

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
**STRATEGY**

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**2021-2025**



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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2021-2025

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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
**ACTION PLANS**

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**2021-2025**



## Preface

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Economic Development Action Plans is a living document, in that all intended actions for a calendar year will be developed annually in consultation with Town Council and Senior Staff. As well, progress made with Actions from the previous year will be presented at the same time.

Long-term planning and community identity will help shape the actions for each year. This approach is important because it is adaptable and accountable. By the fifth year, the data and assumptions in the first half of this report will need refreshing. And so, the cycle will continue.



## Guiding Principles

The Corporate Strategic Plan Report (2019) and the Branding & Corporate Identity Initiative (2021) provide a “community lens” through which the Economic Development Strategy should live. Economic growth should uphold the traits and characteristics that the community values. Growth should also take into account community aspirations and ambition, and Town strategies and priorities.

High-level guiding principles from these documents are outlined below.

### Corporate Strategic Plan

- The Vision statement speaks to being an inclusive, caring community with a unique rural-urban identity.
- The Principles refer to future actions fostered through a lens of environment, engagement, partnerships, inclusion, safety, and wellness.

### Branding & Corporate Identity

- The Character statement speaks about a community that is neighbourly, future-focused, celebratory, proud and genuine.
- The Story talks about a community that has a natural fit with its surroundings, while being creatively-minded and powered by neighbours.

### Key Terms

- Many of the key terms in each document are similar. Some are an exact match. These form the Guiding Principles for the Economic Development Action Plans.

ENGAGEMENT  
ENVIRONMENT  
CARING  
INCLUSIVE  
RURAL-URBAN  
PARTNERSHIPS  
SAFETY  
WELLNESS

ENGAGED  
NATURAL FIT  
NEIGHBOURLY  
FUTURE-FOCUSED  
GENUINE  
CREATIVITY  
PROUD  
CELEBRATORY



## Strategic Pillars

The Corporate Strategic Plan Report includes the following strategic pillar that is relevant to Economic Development:

- Expanding the tax base through a growing, diversified economy: building and maintaining a tax base that supports the highest quality program and service delivery.

The Branding & Corporate Identity Initiative includes the following strategic pillars that are relevant to Economic Development:

- Extraordinary abundance of sport & outdoor recreation options within immense natural assets – trails, cycling, equestrian, golf, hiking and more.
- Creatives, makers, entrepreneurs and self-starters find great support and connections here. Focused on progressive, long-term economic development strategies that welcome start-ups and entrepreneurs. Locals show real support for Stouffville’s home-grown artisans, businesses and ventures.
- We run on people-power – we are engaged in being neighbours here.

### Pillars as Assets

These pillars can be seen as assets that we can protect and expand upon.

TAX BASE

NATURAL AMENITIES  
OUTDOOR RECREATION  
START-UPS  
ENTREPRENEURS  
HOME-GROWN ARTISANS  
COMMUNITY



The Economic Development Strategy (2021) identifies six pillars as areas to where the Town should focus its economic development resources. These are as follows:

## Development Pillars

- **READINESS** - Make Stouffville a premium location to do business and when business is interested in investing in Stouffville... be ready. Build on the exceptional quality of life that Stouffville offers with the advantages of extensive green space, unique urban areas and proximity to a large market area. Developing Stouffville as a Prime Location that is Ready for Investment is the central element to attracting and retaining business.
- **CENTRE CITY** - Downtowns play an important and unique role in the economic and social development of a community. Downtowns create a critical mass of activities where commercial, cultural, and civic activities are concentrated. This concentration facilitates business, learning, and cultural exchange. The heart of a city is where residents and visitors can have a unique experience of shopping, dining, entertainment, and celebration while providing a sense of community and place.
- **RURAL ECONOMY** - A significant amount of Stouffville landmass is occupied by the Oak Ridges Moraine and Ontario's Greenbelt. As a result, the community has a valuable asset that makes it unique and provides a landscape that offers different opportunities, which can support sustainable rural tourism, farming and food.
- **RETAIN & ATTRACT** - Small businesses are the backbone of the economy. Entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as an important driver of economic growth. Stouffville has had a strong home-based business community.
- **ENTREPRENEURSHIP** - Small business is the backbone of the economy. Entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as an important driver of economic growth. Stouffville has had a strong home-based business community.
- **TOURISM** - The Town of Stouffville offers a wide range of opportunities within the rural and urban context including 18 golf courses, 18 horse farms, 13 regional forests, 3 conservation areas, agri-tourism activities and an urban Centre City with an arts and culture scene. Building on the Arts and Culture as part of the Tourism sector is important to consider as not only an economic driver but a community builder.

READINESS

CENTRE CITY

RURAL  
ECONOMY

RETAIN &  
ATTRACT

ENTREPRE-  
NEURSHIP

TOURISM



## Pillars & Actions

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The Economic Development Strategy provides suggested actions that can help bring the Development Pillars to reality. Key actions are highlighted below.

### Readiness

- Develop and/or support the development of shovel ready employment lands for business to locate.
- Continue to provide sufficient resources to the economic development department to ensure a continuous momentum to allow for completion of short and long-term goals and to implement the new economic development strategy.
- Continue to push for high-speed internet accessibility throughout the entire town including the rural areas.
- Continue communicating the ‘good news stories’ about the town and the business community through a variety of media (i.e. OTR publication, social media, etc.).
- Promote the newly approved (2020) town-wide Community Improvement Plan supporting the economic development vision ‘open for sustainable business growth’.

### Centre City

- Provide entryways into the downtown that signal to visitors that they are entering somewhere unique and special.
- Determine unique and out of the box ways to attract people into the downtown (i.e. experimentation with pop up venues for art, food, music and hospitality).

### Rural Economy

- Support the development of sustainable cultivation/tourism opportunities including wineries, cideries, fruit stands, etc.
- Provide support for more rural businesses including farms and rural-related business owners.
- Develop and implement a rural wayfinding signage program.
- Continue to build on and promote rural tourism resources that will bring residents and visitors to the rural areas.





## Pillars & Actions

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### Retain & Attract

- Create and implement an ongoing Business Visitation Program to build relationships between the Town and the local business community.
- Continue to support existing businesses through Shop Local programs, On The Road Publication, etc.
- Continue to push for high-speed internet accessibility throughout the entire town including the rural areas.
- Continue communicating the ‘good news stories’ about the town and the business community through a variety of mediums (i.e. OTR publication, social media, etc.).
- Develop a target-based program to attract future growth industry.

### Entrepreneurship

- Strengthen home-based business policies and ensure zoning bylaws are up to date to allow flexibility to support business success.
- Stimulate an entrepreneurial spirit by providing co-working space to network, gather support and find leadership to help guide entrepreneurs through their business growth.
- Build rapport with the home-based business community through one-on-one discussions, networking opportunities, etc.
- Develop a home-based business inventory to understand the types of home-based businesses that exist within the community.

### Tourism

- Continue to identify and document what makes Stouffville special in terms of arts, culture, events and attractions.
- Continue expanding the Town’s website pages outlining arts, culture and tourism assets.
- Continue to support and promote the town’s growing eco-tourism opportunities.
- Work closely with Central Counties Tourism to update the Tourism strategy (2014-2019).
- Promote Stouffville as a hub for diverse outdoor activities.



## Business Attraction Pillar

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To support the Business Attraction Pillar, the economic base analysis of the local economy identified major trends in Stouffville.

### Key Trends

- There has been a long-term growth trend in the value of knowledge-based industries. Knowledge based industries include Professional, scientific, and technical services; Financial services; Education services; and Information and cultural industries.
- Recent, fast-growing subsectors include food manufacturing, personal/household goods wholesalers, real estate and truck transportation.
- Over the past five years, utilities systems construction and, computer systems and design services have had the largest job growth.
- Local labour supply in town has a concentration in skills related to Social and behavioral sciences and law; Business, management and public administration; Physical and life sciences and technologies; Mathematics, computer and information sciences; and Education, relative to the rest of the province.
- Regional trends in employment point to the growing demand for information communication technology, computer systems design, programming, and digital media services in the region. The analysis also demonstrated the continued growth around fintech and financial services in the region. Lastly, the analysis also showed fast growth and concentration of jobs around furniture and fixture assemblers and inspectors, which reflects the growing residential market in the region and the demand household goods.

### Key Challenges

- ***Stouffville lacks identified zoned, industrial, commercial, employment lands, and office spaces*** for businesses as the greatest challenge for investment attraction. Without these, businesses cannot locate here, with the exception of small home-based businesses.
- ***The review also identified limitations around access to broadband/fibre, water and sewer.*** Lastly, the cost of utilities relative to neighbouring communities represent a challenge.



## Business Attraction Pillar

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The following industries represent the best targets for investment attraction:

### ICT/Professional Services

- *Computer Programmers & Interactive Media Developers; Financial Technologies & Services (Fintech); Civic & Social Organizations (Social Enterprises).*

- FinTech (financial technology) companies are no longer limited to large, traditional financial centers. Whitchurch-Stouffville can attract young entrepreneurs by offering lower costs and greater alignment with the priorities of today's millennial workforce, such as affordable housing, walkability and accessible high-quality outdoor recreation options.

### Renewable Energy and Clean Technologies

- *Utility systems construction; Scientific research and development services; Waste management and remediation services.*

- Successful municipalities will connect a skilled workforce, municipal infrastructure, and supply chains to support the rise of the Clean Economy. Stouffville has a growing population and a growing demand for utilities. This, coupled with a strong construction industry and access to a STEM focused workforce make the town an ideal location for renewable energy and energy/water efficiency and other clean tech companies to locate.

### Food and Beverage Processing

- *Craft & Specialty Foods; Breweries & Wineries; Meat & Dairy Products Manufacturing.*

- Stouffville has a long history of agricultural excellence. Sector supports for artisan food production and craft beverages include the existence of specialty and organic food production, eco-tourism, agri-tourism/farm markets, and equestrian opportunities.

### Advanced/Small-Scale Manufacturing

- *Computer & Electronic Product Manufacturing; Bio-Fabrication & Medical Devices; Fixtures & Furniture Manufacturing.*

- Small batch manufacturers can focus on getting quick prototypes to tech firms looking to rapidly iterate on a design. Bio-fabrication is the use of biomaterials such as cells, proteins and organisms as building blocks in a manufacturing process.



The Economic Development “Team” is formed of one mid-level staff person. During the COVID-19 crisis, under-utilized staff were temporarily redeployed to the EcDev Team. Stouffville’s Economic Development “Toolbox” consists of four primary resources.

### The Toolbox



- **Additional Funding** - During the 2021 budget proceedings, Council expanded the Economic Development Toolbox by allocating \$40,000 to hire extra help or contract services as needed. In addition, Council allocated \$25,000 for the 2021 Patio Program as matching grant funds.

- **On the Road in Whitchurch-Stouffville** - aka. “OTR Magazine” - is the Town’s monthly magazine since 2016. With a circulation of 18,000, OTR reaches every business and household in Stouffville. The purpose of the magazine is to communicate with residents, promote local businesses, support agriculture, develop tourism and, most importantly, build community.

The Stouffville Communications Department uses the publication to produce two pages dedicated to official Community News and report on political activity through Council Corners. Other departments take advantage of the free opportunity to promote the theatre, library, community events, safe streets, diversity issues, infrastructure projects and historical reflection.



The real strength of OTR is its track record of promoting small businesses that would not have a voice otherwise - at no cost. Home-based, hidden, newly established and agricultural businesses have been brought to the forefront by OTR - often as Cover news.

At 24-32 pages, OTR is printed *and* delivered via Canada Post for about 57 cents each - almost half the cost of a postage stamp. The Communications Department and Downtown Stouffville Working Group both contribute about 12% to OTR’s cost, while advertising brings in about 30%, meaning that Economic Development funds 46% of the magazine. EcDev is on the hook for production, graphic design and editorial, all done internally, except for contributing stories written by



The Toolbox, cont.

