



Year in Review
Economic Development
and Tourism

2024





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Land Acknowledgment

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

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

Introduction

The Town of Georgina celebrated a year of significant milestones and achievements in 2024, marking steady progress toward its long-term growth targets. With an estimated population of 51,904 at the end of the year, Georgina remains committed to meeting its forecast growth of 70,500 residents and 20,700 jobs by 2051¹.

Key advancements were made in the development of Georgina's employment lands, further diversifying the Town's economic base, enhancing job opportunities and increasing the non-residential tax base. Notably, with the Town's support, three new tenants were secured for the Kewick Business Park in the first building, and the Canadian Life Science and Technology Park announced plans for a significant investment, which received zoning approval, setting the stage for future economic momentum.

The Town also experienced an increase in business activity, with 93 new establishments recorded in 2024, bringing the total to 1,187². Recognizing that small businesses are the backbone of Georgina's economy, the Economic Development team worked with partners to support more than 150³ ventures through targeted skills training. Additionally, more than 70 business visits were conducted as part of a formalized outreach program, fostering relationships, identifying expansion opportunities and helping to

further initiatives that support the local business community.

In February, a new five-year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, aligned with Georgina's Corporate Strategic Plan, was endorsed, focusing on investment attraction, business retention and expansion, enhancing the economic impact from tourism and creating vibrant downtowns. With 35 of 42 actions in progress or completed, the Economic Development Division is already making significant strides, ensuring the majority of these initiatives remain on track to help meet the Town's goals.

Collaboration was a major focus in 2024, with partnerships and engagement with investors and stakeholders playing a pivotal role in driving growth. These efforts, supported through \$103,318 in grant funding, underscore Georgina's commitment to building strong relationships with new and existing businesses, as well as community partners, laying the foundation for a prosperous and diversified economy in the years to come.

As we reflect on 2024, the Town of Georgina celebrates a year of progress and looks ahead with optimism, continuing to build on the successes that will shape our shared future.

¹ York Region, 2023

² Statistics Canada - Business Register, 2024

³ YSpace, 2024

Business and economic indicators

51,160

Residents
(5.6% increase since 2019)

Source: Statistics Canada Population 2023

\$105,399

Median Household Income
(17.5% increase since 2019)

Source: Localintel Estimates, Statistics Canada 2023

57%

Post-secondary graduates

Statistics Canada - Census Profile 2021

28,270

Labour Force

Source: Environics Analytics, 2024

\$85M

Construction value of issued ICI permits
(17.8M in 2023)

Town of Georgina Development Services Department

157,471 sq. ft.

New ICI floor space created
(23,371 in 2023)

Town of Georgina Development Services Department

1,187

Businesses
(11% increase since 2019)

Source: Statistics Canada - Business Register

2.8M

Total visitor (40+km) counts for people driving to and through Georgina
(43% increase since 2022)

2023 Environics data provided by Central Counties Tourism (CCT)

\$97,774,368

Total economic impact from visitors (40+km) to Georgina
(45% increase since 2022)

Environics Analytics and Ontario's Tourism Receipts Economic Impact Model

790,561

Non-resident visits (40+km) to the following areas in 2023 from 96,640 unique visitors:

Jackson's Point and downtown
Sutton downtown
Willow Beach and Wharf
De La Salle Park Beach

As part of the Vendor Pilot Program launched in 2024, this 2023 Environics visitor data from Central Counties Tourism was pulled to lend statistical data for analysis and will be compared with 2024 data once available.



Economic Development and Tourism Strategy

The creation and implementation of a five-year Economic Development and Tourism Strategy was identified as a key action to deliver on the Town's overarching goal of diversifying our local economy and was endorsed in February 2024.

Through the development of the strategy, the Town engaged with 344 businesses, stakeholders and residents to provide their input. This feedback culminated in a final strategic plan that was created by the community for the community.

