of York Region, 37% of York Region residents were visible minorities in 2006. This was the fourth largest proportion in Canada after Peel (50%), Toronto (47%) and Vancouver (42%).

### Did You Know?

Three out of 10 visible minorities in York Region were born in Canada.

<sup>2</sup>Visible Minorities are defined by the *Employment Equity Act* as 'persons, other than Aboriginal persons, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.'



## Top Five Visible Minorities in 2006

The top five visible minorities in York Region were:

- Chinese (138,575)
  - South Asian e.g. Indian (80,595)
  - West Asian e.g. Iranian (20,860)
  - Black (20,770)
  - Filipino (17,150)
- People who identified themselves as Chinese represented 16% of all residents living in York Region. This was the highest proportion of people who identified themselves as Chinese in Ontario. York Region had the third highest proportion (9%) of people who identified themselves as South Asians in Ontario after Peel and Toronto.

The visible minority groups identified above may have been the top five in 2006 but they may change one day. As demonstrated in Table 1, the fastest growing visible minority groups between 2001 and 2006 were:

- West Asian - e.g., Iranian, Afghan (grew by 144%)
- Southeast Asian - e.g., Burmese, Cambodian and Indonesian (grew by 95%)
- Korean (grew by 84%)
- Latin American (grew by 81%)
- South Asian (grew by 70%)

## Municipal Trends

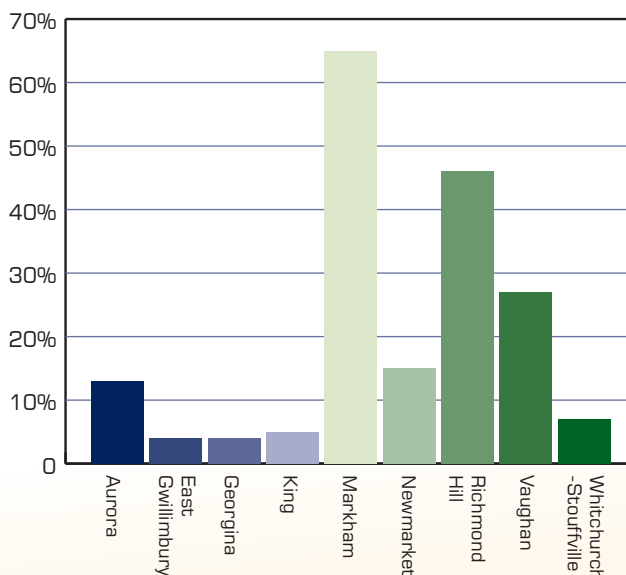
- In 2006, outside of the three southern municipalities, (Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Markham) the number of visible minorities certainly grew (see Map 1), but remained to be 5% or less of the population in the municipalities of Georgina, King and East Gwillimbury.
- People who identified themselves as Chinese were the largest visible minority group in Aurora, Markham, Richmond Hill and Whitchurch-Stouffville. People who identified themselves as South Asian were the largest visible minority group in Vaughan and King. People who identified themselves as Black were the largest visible minority group in Georgina and East Gwillimbury.
- 65% of Markham's population was made up of visible minorities. This is the highest proportion of visible minorities in Canada.
- In 2006, there were 89,300 people who identified themselves as Chinese living in Markham, making it the third largest Chinese community in Canada after Vancouver and Toronto.

**Table 1**  
**Total Visible Minority Population**

	2001	2006	Growth Rate
Total Visible Minority Population	216,130	329,955	53%
Arab	4,935	7,400	50%
Black	16,150	20,770	29%
Chinese	100,710	138,575	38%
Filipino	10,370	17,150	65%
Japanese	1,905	2,360	24%
Korean	5,900	10,860	84%
Latin American	4,720	8,560	81%
Multiple visible minorities	4,450	9,015	103%
South Asian	47,345	80,595	70%
Southeast Asian	5,175	10,110	95%
Other visible minority	5,910	3,700	-37%
West Asian	8,550	20,860	144%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001 and 2006

**Chart 2**  
**Percentage of Visible Minorities by Municipality**



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006



## What Does This Mean?

The face of York Region continues to change rapidly. Like the other major centres in Canada, York Region is an ethno-cultural mosaic representing a wide range of cultures, beliefs and traditions.

Statistics Canada anticipates that the number of visible minorities will continue to grow at a faster rate than non-visible minorities. Nearly 40% of York Region's working age residents are visible minorities. Clearly it is increasingly important for employers to develop programs and policies that promote diversity in the workplace to not only attract employees but, also to stay globally competitive.

As York Region continues to grow and diversify it is important to create a community for new and long term residents that promotes tolerance and embraces one another's uniqueness. The goal of this fact sheet is to provide a general overview to residents, employers, and service providers on how the ethnic make-up of our communities are changing. The information gathered here points to the need to actively create an even more inclusive society where people are open to new ideas, are accepting of people's differences and are able to have an opportunity to prosper. York Region enjoys a rich, multi-cultural diversity that is an asset to everyone and a key ingredient to maintaining York Region's high quality of life.

**Produced by The Regional Municipality of York Community and Health Services Department with the support of the York Region Social Data Strategy Consortium and Community Reference Group**

### York Region's Community Social Data Strategy Consortium



### York Region's Community Reference Group

Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Catholic Community Services of York Region, Central Local Health Integration Network, Human Services Planning Coalition, Regional Municipality of York, Town of Markham Planning & Urban Design Department, Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce, United Way of York Region, Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, York Catholic District School Board, York Region District School Board, York Regional Police, York South Simcoe Training and Adjustment Board

To view this document as well as other socio-economic information about York Region's residents, please visit York Region's Community Social Data website:

[www.york.ca/yrcsd](http://www.york.ca/yrcsd)