- **Town Wide Community Improvement Plan** - aka. "TW-CIP" - was established in the Summer of 2020. These are the development incentives offered by the Town. Incentives developed by the Town were to further its long-term growth goals. These growth goals can be divided into four themes: Corridor Development, Downtown Rejuvenation, Urban Intensification and Rural Advancement.



Matching grants can be used for Building Improvement (Downtown); Leasehold Improvement (Urban Intensification Areas in Stouffville, Ballantrae, and Downtown); Food Security Grant (Rural Areas); and Tourism & Outdoor Experience Grant Program (Rural Areas). These grants will match the amount spent by the applicant toward the cost of the works up to a maximum of \$15,000 per property or address, not to exceed 50% of the total project cost.

Within the TW-CIP there exists program incentives for big developments in the Corridors, Downtown and Urban Intensification area, as well as the ability to expand Broadband in Rural Areas.

In December 2020, the first round of matching grants resulted in five applications being received. An application came from every ward, except for Ward 2. Two were for participation in the Food Security Grant Program, and three were for the Building Improvement Grant Program. The grant requests totaled to \$57,431 for projects totaling to \$213,982 in investment.

- **L4A.ca** - is a website established in June 2020 to promote business and tourism in response to the early impacts of COVID-19. L4A is intended to be the digital "sister" of OTR Magazine. L4A.ca was an unfunded effort, meaning that it wasn't projected, planned or budgeted.



Re-deployed staff helped build the site. Over 250 businesses were registered by July, and the site was used to promote the return of the Farmer's Market, interpretive exhibits at the Museum and outdoor activities, like golfing and hiking. In late 2020 and early 2021, L4A.ca was used to host shop local campaigns, such as *What's For Dinner* and *2021% Off*.



### 2021 Economic Development Actions

The Development Pillars will serve as the organizational structure for 2021 Economic Development Actions. The interaction of these actions with the Corporate Strategic Plan and the Branding & Corporate Identity Initiative will be demonstrated by showing how the Guiding Principles and Strategic Pillars fit.



#### The Toolbox



Additional Funding



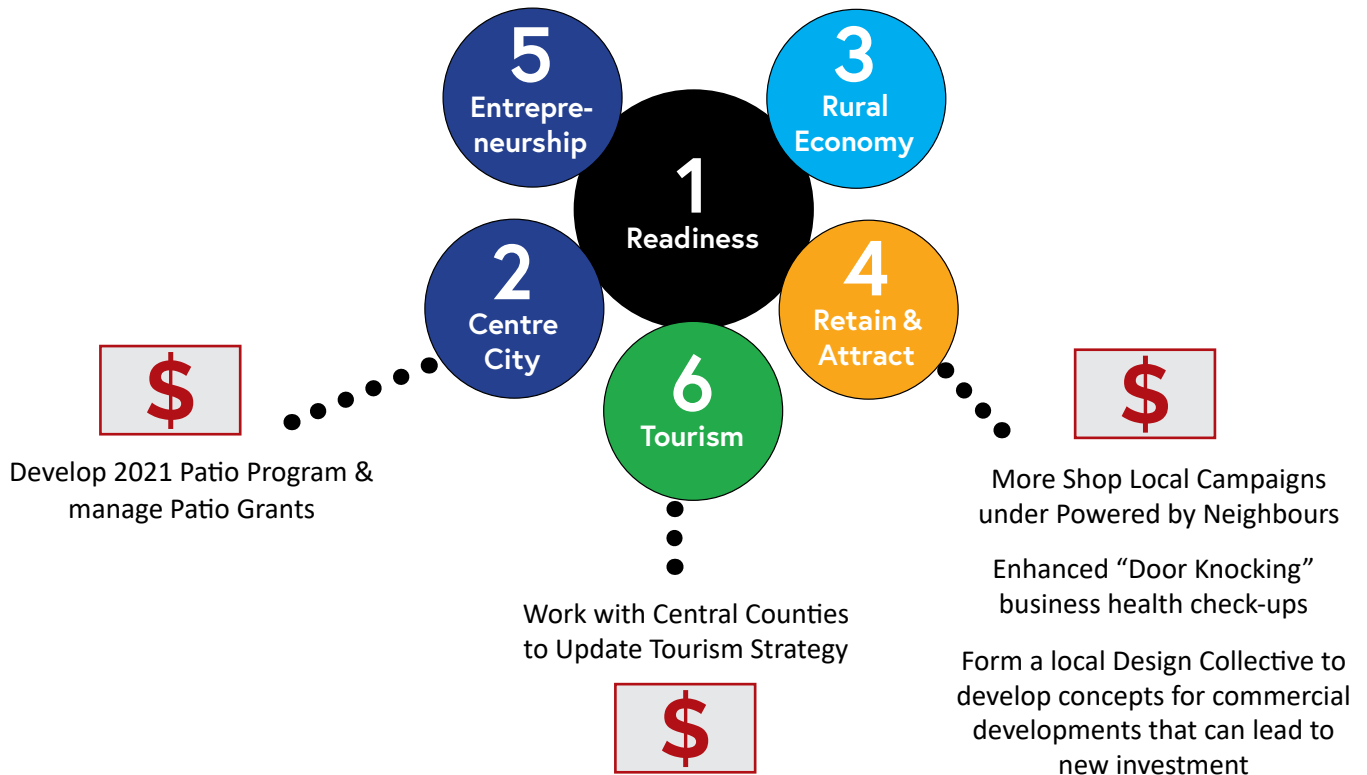
OTR Magazine



Town-Wide CIP



Business & Tourism Website

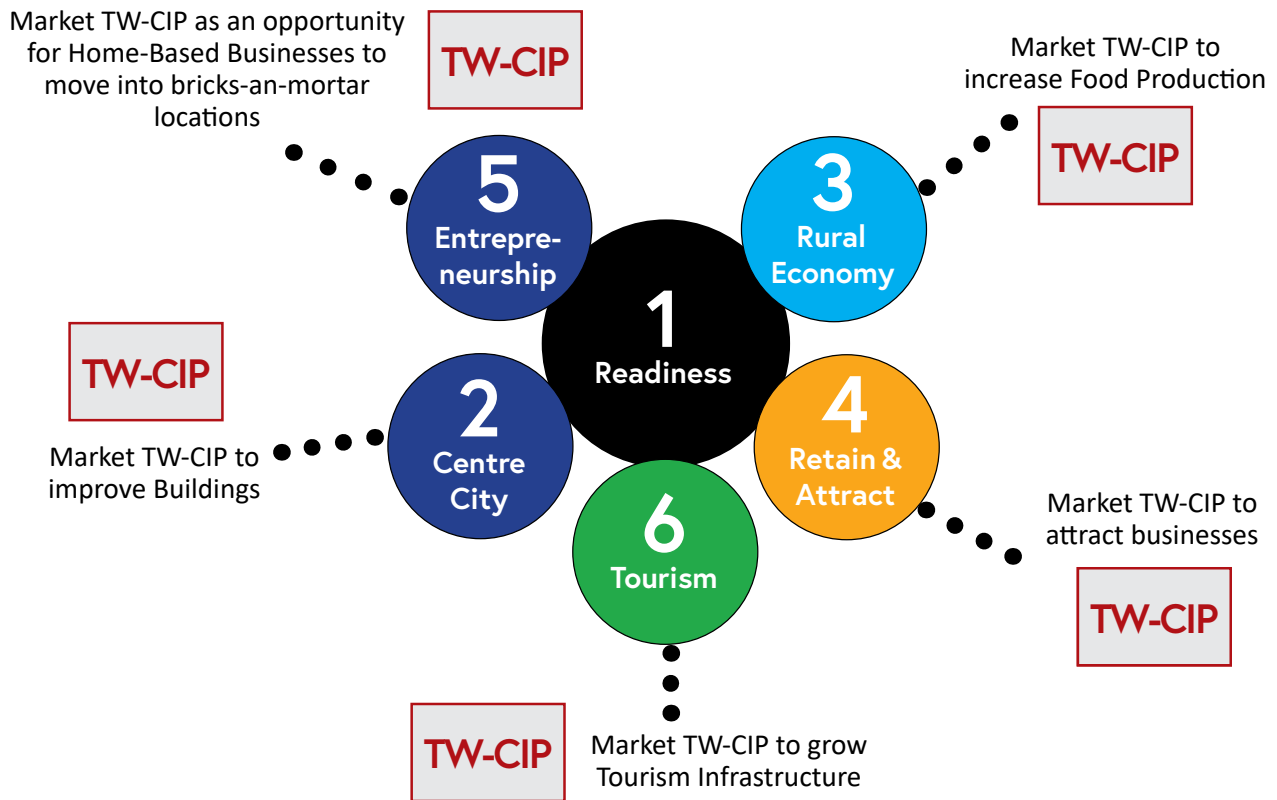


Tool	Actions	Fit	Reporting in Q4
	Develop 2021 Patio Program & manage Patio Grants	Inclusive, Caring, Protecting the Tax Base	Patio program developed and assessed, Council Report
	Work with Central Counties to Update Tourism Strategy	Rural-Urban, Natural Amenities, Outdoor Recreation	Tourism Strategy developed, Council Report
	More Shop Local Campaigns under Powered by Neighbours	Inclusive, Caring, Protecting the Tax Base	A minimum of 3 campaigns launched and assessed
	Enhanced “Door Knocking” business health check-ups	Inclusive, Caring, Protecting the Tax Base	Council Report on the business impacts of covid-19
	Form a local Design Collective to develop concepts for commercial developments that can lead to new investment	Creativity, Engagement, Partnerships, Growing the Tax Base	Work with design collective to develop a concept for a commercial development, begin marketing, Council Report