More than 40 action items were recommended to deliver on the goals and were prioritized based on an achievable five-year timeline. Several initiatives began in 2024, including investment attraction efforts to support the Business Park landowners, a formalized Business Visitation Program, new skills training programs and tourism development projects intended to increase the economic impact of visitors. To learn more about the Economic Development Strategic Plan, visit georgina.ca/EconomicStrategy.

Goal 1



Grow the economy through investment attraction.

14 of 18 actions in progress or completed

Goal 2



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

6 of 6 actions in progress or completed

Goal 3



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

10 of 13 actions in progress or completed

Goal 4



Create lively downtowns and public spaces.

5 of 5 actions in progress or completed





Since the groundbreaking of 500 acres of designated employment lands in late 2022, the Economic Development Division has escalated its investment attraction efforts by boosting its Business Concierge Program and marketing efforts to enhance awareness of the investment opportunities in Georgina.

Supporting major investment

To expedite major development applications that significantly impact job creation and support the non-residential tax base, bi-weekly meetings were established with these major developers and Town staff. These efforts helped support three tenants within the first building in the Keswick Business Park, which resulted in more than half of the 370,000 sq. ft. building being occupied.

Two other major developments, Scott Woods Transport, which has relocated from Vaughan and the Canadian Life Science and Technology Park, a new 50+ acre health and science eco-system, progressed through the development process. These companies are making significant strides in fulfilling the business park's vision of being a premier hub for innovation, logistics and sustainable practices in Ontario's industrial landscape. As these businesses continue to thrive in their new spaces, the park's expansion is poised to bring additional opportunities for job creation, innovation, and economic growth to the region.

Health care investment

The Town has also made gains in its efforts to enhance health care for residents, nurturing relationships with partners. In 2024, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Town, Southlake Health (Southlake) and Northern York South Simcoe Ontario Health Team (NYSS OHT) to advance healthcare in Georgina, including opportunities for a new brick-and-mortar advanced care facility. This not only fulfills the goal of improving the health and well-being of the Town's residents, but signifies a substantial investment that will create lucrative jobs.

Advancing servicing and infrastructure to support development

With the continued development of the Town's designated employment lands and the growth of its population and existing businesses, ensuring servicing and infrastructure are in place is pivotal to progress. Staff continue to meet and advocate for servicing that meets the needs of investors now and in the future. This includes ongoing discussions with York Region and developers regarding water/wastewater infrastructure expansion and transportation needs throughout the region and province.

First three tenants in the Keswick Business Park



Turf Care Canada

Based in Newmarket, Turf Care Canada, a recipient of Deloitte's Best Managed Companies award program, was the first tenant with an impressive 52,000 square feet of space. Known for its industry-leading turf maintenance products and services, it is an independent and privately held Canadian company that provides quality products and services to the golf course community, municipalities, parks departments, professional contractors and authorized Toro and Kawasaki dealers. It services more than 1,200 golf courses in Ontario and Quebec, highlighting its significant impact on the golf industry. The new space will be dedicated to service, allowing the company to expand its parts warehousing capacity at its Newmarket location.



Pulp Moulded Products Inc.

Pulp Moulded Products Inc., a leading provider of sustainable protective packaging solutions, is expanding into a 74,000-square-foot facility at the business park. The company, founded in 2008, is renowned for producing zero-waste packaging that partners with major North American retailers. With permits already issued, the company expects to be operational in 2025. The move from its current 32,000-square-foot facility in Newmarket, where they employ up to 75 staff, will provide much-needed space for the company's continued growth. By the end of summer 2025, Pulp Moulded Products plans to hire 30 additional staff members to support its expansion.