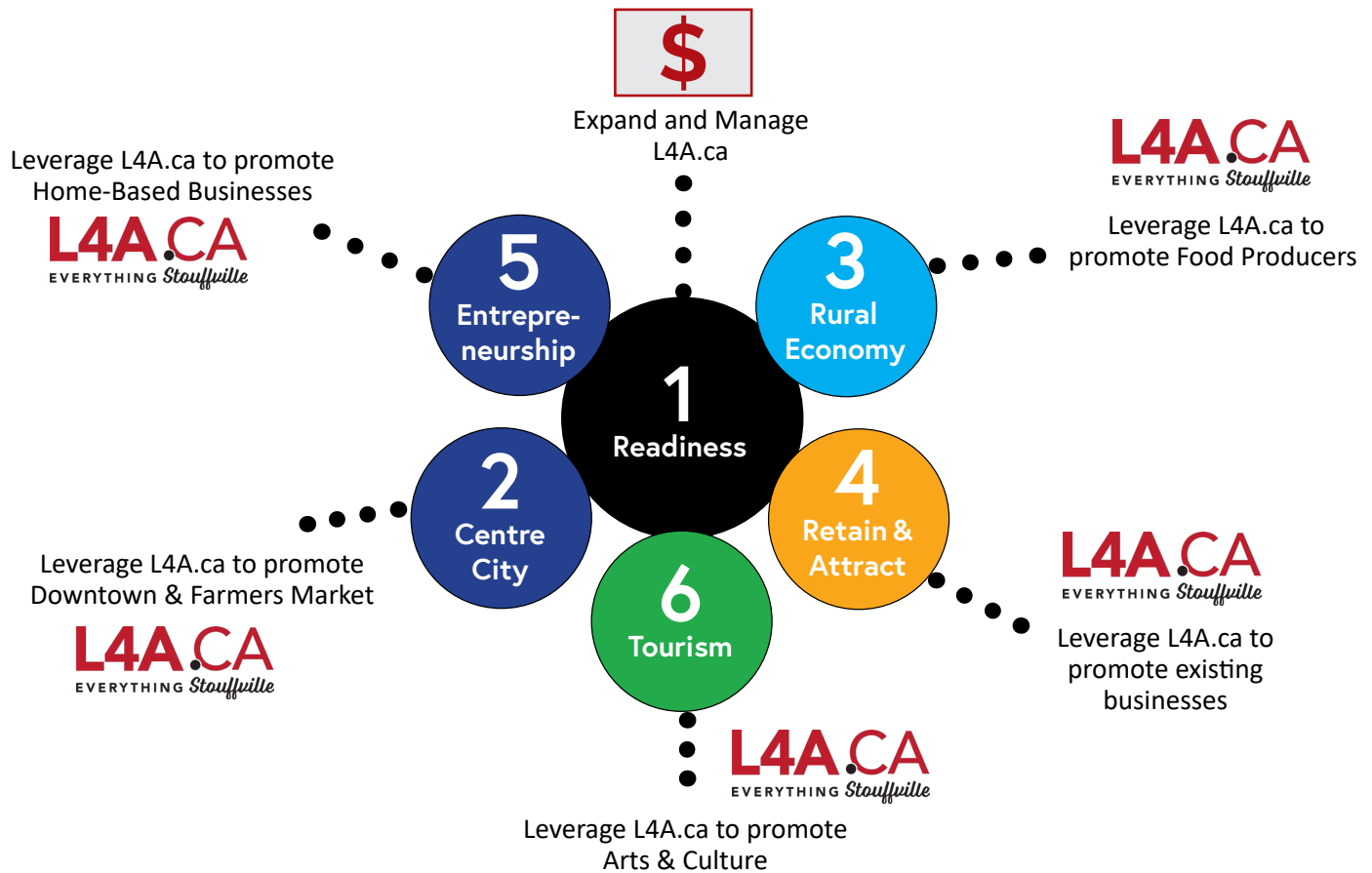


Tool	Actions	Fit	Reporting in Q4
	Build Community	Community Engagement, Proud, Celebratory	Council Report including OTR Statistics. <b>Goals:</b> - Produce 11 editions; - Promote more than 230 businesses and 60 events; - Write more than 20 stories related to tourism; - Feature more than 12 entrepreneurs, start-ups or home-based businesses; - Write more than 25 stories of community interest; - Regularly feature Town events, including Farmers Market; - More than 60 pages about Town initiatives, services and news.
	Home-Based Business awareness building	Start-Ups, Entrepreneurs	
	Produce monthly Centre City spread, market pop up shops & publicize events	Community, Tourism, Entrepreneurs, Protecting Tax Base	
	Local Tourism awareness building & market Community Events	Community, Tourism, Protecting the Tax Base	
	Local Business awareness building	Proud, Celebratory, Protecting the Tax Base	
	Local Food awareness building	Natural Fit, Rural-Urban, Protecting the Tax Base	





Tool	Actions	Fit	Reporting in Q4
TW-CIP	Market TW-CIP as an opportunity for Home-Based Businesses to move into bricks-an-mortar locations	Partnerships, Growing the Tax Base, Celebratory	Council Report regarding next CIP in-take. Goals: - Manage and monitor first funding in-take recipients from December 2020; - Follow up with recipients for celebratory photoshoot & article; - Continue to seek grant funds to expand CIP budget; - Conduct a funding in-take in 2021, manage and monitor in-take recipients.
TW-CIP	Market TW-CIP to improve Buildings	Partnerships, Growing the Tax Base, Celebratory	
TW-CIP	Market TW-CIP to grow Tourism Infrastructure	Partnerships, Growing the Tax Base, Celebratory	
TW-CIP	Market TW-CIP to attract businesses	Partnerships, Growing the Tax Base, Celebratory	
TW-CIP	Market TW-CIP to increase Food Production	Partnerships, Growing the Tax Base, Celebratory	



Tool	Actions	Fit	Reporting in Q4
	Expand and Manage L4A.ca, an unfunded expense	Community Engagement, Celebratory, Rural-Urban	Council Report including L4A Statistics. <b>Goals:</b>
	Leverage L4A.ca to promote Home-Based Businesses	Start-Ups, Celebratory, Entrepreneurs	- Enhance the Farmers Market section;
	Leverage L4A.ca to promote Downtown & Farmers Market	Community, Tourism, Protecting Tax Base	- Enhance the Trails & Forests section;
	Leverage L4A.ca to promote Arts & Culture	Community, Tourism, Home-Grown Artisans	- Enhance the Golf Courses section;
	Leverage L4A.ca to promote existing businesses	Proud, Celebratory, Protecting the Tax Base	- Create a Horse Farm section;
	Leverage L4A.ca to promote Food Producers	Natural Fit, Rural-Urban, Protecting the Tax Base	- Continue to produce sections regarding events, including studio tours, Museum exhibits, Christmas Markets, etc.



Tool	Actions	Fit	Reporting in Q4
<b>NEW</b>	Work with CAO & Planning Dept. to identify & promote commercial development opportunities	Protecting Tax Base, Growing the Tax Base	Council Report regarding progress. Goals: - Open up new commercial lands; - Develop a Home-Based Business Inventory
<b>NEW</b>	Develop a Home-Based Business Inventory	Start-Ups, Celebratory, Entrepreneurs	- Re-Develop Town Sign Bylaw
<b>NEW</b>	Help Re-Develop Town Sign Bylaw	Start-Ups, Future Focused, Growing the Tax Base	- Investigate Rural Wayfinding signage program
<b>NEW</b>	Investigate Rural Wayfinding signage program	Natural Fit, Rural-Urban, Protecting the Tax Base	- Report on the space needs of Target Industries to attract
<b>NEW</b>	Examine the space needs of Target Industries to attract	Protecting Tax Base, Growing the Tax Base	



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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
**APPENDICES**

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**2021-2025**

**22. Corporate Strategic Plan Report**

**32. Branding & Corporate Identity Initiative**

**37. Economic Development Strategy**





## 2019- 2022 STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT

# TOWN OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

JULY 2019

## Executive Summary

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An effective Strategic Plan provides the long-range guidance that enables an organization to advance priorities, strengthen operations, identify objectives and allocate the resources required to pursue strategy implementation.

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville's Strategic Plan for 2019-2022 reflects Council's vision for an ambitious, yet realistic approach to establishing a foundation for future progress and sustainable growth. The Plan clearly identifies strategic priorities and supports management and staff in the development of departmental business plans that will guide operations and service delivery. The development and refinement of this plan has considered both resident values and priorities as well as best practices in municipal good governance.

From the outset, the planning process has recognized the importance of context. Whitchurch-Stouffville has recently emerged from a period of instability that had a detrimental effect on planning, service delivery and the overall organizational health of the Corporation. This new plan reflects a renewed commitment to the provision of exceptional service and to sustainable, future-focused planning. It recognizes the importance of building the capacity of staff to be responsive and proactive in serving the needs of residents, business, and other stakeholders. It further seeks to provide a sustainable foundation through prudent fiscal management and a commitment to best practices in good governance. Building on this solid foundation, the strategic plan that has emerged will leverage the Town's strengths and support the ability of the Town to grow in a way that respects the important quality of life attributes that make Whitchurch-Stouffville unique.

Significant effort was undertaken by the Town to ensure the broadest possible engagement of residents and other stakeholders in the planning process. A strong effort to engage the public through social media, online surveys and public meetings, engagement by the public in the strategic planning process resulted in limited participation. This level of response is not uncommon in the municipal strategic planning process and is likely indicative of a gap in understanding of the role that a strategic plan plays in guiding the direction of planning, programs, service delivery and resource allocation. It is anticipated that as Council and Staff move forward with implementation of the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, that the public will become increasingly engaged as a result of regular reporting on plan progress.

Four key strategic pillars have been identified through this planning process:

- a) Fiscal sustainability;
- b) Expanding the tax base through a growing, diversified economy;
- c) Service excellence; and
- d) Asset planning, maintenance and development.

It is recognized that a strategic plan is not a comprehensive description of all the activities that the Town will undertake. It is a tool that serves to focus effort and resource allocation where it can have the most significant impact on advancing objectives that are most critical to efficient, effective, and sustainable municipal operations.

The Strategic Pillars and Priorities are supported by five Guiding Principles. These Guiding Principles encompass values of the Town and the corporation and will serve to inform the decision-making process beyond the life of this strategy.

## Environment

Our actions and decisions are evaluated through an environmental lens; ensuring that we are able to meet present needs without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations.

## Engagement

We support the engagement of residents and stakeholders through an ongoing commitment to dialogue, transparency and collaboration. Effective engagement ensures members of the community have a voice and an opportunity to contribute their diverse strengths to building a strong and sustainable future.

## Partnerships

Wherever possible, we will forge and nurture strategic partnerships that increase effectiveness, efficiency and mutual benefit.

## Respect

We are committed to fostering a corporate culture that enhances individual creativity and teamwork, while supporting mutual trust and respect among employees, elected officials and members of the public.

## Quality of Life

We are committed to be a caring community that upholds the values of inclusion, safety, and wellness that exemplify the Town's exceptional quality of life.

The 2019-2022 Strategic Plan will now inform the Implementation Phase through the development and execution of Departmental Business Plans. Departmental Business Plans detail the specific actions that staff will undertake in support of achieving the objectives of the Strategic Pillars and Priorities. The Business Plan creates a direct connection between high level strategic priorities and the daily activities of staff; ensuring that all staff have a clear understanding of how their role and their efforts align with the overall strategic objectives.

## Methodology

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The development of this strategic plan was supported by the establishment of a Project Steering Committee comprised of the Mayor, representatives of Council, senior staff and the consultants. From the outset, the project was designed as a collaborative effort that would provide ongoing opportunities for input and validation by staff, stakeholders and members of the public. The methodology employed to build the plan is described below.

### Developing the Plan

#### Literature Review

To ensure that the project was able to move forward with a foundational understanding of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville's current state, a comprehensive review of select literature and studies was undertaken. This review provided important context in understanding current and emerging trends that influence the direction and goals of the municipality. A review of relevant documents provided by Town Staff was augmented by an analysis of key regional, provincial, national and global trends in preparation for an initial workshop with Council and senior staff.

#### Community Profile

A community profile detailing significant demographic trends was prepared as background for the initial workshop with Council and senior staff. Using gathered literature and information provided by the Town in conjunction with data obtained from the Statistics Canada and Canadian business counts data etc., a snapshot of the socio-economic profile of the Town was created that provided insight into key patterns of change and trends.

#### Initial Consultation – Interviews with Council and Senior Staff

Building on the literature and data review, a series of in-person and phone interviews were conducted that focused on current trends, opportunities, challenges, and priorities for growth. Common themes emerging from these discussions were captured as part of a presentation to Council and Senior Staff. The presentation was used to lay the foundation and establish a common understanding for the first Council and senior Staff workshop held in March 2019.

#### Council and Senior Staff Workshop

The initial workshop provided an opportunity to focus on defining the future of the Town and achieving consensus on key strategic priorities for the current of Council. As part of this initial workshop, Council and Senior Staff also undertook a review of the existing Vision and Mission statements in an effort to ensure that they accurately reflected the goals and aspirations of Whitchurch-Stouffville now and into the future. Efforts to identify strategic priorities were supported by technology provided by the Queen's Executive Decision Centre that allowed for ideas to be organized by theme and ranked by participants in real time. Four Strategic Pillars were identified as a result of this initial workshop as well as a number of strategic priorities under each of the pillars.

## Refining the Plan

### Staff Consultation – Town Hall Meetings

Internal Staff Town Hall meetings provided the first opportunity to share the outcomes of the Council and Senior Staff workshop. Some initial feedback was gathered as part of these Town Hall meetings. The primary focus, however, was awareness-building and engagement of staff to participate in more extensive ½-day workshops.

### Public Consultation – Online Survey

As part of its efforts to validate the proposed Strategic Pillars and Priorities, the Town undertook a public online survey that was promoted using various social media channels. The survey was conducted using Survey Monkey. Survey questions were developed in collaboration with the consultant and designed to support the public's engagement with the strategic planning process and elicit feedback on the pillars and priorities as proposed. It was further designed as an opportunity to identify any gaps, and to suggest additional priorities that respondents felt should have been included.

### Public Consultation – Facebook Live

As part of the strategic planning process Mayor Iain Lovatt hosted a Facebook Live engagement to discuss the strategic planning process and the emerging priorities. While response to the Facebook Live forum was overwhelmingly positive, resident input was not focused on the strategic planning process and unfortunately provided little feedback on the Strategic Pillars and Priorities as presented. The Facebook Live forum did, however, generate significant positive engagement and should continue to be considered as a municipal engagement tool.

### Public Consultation – Public Meetings

Two public sessions were held to share findings to date, highlight emerging themes, identify strategic priorities, and seek community input. It was intended that this input would both provide additional direction to Council and support staff in their efforts to identify specific actions and tactics in support of the Plan.

### Advisory Committees to Council Surveys

The Town conducted a secondary survey online using Survey Monkey that was targeted specifically to members of Advisory Committees of Council.

Respondents were asked to validate the proposed strategic pillars and to suggest potential additional areas of focus not addressed by the proposed pillars.

## Staff Workshops

Staff across the corporation were invited to participate in half-day workshops designed to assess the proposed priorities in more detail and to identify the actions and tactics that would best support those priorities. Once identified, the proposed actions would then be used to inform the departmental business planning process.

Four workshops were facilitated by the consultant over a 2-day period with more than 50 staff participating. As part of the workshop, attendees were asked to identify any additional priorities that they felt should be brought forward for Council's consideration.

## Input Summary Report

Input gathered through the various consultations processes was summarized and provided to Council for their consideration as they worked to refine the plan. A copy of the Input Summary report is included as Appendix A to this report.

## Finalizing the Plan

### Council Workshop

The strategic planning process culminated with a second Council workshop. During this workshop Council had an opportunity to consider the feedback of staff and stakeholders in finalizing the Strategic Pillars and Priorities.

## Updated Vision & Mission

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### Vision



**To be an inclusive, caring community with a unique rural-urban identity that provides an exceptional quality of life.**

### Mission



**To enhance our community by delivering service excellence that is friendly, efficient and financially responsible.**

## Guiding Principles

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The principles provide a broad philosophy that encompasses values of the Town and the corporation. These principles were adopted in order to be able to provide a lens through which to evaluate all decisions. Guiding Principles differ from strategic pillars or priorities in that they extend beyond the life of the strategic plan.



### Environment

Our actions and decisions are evaluated through an environmental lens; ensuring that we are able to meet present needs without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations.

### Engagement

We support the engagement of residents and stakeholders through an ongoing commitment to dialogue, transparency and collaboration. Effective engagement ensures members of the community have a voice and an opportunity to contribute their diverse strengths to building a strong and sustainable future.

### Partnerships

Wherever possible, we will forge and nurture strategic partnerships that increase effectiveness, efficiency and mutual benefit.

### Respect

We are committed to fostering a corporate culture that enhances individual creativity and teamwork, while supporting mutual trust and respect among employees, elected officials and members of the public.

### Quality of Life

We are committed to be a caring community that upholds the values of inclusion, safety, and wellness that exemplify the Town's exceptional quality of life.



# Strategic Pillars

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The following strategic pillars and priorities were identified by Council with input from Senior Staff and form the backbone of the Strategic Plan. The proposed pillars form the foundation for achievement of the vision for the Town.

Strategic Pillars
<p><b>Fiscal Sustainability</b></p> <p>Working toward a sustainable budget that ensures the protection and maintenance of core services now and into the future.</p>
<p><b>Expanding the tax base through a growing, diversified economy</b></p> <p>Building and maintaining a tax base that supports the highest quality program and service delivery.</p>
<p><b>Service Excellence</b></p> <p>Supporting a collaborative, timely, customer-focused approach to operations that enhances efficiency, effectiveness, and customer satisfaction.</p>
<p><b>Asset planning, maintenance and development</b></p> <p>Successful stewardship of the infrastructure and facilities required to support a growing community and vibrant economy</p>

## Strategic Priorities

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### Fiscal Sustainability

- Capital financing and debt strategy
- New revenue sources: grant funding, community contributions toward major capital expenditures, sponsorships of programs
- Invest in budget systems (process enhancement)

### Expanding the tax base through a growing, diversified economy


- Focus on servicing and development of Provincially Significant Employment Zones
- Update the Economic Development strategy and continue to attract businesses to locate in WS
- Identify expansion areas for Industrial / Commercial growth
- Expand commercial tax base by 2% annually

### Service Excellence

- Creating a positive culture, with sense of accountability and empowerment
- Create an employee attraction strategy to get the best available people
- Complete staff and customer surveys
- Create service-driven policies and procedures / streamline processes
- Create and implement employee development plans

### Asset planning, maintenance and development

- Address / plan for maintenance of existing assets & infrastructure Create new infrastructure
- Focus on continuous improvement of the asset register for asset management planning

The background of the cover is a stylized, monochromatic version of the Stouffville Coat of Arms. It features a central shield with a red saltire (St. Andrew's cross) at the top, a five-pointed star on the left, a church spire in the center, and a chalice on the right. The shield is flanked by two supporters and a ribbon at the bottom that reads "WHITCHURCH STOUFFVILLE".

# Stouffville Branding and Corporate Identity

Recommendations to Stouffville Town Council

March 2021

**trajectory**

## Placebranding Value

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A placebrand is the **sum of ideas and impressions** people have about a place. A strong brand will help Stouffville:

**Build and improve** awareness, reputation and competitiveness

**Nurture** civic pride and engagement; turn passive stakeholders into active participants

**Enhance** the Town's ability to attract local, national and international audiences

**Encourage** innovative development and experiences

**Support and complement** efforts to recruit and attract "new economy" investment, businesses and talent

**Position Stouffville** as a dynamic choice to explore, live, work and play

## Process Inputs

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Tour of Stouffville,  
Materials review

7 Steering Committee  
Workshops/meetings

20 Stakeholder interviews

Interviewees included residents, business  
and community leaders

2 community  
surveys

Approx. 4,000 total respondents between  
name, strategy & identity surveys

## Brand Framework

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# Natural fit

Create your life's balance here

- Right-sized living, ideally situated between downtown hubs and gateways to the north
- Urban, suburban, & rural lifestyle options served by diverse transportation modes
- Extraordinary abundance of sport & outdoor recreation options – trails, cycling, equestrian, golf, hiking and more.
- Immense natural assets (Forests, Bruce's Mill, Rouge Park access)
- Rich connections to culture, sports, history, heritage, and faith groups
- Straddling the ecologically sensitive Oak Ridges Moraine, we're committed to sustainable futures.

Find unbeaten paths right next door



Grow your passions



# Creatively-minded

Welcome to home turf for enterprising creative sparks.

- Creatives, makers, entrepreneurs and self-starters find great support and connections here.
- We're a municipality focused on progressive, long-term economic development strategies that welcome start-ups and entrepreneurs.
- Locals show real support for Stouffville's home-grown artisans, businesses and ventures.

# Powered by neighbours

Neighbours care. Neighbours engage. Neighbours belong. We are all neighbours here.

- Welcoming to all, embrace diversity and inclusion for all,
- Authentic and real relationships
- Run on people-power – active and engaged participation
- Positive local and neighbourly engagement
- Supporting families of *all* types.



Neighbours supporting neighbours



## Brand Character

<b>Neighbourly</b>	>	People engage here. Lending a hand is second nature. We're welcoming, supportive and family-friendly – for all kinds of families!
<b>Future-focused</b>	>	We're a place of bold aspiration – willing to pursue fresh ideas and unlock new opportunities. We continually build on the diversity, creativity, resilience and resourcefulness of our communities.
<b>Celebratory</b>	>	Creating a vibrant, inclusive culture helps reinforce a sense of belonging and shared values. That's why celebrating our diverse traditions and creating new ones is so essential to our personality.
<b>Proud</b>	>	We're not boastful – just unabashedly positive about our place. It makes our manner confident and self-assured.
<b>Genuine</b>	>	Authentic, grounded and pragmatic, we make realistic commitments and deliver on them.

## Our Story

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Stouffville offers a **natural fit** for residents, businesses and visitors who value our special fusion of green spaces, rich heritage, community connections and enterprising creativity.

Straddling the ecologically sensitive Oak Ridges Moraine, we're committed to sustainable futures for our urban, suburban and rural communities while being strong stewards of our immense natural assets.

Our 15 hamlets are home turf to **creatively minded** sparks in business, culture and society.

We're all neighbours here... committed to growing as an inclusive locale that embraces diversity and runs on the kind of positive energy that welcomes and supports families and communities of *all* types. We are "**powered by neighbours**" ... Stouffville.

## Creative Considerations

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Along with being **contemporary, compelling** and **differentiated**, the Stouffville identity must:

- Exemplify the tone and spirit of our positioning; signal our intentions
- Inspire sense of pride locally; galvanize regional support for new Stouffville marketing brand
- Have flexibility to incorporate all 15 hamlets and various sub-brands
- Be robust enough to work across the breadth of channels and applications required of a municipal brand
- Be fun and easy to work with, both for internal marketing and all of Stouffville's many partners and "brand users"

**TOWN OF WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY  
2021 to 2025**



**January 2021**



## Introduction

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The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville hired McSweeney and Associates to compile background information on the town and to provide a set of suggested actions to assist staff in writing an updated Economic Development Strategy.

The report includes the summary of the findings from the background research (strategic document review, 2018 statistics and data analysis, situational analysis) and stakeholder consultations (one on one interviews) portion of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Strategy process. This is encapsulated in the SCOAR® (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results), a McSweeney exclusive analysis based on the statistical analysis of the local economy, regional competitive outlook, trends and forecasts, investment readiness assessment, consultations, and document review.

### **Background research includes:**

One on one interviews:

- Thirteen one on one phone interviews with key community stakeholders, elected officials and town staff were conducted in October 2020

Documents reviewed:

- 2019-2022 Strategic Plan Report – Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville (July 2019)
- Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Economic Development Strategy 2015 To 2020
- Situational Analysis for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville (December 2015)
- OTR publications (June 2020, Summer 2020)
- Destination Whitchurch-Stouffville 2014-2019 Tourism Strategy
- Stouffville Brand Workshop Presentation (March 16, 2020)
- Stouffville Brand Survey Insights Summary (December 8, 2020)
- Whitchurch-Stouffville Tourism Map & Resources
- Long Term Tourism Destination Development Strategy – Draft for Consultation (2009)
- Major Employers Whitchurch-Stouffville (2015)
- Whitchurch-Stouffville Labour Force Profile & Target Industry Selection (2020)
- Whitchurch-Stouffville Situational Analysis (September 2020)

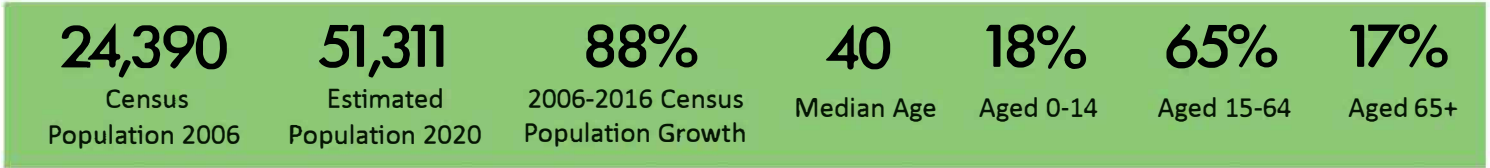
## KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

The key highlights are from the Whitchurch-Stouffville Labour Force Profile & Target Industry Selection:

- Fast-growing and young population.
- Housing affordability issues for both renters and owners.
- Well educated population.
- High-income households.
- Fields of study with low supply and are high in demand: architecture, mathematics, statistics, communication/journalism.
- Service industries added the most value over the past 10 years: restaurants, computer systems design and related services, information and cultural services, and service to buildings and dwellings.
- WS has concentrations in various manufacturing, tourism, professional services, and construction-related industries.
- The largest supply of skills locally, as measured by major field of study are Business, management, marketing, followed by health and education.
- Priority areas for investment:
  - IT/professional services; - niche opportunities include computer programmers and interactive media developers; financial technologies and services (FinTech); Civic and Social organizations;
  - Renewable energy and clean technologies; - niche opportunities include utility systems construction; scientific research and development services; waste management and remediation services;
  - Advanced/small scale manufacturing; niche opportunities include: computer and electronic product manufacturing; bio-fabrications and medical devices; fixtures and furniture making; and
  - Food and beverage processing: niche opportunities include: craft and specialty foods; breweries and wineries; meat and dairy products manufacturing.
- Competitive advantage due to a concentrated supply of social scientists, and STEM technologists and professionals, relative to the rest of Ontario.