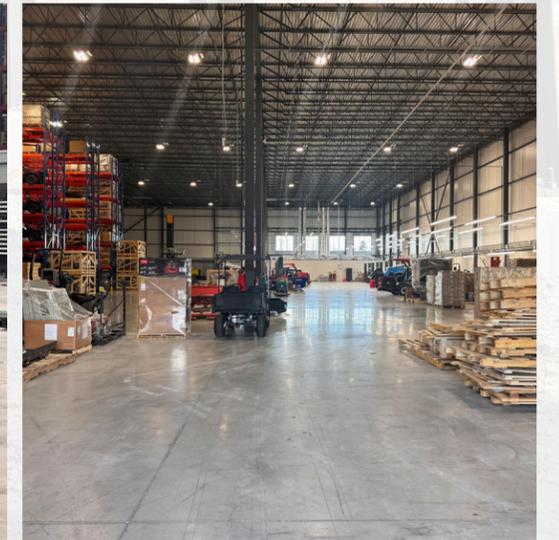


Imperial Dade

A leader in packaging, facilities maintenance supplies, equipment, print products, services, and solutions, Imperial Dade will occupy 60,000 square feet in the Keswick Business Park. With more than 1,500 employees across Canada, the company is known for its personalized supply chain solutions. Its new location, expected to be operational by spring 2025, will add 50 positions to its workforce in Georgina. Imperial Dade's presence strengthens the local economy with its extensive network of 27 distribution centres across Canada, servicing a wide range of B2B industries.



Mayor Margaret Quirk, Regional Councillor Naomi Davison, Ward 2 Councillor Dan Fellini and Town staff at Turf Care's new facility.



Canadian Life Science and Technology Park announces investment



A new 56-acre life sciences and technology park is coming to Georgina. In the initial phase, the Canadian Life Science and Technology Park, located at the south end of the Business Park lands, aims to serve a wide array of sectors, attracting tenants and clients from pharmaceutical, biotechnology, medical device, bioprocessing, Contract Research Organizations (CROs), Contract Development and Manufacturing Organizations (CDMOs), healthcare, academia, digital and technology sectors, and other related fields. It will include 21 lots with varying acreages to meet the needs of the market, with the potential for 826,000 sq. ft. of buildable space and the creation of more than 1,700 jobs once fully developed. The development has progressed and its zoning bylaw approval was received in late 2024.

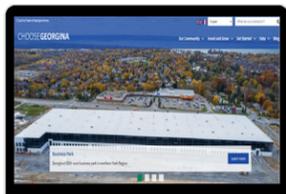
Promoting investment opportunities

Through strategic communication channels, partnerships, trade show participation, campaigns and outreach efforts, the Economic Development and Tourism Division has made significant progress over the past few years in positioning Georgina as a prime destination to live, work, play, and invest.

Key achievements:

Enhanced online presence

In late 2023, we launched a new economic development website, which continues to evolve. This year, updates to the site have included a



new quality-of-life dashboard, sharing success stories via blog posts and running targeted campaigns that drive traffic and awareness,

resulting in more than 21K visits, 34 per cent from foreign countries. Social media efforts have also been robust, reaching more than 7,000 followers and significantly boosting the visibility of success and opportunities in Georgina.

Investment-attraction partnerships

Collaborating with York Region has been pivotal. For the second consecutive year, York Region provided \$15,000 in financial support for division-led activities. Together, we attended high-profile events such as the Site Selector's Guild, Collision, and Med Tech conferences, showcasing our value proposition and connecting with potential investors. These efforts have strengthened relationships with key developers and advanced opportunities for growth.



Canadian Life Science and Technology Park, Toronto Global and CBRE representatives speaking during a life science and technology panel on the demand for commercial or graduating space with an industry-led business park development at Med Tech Conference.

Targeted campaign success

Talent attraction was a major focus this year, highlighted by a new addition to the Town's

Choose Georgina video series. This campaign garnered more than 87,000 views, contributing to a cumulative total of more than 450,000 views for the video series. These efforts effectively promote Georgina as a desirable location to live, work, play and invest.

Strategic outreach and lead generation

Partnering with a lead generation company, we intensified our outreach efforts. This included gaining insights into best practices, creating a compelling pitch deck that underscores Georgina's value proposition and developing a targeted list of companies for proactive engagement.