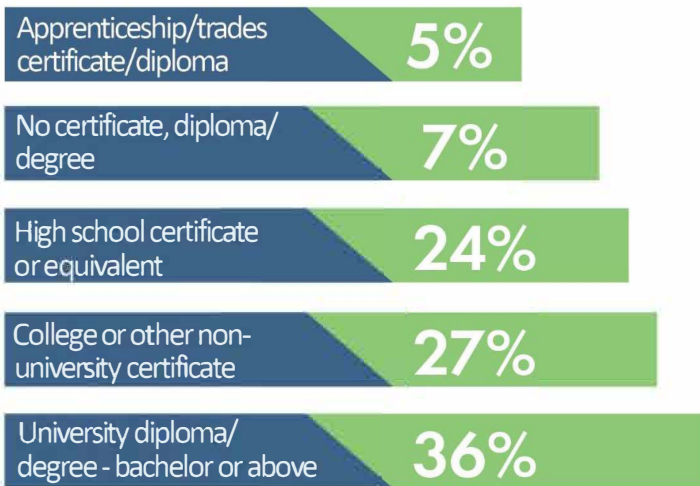
# Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

## Economic **SNAPSHOT**



### Educational Attainment

For the population aged 24-65



### Top 6 Major Fields of Study

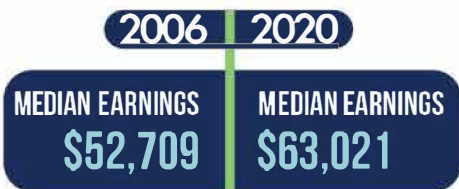


## Household & Earnings



Median Household Income **\$120,241**

Average Household Income **\$150,340**



Increased Median Earnings by **19.6%** since 2006

Persons aged 15+ with earnings who worked full year, full time

**27%** of Whitchurch-Stouffville's population spends **30% or more** of household total income on shelter costs

All data sourced from Manifold SuperDemographics 2020, unless otherwise specified.

# Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Economic **SNAPSHOT**

## Labour Force & Local Economy

### Top 5 Employment Industries



10%  
Retail Trade



9%  
Professional, Scientific  
& Technical Services



9%  
Educational  
Services



8%  
Health Care &  
Social Assistance



8%  
Construction

### Top 5 Employment Occupations



21%  
Sales & Service



18%  
Business, Finance  
& Administration



15%  
Management



11%  
Education, Law & Social,  
Community &  
Government

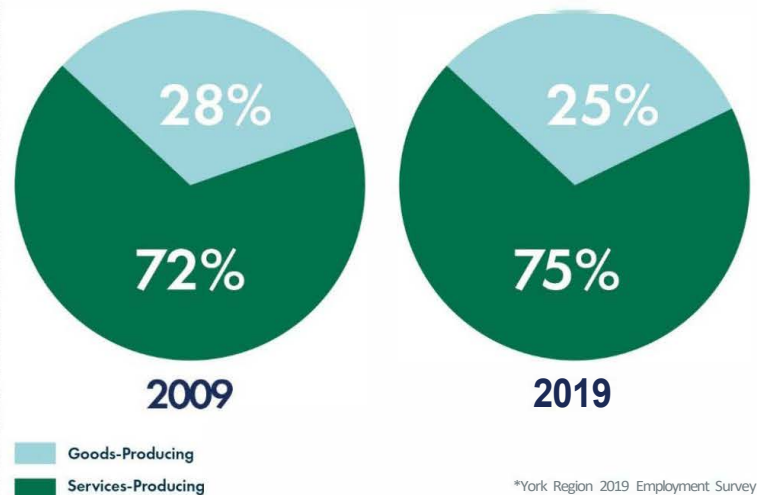


11%  
Trades, Transport  
& Equipment  
Operators

### Entrepreneurship



### Share of Employment by Services-Producing and Goods-Producing Sectors\*



All data sourced from Manifold SuperDemographics 2020, unless otherwise specified.

\*York Region 2019 Employment Survey

## Population Growth

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This subsection illustrates the socio-economic characteristics of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. The wider economic landscape relevant to the town is explored by using Ontario as a benchmark.

Table 1 illustrates population changes in Whitchurch-Stouffville over time, compared to Ontario. The census population in Whitchurch-Stouffville grew by 88% between 2006 and 2016, meanwhile, Ontario's population grew by 11% during the same time period. The town's resident population is expected to grow by 4.1% over the next 5 years.

**Table 1: Population Change, Whitchurch-Stouffville (WS) vs. Ontario (ON), 2001-2030**

Population	2006	2011	2016	2020*	2025*	2030*
WS Total	24,390	37,628	45,837	51,311	53,404	55,925
% Change	10.8%	54.3%	21.8%	11.9%	4.1%	4.7%
ON Total	12,160,282	12,851,821	13,448,494	14,635,077	15,489,765	16,338,605
% Change	6.6%	5.7%	4.6%	8.8%	5.8%	5.5%

Source: Statistics Canada Census data, 2001, 2006, 2011 2016; Manifold SuperDemographics 2020.

\*Manifold population estimates vs. Census data are not directly comparable.

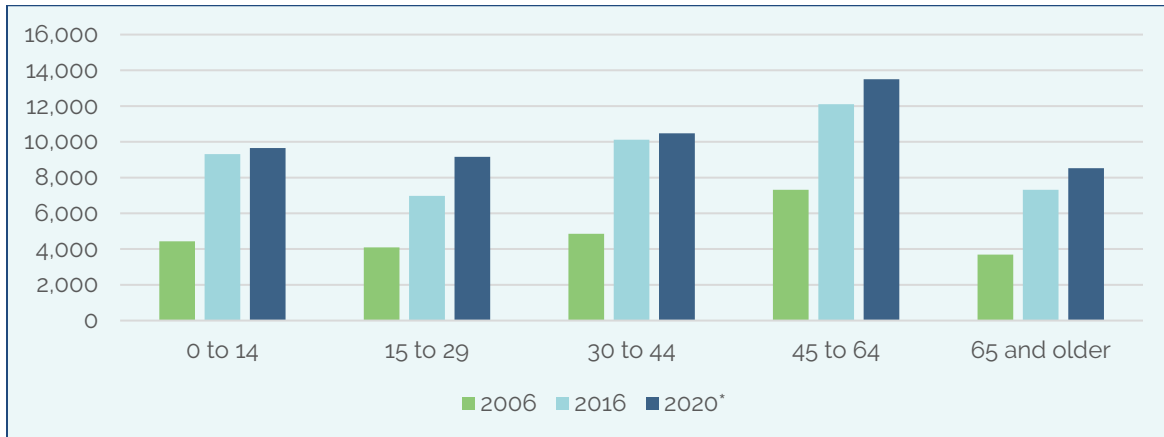
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The census population in Whitchurch-Stouffville grew by 88% over the past 3 census periods.

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Figure 1 shows changes to Whitchurch-Stouffville’s age profile between the last 3 census periods and estimates for 2020. The most significant growth in the population, between the past three census periods, came from adults ages 30 to 40, and children 0 to 9.

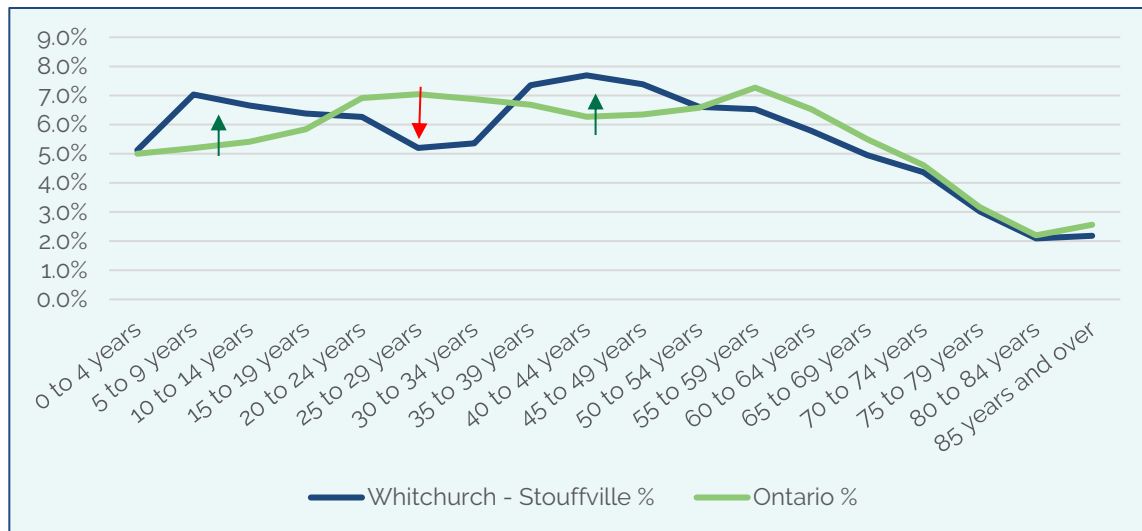
**Figure 1: Population by Age, Whitchurch-Stouffville, 2006, 2016 & 2020\***



Source: McSweeney & Associates from Statistics Canada Census data 2006, 2011 and 2016, and Manifold Data Mining Inc. SuperDemographics 2020

Figure 2 contrasts the age profile of residents in Whitchurch-Stouffville and Ontario, in 2020. Whitchurch-Stouffville has a higher proportion of youths (0-19) but a smaller percentage of young adults (aged 20 to 34), compared to Ontario. Similarly, the town has a higher proportion of middle-aged adults (35 to 54), but a smaller proportion of mature adults and older folks (55 and older).

**Figure 2: Percent Population by Age, Whitchurch-Stouffville vs. Ontario, 2020**

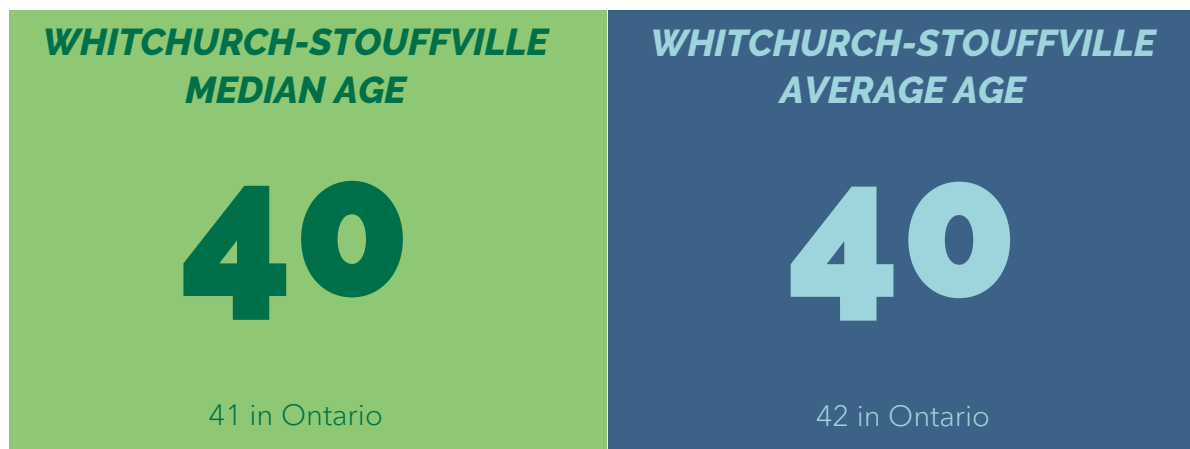


Source: McSweeney & Associates and Manifold Data Mining Inc. SuperDemographics 2020

Compared to Ontario, Whitchurch-Stouffville has a larger percentage of its population within the age range of 35 to 50 and 0 to 25, indicating a higher proportion of families with children relative to the province. Ultimately, Whitchurch-Stouffville has a lower percentage of persons within the working-age group (15 to 65) compared to Ontario, due to a larger percentage of the youth population in the town.

2020 Age Profile Snapshot		
Age Group	Whitchurch-Stouffville	Ontario
0-14	18.8%	15.6%
15-64	64.6%	66.4%
65+	16.6%	18.0%

Whitchurch-Stouffville has a slightly younger population compared to Ontario, as measured by the average age and median age.



## Income, Households and Affordability

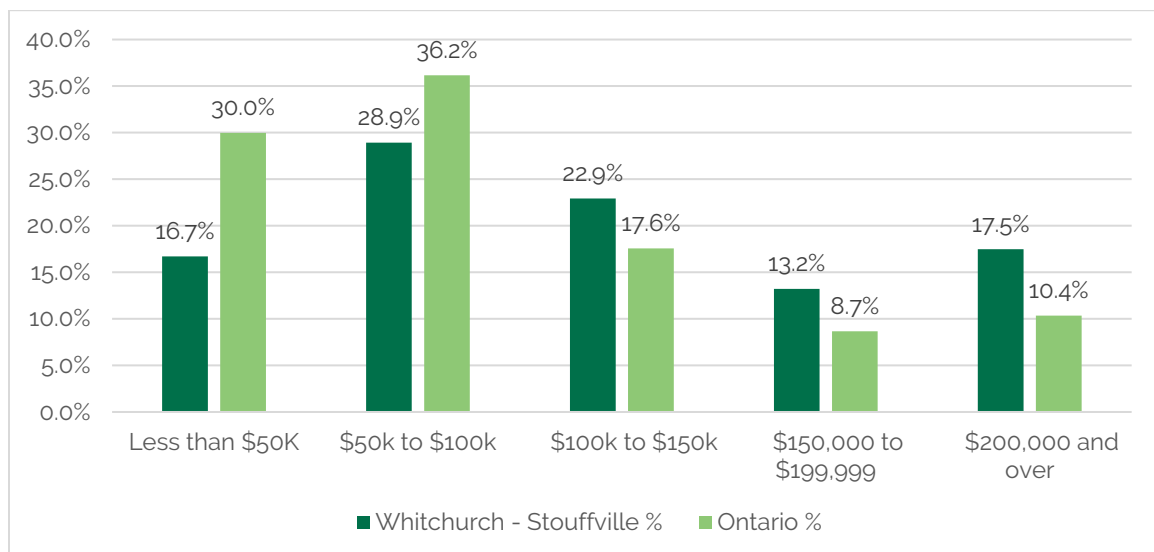
This subsection describes the income and housing costs faced by the resident population of Whitchurch-Stouffville. Between 2006 and 2020, the number of residents with employment income from full-time, full-year work has more than doubled. Currently, the estimated median earnings for full-time, full-year workers is \$63,021 annually (a 20% increase from 2006). With regards to employment income for all labour market participants, the following observations can be made<sup>1</sup>:

- Based on 2019 incomes, *Whitchurch-Stouffville's median employment income is \$43,853*, that is, 21% higher than in Ontario (\$36,112).
- Based on 2019 incomes, the *average employment income for Whitchurch-Stouffville residents is \$62,567*, which is, 22% higher than in Ontario (\$51,376).

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of household incomes. Approximately 53% of households in Whitchurch-Stouffville earn over \$100,000 annually, compared to 37% in Ontario.

- Median household total income in Whitchurch-Stouffville: \$120,241 vs. \$82,969 in Ontario
- Average household total income in Whitchurch-Stouffville: \$150,340 vs. \$108,247 in Ontario

**Figure 3: Household Total Income Levels by Percentage of the Population, 2020**



Source: Manifold Data Mining Inc. SuperDemographics 2020 (based on 2019 incomes).

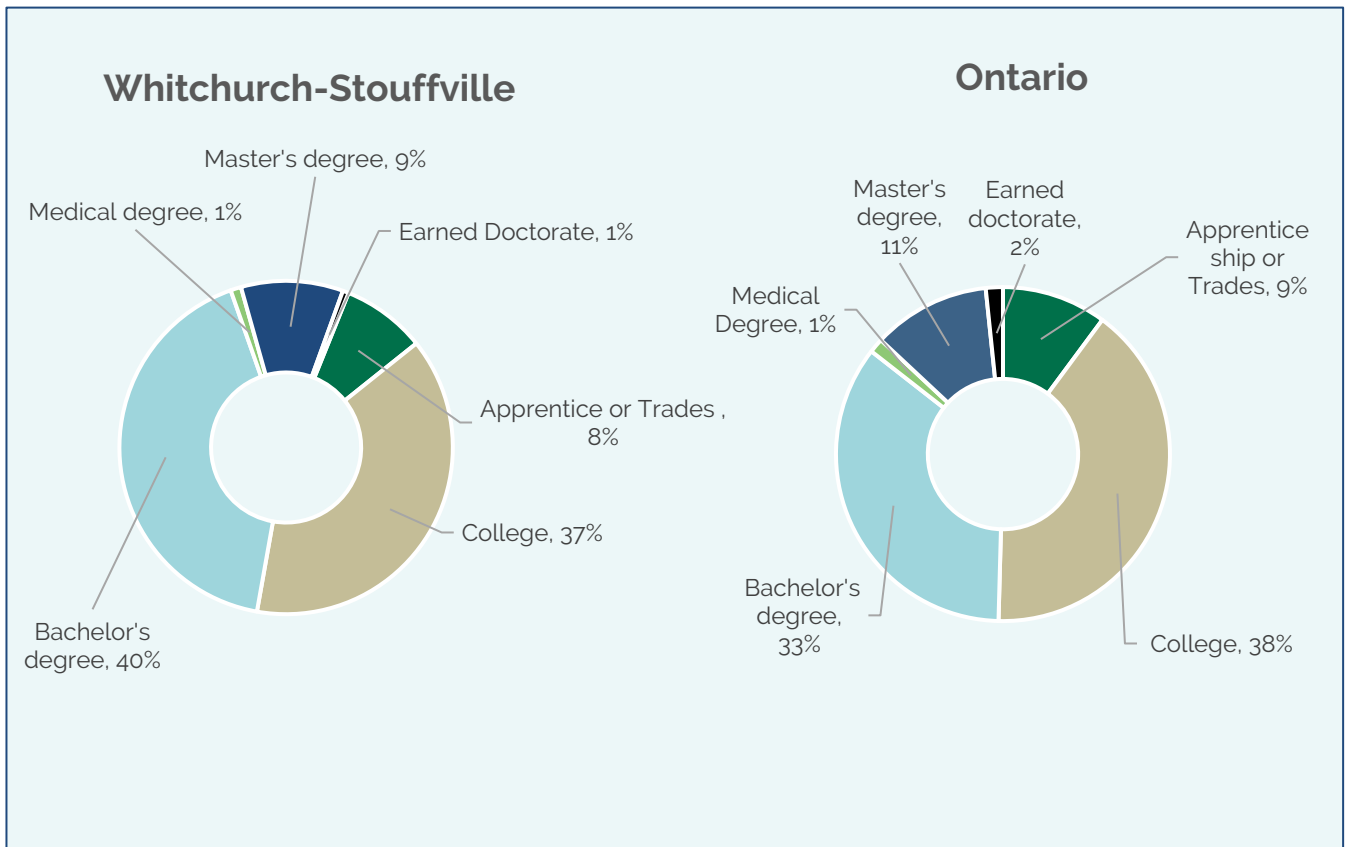
<sup>1</sup> As noted previously, all income data uses the year previous; therefore 2020 data uses 2019 incomes.



Figure 4 illustrates the post-secondary educational attainment of Whitchurch-Stouffville's residents, compared to Ontario's. The following can be concluded about the town's postsecondary education:

- A total of 18,145 residents have post secondary education.
- A Bachelor's degree is the most common type of education, attained by 40% of Whitchurch-Stouffville residents ages 25 to 64 with post secondary education, compared to 33% in Ontario

**Figure 4: Residents aged 24- 65 with Post-Secondary Attainment, 2020**



Source: McSweeney & Associates from Manifold SuperDemographics 2020

## Real Gross Domestic Product

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This subsection investigates the economic impact of each sector in Whitchurch-Stouffville using Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is an inflation-adjusted measure that reflects the value of all goods and services produced by an economy in a given year (expressed in base-year prices). The town's Real GDP in 2019, adjusted to 2012 prices, amount to \$1,749 million. Table 12 below illustrates the changes in Real GDP by sector, over the past 10-years, and projected into the next 5 years.

Over the past 10 years, Real GDP grew by 44%: goods-producing industries grew by 21%, while services-producing industries grew by 58%. Construction-related industries led the way in terms of growing the value of goods produced in Whitchurch-Stouffville and is expected to continue to do so over the next 5 years (11% growth projected to 2024).

On the other hand, several service-producing industries are growing and are expected to continue to support the growth of Real GDP over the next five years. Most notably, Finance, insurance and real estate; professional, scientific and technical services; and Education services created the most dollars absolute terms, over the past 5 and 10 years. Moreover, Information and cultural industries; Educational services; and Professional, scientific and technical services were the fastest growing sectors (by % change) in Real GDP, measure over the past 5 and 10 years.

Changes to Real GDP by sector over the past 10 years (as well as forecasts for the next five years) suggest that the Whitchurch-Stouffville economy is primarily being driven by the knowledge industries. For example, the Information and cultural industries; Educational services; and Professional, scientific and technical services industries have the highest annual average growth rates, which suggests that these sectors of the economy have long-term positive trends that have and will continue to support growth.

**Table 2: Real GDP in Whitchurch-Stouffville (in millions \$, based on 2012 prices)**

	2009	2014	2019	2024	10 Years: 2009-2019	
					% Growth over 10 Years	Annual Average % Growth
<b>ALL INDUSTRIES</b>	1,216	1,487	1,749	1,953	44%	3.2%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		22%	18%	12%		
<b>GOODS PRODUCING INDUSTRIES</b>	464	535	562	600	21%	1.1%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		15%	5%	7%		
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>	111	121	119	120	7%	-0.9%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		9%	-1%	1%		
<b>CONSTRUCTION</b>	228	285	348	385	5%	4.1%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		25%	22%	11%		
<b>PRIMARY &amp; UTILITIES</b>	125	129	94	94	-24 %	-3.4%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		3%	-27%	0%		
<b>SERVICES PRODUCING INDUSTRIES</b>	752	953	1,187	1,352	58%	4.4%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		27%	25%	14%		
<b>WHOLESALE TRADE</b>	88	108	104	113	19%	1.1%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		23%	-3%	8%		
<b>RETAIL TRADE</b>	50	68	95	109	89%	6.3%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		35%	41%	15%		
<b>TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING</b>	46	50	65	71	40%	2.3%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		7%	30%	9%		
<b>INFORMATION &amp; CULTURAL INDUSTRIES</b>	22	34	48	54	123%	8.7%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		59%	40%	12%	44 %	3.7%
<b>FINANCE, INSURANCE &amp; REAL ESTATE</b>	265	330	383	436		
<i>5 year % growth</i>		24%	16%	14%		
<b>PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC &amp; TECHNICAL SERVICES</b>	69	89	133	154	92%	6.1%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		28%	50%	15%		
<b>EDUCATIONAL SERVICES</b>	55	83	118	138	113%	8.0%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		50%	42%	17%		
<b>HEALTH CARE &amp; SOCIAL ASSISTANCE</b>	51	57	71	79	40%	3.4%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		11%	25%	10%		
<b>ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT &amp; RECREATION</b>	26	25	27	29	2%	0.2%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		-4%	6%	7%		
<b>ACCOMMODATION &amp; FOOD SERVICES</b>	18	24	32	37	74%	5.3%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		30%	35%	17%		
<b>OTHER SERVICES</b>	31	40	44	52	44%	3.7%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		30%	11%	18%		
<b>PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION</b>	30	45	67	81	124%	9.5%
<i>5 year % growth</i>		53%	47%	22%		

Source: The Conference Board of Canada, 2020. Real GDP Estimates prepared for Whitchurch-Stouffville and the York region. Manipulations and calculations by McSweeney and Associates.