Town staff and developers from Panattoni Development Company Canada and the Canadian Life Science and Technology Park at the Society of Industrial and Office Realtors (SIOR) broker event in Toronto.

Impact on success:

Increased awareness: Website updates, online targeted campaigns and video content have substantially increased awareness of Georgina's opportunities among residents, businesses and investors.

Stronger partnerships: Collaborations with York Region and participation in global conferences have bolstered Georgina's reputation and visibility within key investment ecosystems.

Improved investment readiness: The new pitch deck and targeted outreach initiatives have refined Georgina's ability to attract and secure investment opportunities.

Community growth: Talent attraction campaigns are helping to address workforce needs and supporting sustainable economic and community development.

Collectively, these efforts demonstrate our commitment to fostering economic growth and positioning Georgina as a thriving hub for investment and innovation.



300+ of 500 acres of designated employment lands progressing through development process

186,000 sq. ft. secured by three tenants within the Keswick Business Park

\$85M in construction value of issued ICI permits

More than **100** touchpoints with major investment developers



Supporting business expansion and retention

In 2024, the Town of Georgina demonstrated its unwavering commitment to fostering a thriving business community. Through strategic partnerships, innovative programming, and consistent engagement, the Town has made significant strides in supporting local businesses.

Georgina remains committed to driving business expansion and retention through continued collaboration, innovative programming and responsive support. By listening to and addressing the needs of the business community, Georgina is building a robust economic future that will support residents and businesses.

Empowering entrepreneurs



Peer-to-peer networking event at the Entrepreneurship Hub

The YSpace Entrepreneurship Partnership has been a key driver in nurturing entrepreneurial growth in Georgina over the past three years.

In early 2024, the partnership between York University YSpace, the Town of Georgina and the Town of East Gwillimbury was renewed through to 2026. This extension, fueled by the success of the initial partnership, is supported by funding from all three partners and a \$150,000 grant from the Province's Rural Economic Development program.

Success continued in 2024, assisting 872 participants through skills-training programs and networking events and providing 262 hours of mentorship, which directly supported 151 Georgina business ventures.

Evolving to meet business needs

Based on a review of the previous year's trends and a participant feedback survey, the YSpace partnership evolved its programming to address the current needs of local entrepreneurs. Key updates included:

- Focused training on foundational business knowledge and digital skills.
- Mentorship opportunities with experts tailored to specific business needs.
- Extended hours of operation.
- New partnerships with organizations such as South Lake Community Futures and the Georgina Public Library further strengthen the support network. Other notable partners include the York Small Business Enterprise Centre, VentureLab, and the Skills Training Centre. These collaborations have been instrumental in raising awareness and delivering customized support to businesses looking to expand.



YSpace participant Joseph Goode sharing his business journey during a promotional video shoot

"It's really given me a foundation to fall back on because without them, my business wouldn't be where it is today." ~ Joseph.

Building collaborative networks

Collaboration extended beyond YSpace mentorship to include regular participation in the Community Action Table, ensuring we stayed informed about initiatives supporting income stability and employment while also sharing relevant updates with the business community. Additional partnerships included working with Job Skills to host an information session at a job fair and explore opportunities for cross-promotion. We also collaborated with the Georgina Chamber of Commerce, YSBEC, and South Lake Community Futures to organize events for Small Business Week.

Formalizing business engagement

To better understand and support local businesses, the Town launched a Business Visitation Program in 2024. Staff visited more than 70 businesses and gathered valuable insights into the needs and perspectives of businesses across various sizes and sectors. Key findings included:

- More than 70 per cent of businesses rated Georgina as a good or excellent place to do business.
- Georgina's top advantages were identified as its location, lifestyle and tourism draw.
- Feedback from 28 downtown businesses highlighted infrastructure needs, guiding future strategic improvements.
- Challenges such as access to talent and space for expansion emerged as common themes.

During these visits, staff shared information on available resources, programs and partnership opportunities and gathered content to share successes on our website, choosegeorgina.ca.

Celebrating success



Dave and Anita, owners of Home Hardware in Sutton, receiving their Mayor and Council's Milestone Awards

The Town celebrated local business achievements through 20 ribbon-cutting events and the annual Business Excellence and Mayor and Council's Milestone Awards. Organized by the Georgina Chamber of Commerce and supported by the Town through a funding agreement, these events provided opportunities to connect with business owners and establish relationships for continued support and bring awareness to all of the businesses that continue to thrive in Georgina.

Site visit *spotlight*

Brouwer Kesmac: A local legacy with a global impact on the Town of Georgina



Over the past 50+ years, Brouwer Kesmac has transformed from a small sod farm into a global leader in turf equipment manufacturing right here in the Town of Georgina.

From pioneering the first tractor-mounted sod harvester in the 1970s to revolutionizing turf harvesting technology today, its commitment to innovation has shaped the industry. With 19 unique products and operations spanning the globe, Brouwer Kesmac continues to put Georgina on the map!

The company's impact goes beyond machinery. As one of the area's largest employers, it has created countless jobs, injecting vitality into our local economy.

Economic Development staff and members of Council had the privilege of touring the Brouwer Kesmac manufacturing facility in August to learn more about the company's operations.

Learn about Brouwer Kesmac and other businesses that have made an impact at choosegeorgina.ca/blog.



Leveraging tourism to create an economic impact

With its close proximity to Toronto and 52 kilometres of stunning Lake Simcoe shoreline, the Town of Georgina is well-positioned as a tourism destination. Tourism plays a pivotal role in Georgina’s economy, with data revealing that one out of every ten jobs in the community is tied to the tourism sector. Central Counties Tourism (CCT) reports that Georgina is receiving more visitors every year, with the latest stats indicating a 38 per cent increase in total visitors (40km radius) through Georgina’s gateways from 2022 to 2023. Recognizing this significant impact, Georgina has taken proactive measures to foster tourism development and amplify its economic benefits.

Enhancing tourism infrastructure

In alignment with a new Wayfinding Strategy approved by Council in early 2024, the Town installed new marquee signs at key visitor locations, including the ROC, Uptown Keswick Parkette, North Gwillimbury Park, and Holmes Point Park. These signs complement existing installations at De La Salle Park, Jackson’s Point Parkette, Jackson’s Point Harbour, and High Street in Sutton, ensuring visitors are well-informed about local attractions and activities.



Building partnerships

In 2024, the Town strengthened its collaboration with the tourism community, forming more than 100 direct partnerships with local stakeholders. These collaborations encompassed cross-promotion, financial support through grants, and program delivery, all aimed at boosting Georgina’s profile as a vibrant destination.

More than 30 events, attracting visitors from outside the Town, received marketing support, 23 of which were supported in the amount of \$45,000 collectively through the

choosegeorgina.ca

Economic, Culture and Community Betterment Program. An example of the impact these events have is the Georgina Marathon, which drew more than 1,000 visitors, 66 per cent of whom were from outside Georgina. Many out-of-town attendees stayed overnight in local accommodations, further driving economic activity.

Recognizing the significant amount of visitors that come to Georgina to enjoy the beaches during the summer months, the Town launched a Vendor Pilot Program. This initiative established partnerships between local tourism vendors and will continue in 2025 to enhance visitor experience and support local entrepreneurs. The Georgina Chamber of Commerce Kiosk, also located at De La Salle, directs visitors to the many great places to eat and shop in Georgina, stimulating more impact from tourism.

Promoting Georgina through strategic branding and outreach

To further promote the Town externally, significant strides were made in developing a tourism brand and an online presence dedicated to showcasing local opportunities, as well as attending regional tourism trade shows and advertising initiatives. Work will continue in 2025 to develop a tourism brand that will result in new communication channels that will expand awareness efforts and help cement Georgina’s identity as a year-round destination.