The number of businesses in Whitchurch-Stouffville grew by 2,422, between 2014-2019 (64% growth), however, there were only 268 businesses added with employees (19% growth).

**Table 3: Business Patterns in Whitchurch-Stouffville, 2014-2019**

NAICS Code	Description	2019 With Employees	2019 Total	Change with Employees	Change Total	%Change with Employees	%Change Total
X0	Unclassified	142	903	142	903	n/a	n/a
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	80	1,024	6	554	8.1%	117.9%
54	Professional, scientific and technical services	218	854	26	233	13.5%	37.5%
52	Finance and insurance	65	434	9	187	16.1%	75.7%
23	Construction	283	775	28	142	11.0%	22.4%
62	Health care and social assistance	109	231	18	96	19.8%	71.1%
81	Other services (except public administration)	121	289	16	83	15.2%	40.3%
56	Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	129	339	9	83	7.5%	32.4%
44-45	Retail trade	125	317	3	69	2.5%	27.8%
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	61	183	9	66	17.3%	56.4%
72	Accommodation and food services	94	144	34	51	56.7%	54.8%
51	Information and cultural industries	14	67	1	25	7.7%	59.5%
61	Educational services	16	58	0	18	0.0%	45.0%
71	Arts, entertainment and recreation	36	94	(3)	16	-7.7%	20.5%
31-33	Manufacturing	72	150	4	13	5.9%	9.5%
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	5	6	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
91	Public administration	1	1	0	0	0.00%	0.00%
22	Utilities	0	5	(2)	0	-100.0%	0.0%
41	Wholesale trade	85	168	(6)	(2)	-6.6%	-1.2%
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	24	88	(17)	(13)	-41.5%	-12.9%
55	Management of companies and enterprises	7	61	(9)	(102)	-56.3%	-62.6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,687</b>	<b>6,191</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>2,422</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	<b>64.3%</b>

Source: EMSI 2019.Q3 from Statistics Canada's Business Registry: December 2014 and December 2019

**The largest sub-sectors (by 3-digit NAICS) by the total number of businesses in Whitchurch-Stouffville are:**

- Real estate
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Specialty trade contractors
- Administrative and support services
- Securities, commodity contracts, and other financial investment and related activities
- Construction of buildings

**The largest industries (by 4-digit NAICS) by the total number of businesses in Whitchurch-Stouffville are:**

- Lessors of real estate
- Other financial investment activities
- Offices of real estate agents and brokers
- Management, scientific and technical consulting services
- Computer systems design and related services
- Residential building construction
- Services to buildings and dwellings

**The industries that had the largest growth in the number of businesses over the past 5 years were:**

- Lessors of real estate
- Offices of real estate agents and brokers
- Other financial investment activities
- Other professional, scientific and technical services<sup>7</sup>
- Computer systems design and related services
- Residential building construction

**The industries that had the largest growth in the number of businesses with employees, over the past 5 years were:**

- Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places
- Computer systems design and related services
- Services to buildings and dwellings
- Other specialty trade contractors
- Residential building construction
- Health and personal care stores

<sup>7</sup> Includes marketing research and public opinion polling, photographic services, translation and interpretation services, and veterinary services

Lastly, the following were the fastest growing industries, as measured by the percentage change in the number of businesses (note that only industries that accounted for at least 1% of business growth were considered):

**Table 4: Fast Growing Industries by % Change in Number of Businesses, 2014-2019**

Description	2019 Total	Change Total	% Change Total
Lessors of real estate	615	366	146.99%
Other professional, scientific and technical services	106	60	130.43%
Agencies, brokerages and other insurance-related activities	78	42	116.67%
Offices of real estate agents and brokers	273	146	114.96%
Other financial investment activities	299	131	77.98%
Offices of other health practitioners	89	38	74.51%
Activities related to real estate	94	40	74.07%
Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places	121	45	59.21%
Land subdivision	78	27	52.94%
Computer systems design and related services	219	58	36.02%
Services to buildings and dwellings	178	38	27.14%
Residential building construction	213	45	26.79%
Management, scientific and technical consulting services	237	41	20.92%

Source: EMSI 2019.Q3 form Statistics Canada's Business Registry: December 2014 and December 2019



## Employment Profile

Between 2014 and 2019, the local economy of Whitchurch-Stouffville grew by 3,293 jobs (21%) to a total of approximately 18,824. Over those five years, Whitchurch-Stouffville's local employment (%) growth was higher than that of York Region (15.4%)<sup>8</sup> and Ontario (10.4%). Table 5 indicates the percentage job growth, between 2014 and 2019, by sector. Note that negative numbers are indicated by red text.

**Table 5: Employment Growth by Sector, Whitchurch-Stouffville, and Ontario, 2014-2019**

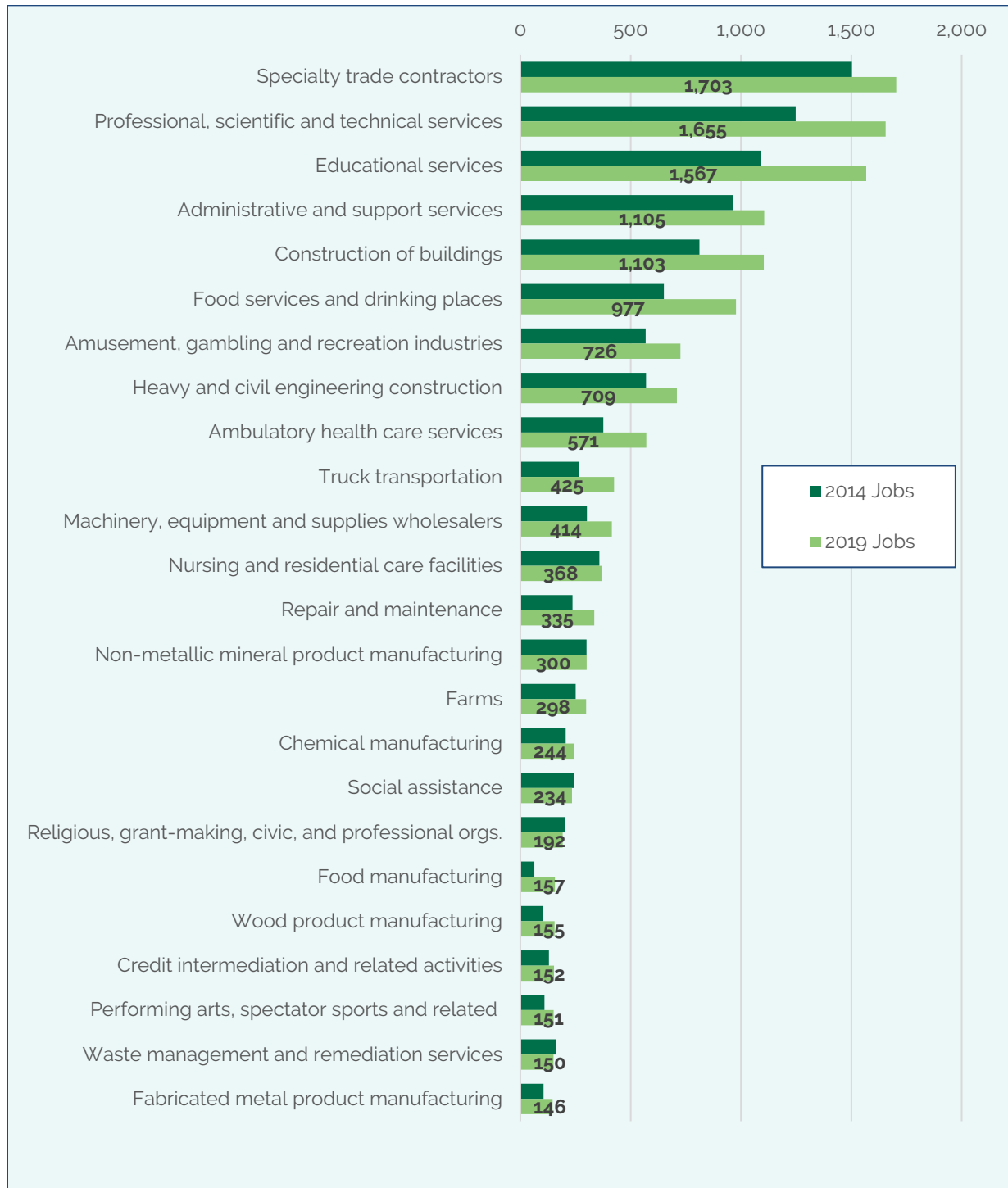
NAIC	Description	Jobs in Whitchurch-Stouffville 2019	Whitchurch-Stouffville% Change	Ontario % Jobs Change
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	381	21%	(14%)
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	64	113%	8%
22	Utilities	74	(11%)	13%
23	Construction	3,516	22%	13%
31-33	Manufacturing	1,257	22%	5%
41	Wholesale trade	884	29%	8%
44-45	Retail trade	1,752	(3%)	4%
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	600	27%	15%
51	Information and cultural industries	163	3%	(1%)
52	Finance and insurance	432	(3%)	9%
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	577	67%	9%
54	Professional, scientific and technical services	1,655	33%	16%
55	Management of companies and enterprises	0	(100%)	(11%)
56	Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	1,256	12%	7%
61	Educational services	1,567	44%	11%
62	Health care and social assistance	1,198	20%	17%
71	Arts, entertainment and recreation	898	31%	21%
72	Accommodation and food services	1,056	46%	18%
81	Other services (except public administration)	938	12%	(0%)
91	Public administration	278	(27%)	10%
X0	Unclassified	277	79%	63%
<b>All</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>18,824</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>10%</b>

Source: EMSI Analyst 2019.Q1

<sup>8</sup> The Conference Board of Canada, 2014-2019 Employment by location estimates for York, Census Division.

To understand how each subsector supports employment, Figure 5 shows the largest subsectors in Whitchurch-Stouffville by jobs in 2019 (excluding retail and public admin). Jobs by subsector in 2014 are shown to illustrate employment change.

**Figure 5: Largest Subsectors by Number of Jobs, 2014-2019**



Source: EMSI Analyst, 2019.3 - Employees and Self-Employed



Based on EMSI Analyst data on employment by subsector between 2014 and 2019, the following can be concluded about local jobs in the local economy of Whitchurch-Stouffville:

Largest Growth Subsectors by change in Total # of Jobs	Recent Fast-Growing Subsectors by % Job Growth	Subsectors with the Largest Projected Job Growth
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Educational services</li> <li>2. Professional, scientific and technical services</li> <li>3. Food services and drinking places</li> <li>4. Construction of buildings</li> <li>5. Specialty trade contractors</li> <li>6. Ambulatory health care services</li> <li>7. Real estate</li> <li>8. Truck transportation</li> <li>9. Amusement, gambling and recreation industries</li> <li>10. Heavy and civil engineering construction</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Food manufacturing</li> <li>2. Personal and household goods wholesalers</li> <li>3. Real estate</li> <li>4. Truck transportation</li> <li>5. Ambulatory health care services</li> <li>6. Food services and drinking places</li> <li>7. Educational services</li> <li>8. Repair and maintenance</li> <li>9. Machinery, equipment and supplies merchant wholesalers</li> <li>10. Construction of buildings</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Educational services</li> <li>2. Professional, scientific and technical services</li> <li>3. Construction of buildings</li> <li>4. Food services and drinking places</li> <li>5. Administrative and support services</li> <li>6. Heavy and civil engineering construction</li> <li>7. Ambulatory health care services</li> <li>8. Specialty trade contractors</li> <li>9. Amusement, gambling and recreation industries</li> <li>10. Truck transportation</li> </ol>

**Notes:**

**Largest Industries by Total Employment** is defined as the top 7 largest industries by the number of jobs, not including industries that are solely funded by the government such as healthcare and education.