In partnership with the Georgina Chamber of Commerce, the Town printed and distributed 11,000 tourism guides that were strategically placed at ambassador locations within Georgina and at tourism kiosks across Ontario.

Spotlight on agri-tourism and culinary experiences

Georgina’s thriving agriculture sector remains a top priority, aligning directly with York Region’s goal of growing and sustaining the sector — which stands as the fourth-largest food and beverage processing

hub in Canada. The Town continued to highlight and promote sustainable agriculture through its annual Field to Table event, which attracted more than 500 visitors to each farm tour location.

Meanwhile, the Grown in Georgina campaign provided residents and visitors with the opportunity to learn where their food comes from while encouraging support for local farmers. This objective was further advanced through a collaboration with a local videographer who produced a short documentary, Beyond the Fields, that featured five local agri-businesses.

In addition, the Taste of Georgina event, now in its fifth year, successfully drew hundreds of patrons to local restaurants to enjoy prix fixe menus during what is typically a slower season for the hospitality industry.

These division-led initiatives were supported by \$8,000 in funding from the York Region Tourism Fund and the Central Counties Tourism Partnership, further reinforcing the Region’s commitment to fostering a strong and sustainable agri-food and tourism sector.

Georgina’s commitment to tourism development has fostered economic growth and strengthened community connections. As the Town continues to innovate and invest in this vital sector, its reputation as an all-season destination will only grow, ensuring a prosperous future for residents and businesses alike.



Enhancing downtown vibrancy in Georgina

Downtown areas are pivotal to both the economy and the sense of place within a community. With more than 150 retail stores, restaurants and offices, these areas generate significant tax revenue and employment opportunities. They also attract tourists due to their historical significance, cultural attractions and entertainment options. The Town of Georgina's three Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and Pefferlaw's main street serve as the heart of their communities, reflecting local history and culture and providing a sense of identity and pride for residents.

Town staff collaborate closely with BIA boards and business members to implement initiatives and programs, facilitate and market events, and submit grant applications to support revitalization efforts. Key highlights from 2024 include:

- Staff conducted more than 30 visits with BIA businesses to gather insights, determine trends and inform strategic decisions regarding downtown revitalization.
- A CRM system was established for the Sutton BIA to improve communication with its members.
- Beautification projects included holiday decorations in public spaces and on poles, as well as summer and veteran banners.
- Supported 26 events and meetings.
- Efforts to streamline and promote the Town's Community Improvement Plan were undertaken. Two businesses enhanced their facades through \$10,000 in grants.



Before and after photos of CIP facade improvement in Jackson's Point



Over the past two years, numerous infrastructure and art installations have been completed, adding to each downtown's identity. The Uptown Keswick Parkette was revitalized and the Jackson's Point Parkette saw continued improvements. Art installations included indigenous sculptures in Sutton and Keswick and a mural in the Jackson's Point Parkette.

With new infrastructure and cultural additions, events were a key focus in 2024. Staff supported BIA boards by organizing performances in each downtown area with local talent. Staff also supported signature events through grants, marketing and road closures. Whoville on High Street welcomed an astounding 5,000 residents and visitors in its second year, bringing new patrons into stores and restaurants.



Historic Downtown Sutton

Georgina prepares for redevelopment of Historic Downtown High Street in Sutton

The High Street redevelopment project in Sutton aims to transform the historic downtown area into a key economic and community hub by upgrading essential infrastructure and enhancing streetscaping. This includes new watermains, a stormwater system and improved streetscaping beautification, all designed to modernize the area to current standards and ensure long-term service. The project began in 2024, ending the year in the engineering pre-design phase. To prepare for this transformative project, Economic Development and Engineering staff visited Port Hope to learn from their experience with a similar project. For more information on the High Street redevelopment project, visit georgina.ca/HighStreet.



Town staff visiting Port Hope to learn from their recent revitalization



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