**Recent Fast-Growing Industries by Percentage Job Growth** is defined as industries that had the largest percentage job growth in the economy, including only industries that grew jobs by 0.01 % of total jobs in 2019 (85 new jobs), between 2014 and 2019. Industries indicated here that are not included in the first category can signal emerging industries.

**Industries with Largest Projected<sup>9</sup> Growth Employment** is defined as the industries projected to have the largest absolute job growth over the next five years.

<sup>9</sup> Projections are calculated using robust industry data. First, simple short-, mid-, and long-term trend lines are made for every industry and municipality based on the historical data. Those lines are then averaged and dampened to prevent extreme change. EMSI then incorporates national industry projections (COPS national employment projections) as well as province and regional projections provided by province labour market organizations to adjust these numbers again.

## Labour Force Profile

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Talent and skills have been consistently within the top 3 factors in North America for site selection over the past few years<sup>1</sup>. The bottom line is that businesses require the right people, spaces, and infrastructure to locate in a community. Without the right labour force, or access to land/office spaces, and utilities, investment attraction becomes increasingly difficult. The objective of this report was firstly, to understand the labour market conditions for businesses locating in Whitchurch-Stouffville; and secondly, to identify the best opportunities for investment attraction given the availability of employment spaces, as well as industry and infrastructure development trends in the town.

The methods for this study involved measuring the local supply of skills and educational attainment, as well as reviewing occupational employment trends within a 45-minute drive time radius: the most probable area for recruitment for local employers. These findings were then supplemented with an investment readiness review and the economic base analysis taken from the Whitchurch-Stouffville Situational Analysis 2020). Also completed by McSweeney and Associates.

**The economic base analysis of the local economy**, conducted in the 2020 Situational Analysis, identified major economic trends in Whitchurch-Stouffville. The analysis identified knowledge-based industries as having the strongest sustained, long term-growth. Furthermore, food manufacturing, personal/household goods wholesalers, real estate and truck transportation were identified as emerging/fast growing industries. Local employment concentrations were found in construction, manufacturing, professional services and tourism related industries. Lastly, the fastest growing employment industries were utility systems construction and computer systems design services.

**The Labour Force Profile** highlighted the fact that the local labour force is highly skilled, with university education at the bachelor level being the most common educational attainment level. Whitchurch-Stouffville has a stronger relative supply of knowledge-based skills when compared to Ontario. Knowledge-based skills, measured by university diplomas, also had the largest growth between 2006 and 2020, while the supply of skilled trades (apprenticeship and trades) stagnated.

**The Labour Shed Analysis** points to the growing demand for information communication technology, computer systems design, programming, and digital media services in the region. The analysis also demonstrated the continued growth around fintech and financial services in the region.

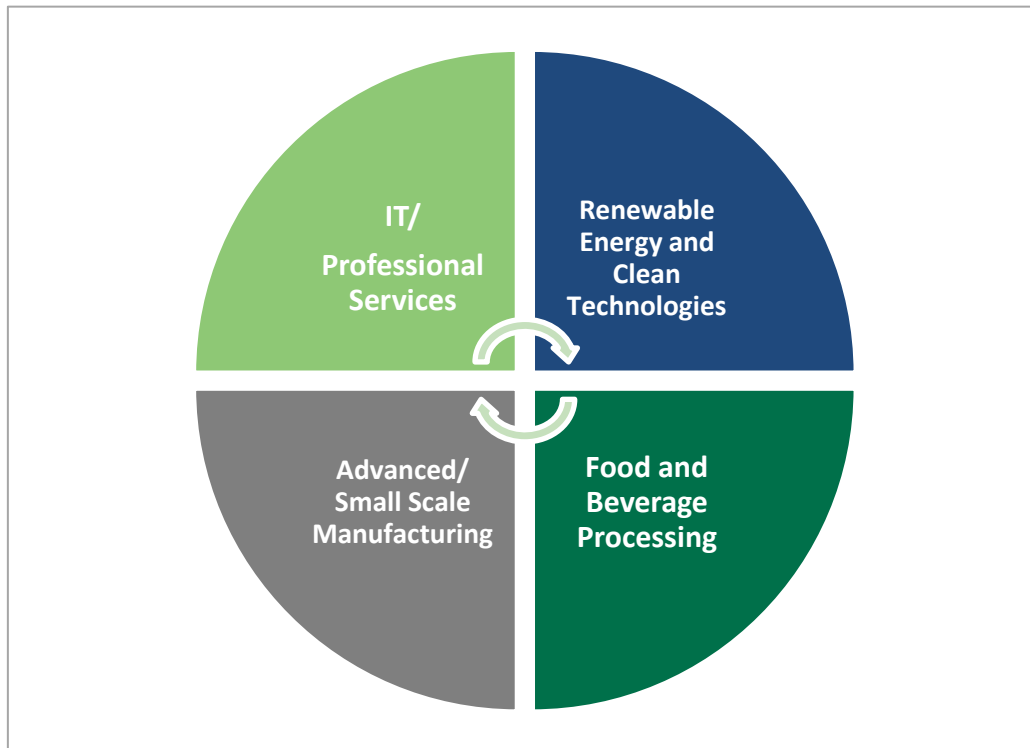
<sup>1</sup> Area Development Magazine. 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Corporate Survey, 2019. Online: <https://www.areadevelopment.com/Corporate-Consultants-Survey-Results/Q1-2020/34th-annual-corporate-survey-16th-annual-consultants-survey.shtml>

The Investment Readiness Review identified serviced lands for businesses as the greatest challenge for investment attraction into Whitchurch-Stouffville. Without these, businesses face higher costs associated to locating in Whitchurch-Stouffville, with the exception of small home-based businesses. The review also identified limitations around access to broadband, water and sewer.

After considering all of these pieces of information in conjunction, four priority areas have been identified as best fit industry sectors for investment attraction. As demonstrated by the diagram below, these sectors are interconnected, and will help sustain each other. These are also strategic as they fall in line with the federal government’s strategic planning for economic development (e.g., Canada’s super clusters include advanced manufacturing, agri-food, clean technology, digital technology, health/bioscience and clean resources, infrastructure and transportation)<sup>2</sup>, which makes funding and resources for developing these industries increasingly available. Lastly, these targets also support the well being and long-term sustainability of the local community.

Specific niche opportunities, key value chain requirements and competitive advantages of locating in Whitchurch-Stouffville have all been considered for each priority area, which can be found in the Target Industry Selection section. The following represent the four priority investment attraction areas:

### Priority Areas for Investment Attraction



<sup>2</sup> Government of Canada: Innovation Superclusters Initiative. Online: <https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/093.nsf/eng/home>

## Target Industry Selection

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**The economic base analysis** of the local economy, conducted in the 2020 Situational Analysis, identified three major trends in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

- 1.** There has been a long-term growth trend in the value of knowledge-based industries in Whitchurch-Stouffville, as measured by GDP and jobs. Knowledge based industries include Professional, scientific, and technical services; Financial services; Education services; and Information and cultural industries.
- 2.** Recent, fast-growing subsectors (measured by the percentage change in the number of jobs between 2014 to 2019) includes food manufacturing, personal/household goods wholesalers, real estate and truck transportation.
- 3.** Over the past five years, utilities systems construction and, computer systems and design services have had the largest job growth that can be attributed to local competitiveness effects based on shift share analysis.

**Local labour supply in** town has a concentration in skills related to Social and behavioural sciences and law; Business, management and public administration; Physical and life sciences and technologies; Mathematics, computer and information sciences; and Education, relative to the rest of the province.

**Regional trends in employment** point to the growing demand for information communication technology, computer systems design, programming, and digital media services in the region. The analysis also demonstrated the continued growth around fintech and financial services in the region. Lastly, the analysis also showed fast growth and concentration of jobs around furniture and fixture assemblers and inspectors, which reflects the growing residential market in the region and the demand household goods.

**The Investment Readiness Review** identified zoned, industrial, commercial, employment lands, and office spaces for businesses as the greatest challenge for investment attraction into Whitchurch-Stouffville. Without these, businesses cannot locate here, with the exception of small home-based businesses. The review also identified limitations around access to broadband/fibre, water and sewer. Lastly, the cost of utilities relative to neighbouring communities represent a challenge. Whitchurch-Stouffville could benefit from increased investment in utilities systems construction and smart city developments (i.e. renewable energy developments, and high efficiency water and wastewater treatment and conservation technologies).

Based on the aforementioned pieces of information, the following industries represent the best targets for investment attraction:

<b>ICT/Professional Services</b>	
Niche Opportunities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Computer programmers and interactive media developers</li> <li>2. Financial Technologies and Services (FinTech)</li> <li>3. Civic and Social Organizations (Social enterprises)</li> </ol>
Key Requirements or Value Chain:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Highly skilled labour force (university-educated workforce)</li> <li>✓ Access to airport and major highways</li> <li>✓ Access to accommodation services</li> <li>✓ Access to broadband/fibre</li> <li>✓ Office space or Home-based business possibility</li> <li>✓ Access to general office workers</li> </ul>
Whitchurch-Stouffville Competitive Position	<p>Traditionally, hi-tech, legal services, management consulting, advertising and public relations firms have opted to locate within large urban centres. Today, smaller cities are becoming viable options if they can provide a vibrant professional services support environment through advanced telecommunications infrastructure, and a strong pool labour. FinTech (financial technology) companies are no longer limited to large, traditional financial centers. Whitchurch-Stouffville can attract young entrepreneurs by offering lower costs and greater alignment with the priorities of today's millennial workforce, such as affordable housing, walkability and accessible high-quality outdoor recreation options.</p>
<b>Renewable energy and Clean Technologies</b>	
Niche Opportunities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Utility systems construction</li> <li>5. Scientific research and development services</li> <li>6. Waste management and remediation services</li> </ol>
Key Requirements or Value Chain:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Access to a STEM focused workforce</li> <li>✓ Access to educational institutions</li> <li>✓ Access to commercialization and research funding</li> <li>✓ Existence of strong construction industries</li> <li>○ Government Policy Support (i.e. municipal Smart City Plan)</li> <li>✓ Socially and environmentally progressive population</li> </ul>
Whitchurch-Stouffville Competitive Position:	<p>The City of Toronto and the Federal Government have committed to 100% low carbon energy by 2050. This will drive the regional demand for clean/conservation technologies and construction of renewable assets. Successful municipalities will connect a skilled workforce, municipal infrastructure, and supply chains to support the rise of the Clean Economy. Whitchurch-Stouffville has a growing population and a growing demand for utilities. This, coupled with a strong construction industry and access to a STEM focused workforce make the town an ideal location for renewable energy and energy/water efficiency and other clean tech companies to locate.</p>

<b>Food and Beverage Processing</b>	
<b>Niche Opportunities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Craft and specialty foods</li> <li>8. Breweries and Wineries</li> <li>9. Meat and Dairy Products Manufacturing</li> </ul>
<b>Key Requirements or Value Chain:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Strong Transportation and logistics sector</li> <li>✓ Proximity to inputs</li> <li>✓ Access to markets</li> <li>✓ Low-cost of energy</li> <li>✓ On-farm manufacturing permissions</li> <li>○ Abundant, clean and low-cost water</li> </ul>
<b>Whitchurch-Stouffville Competitive position</b>	Whitchurch-Stouffville has a long history of agricultural excellence. Sector supports for artisan food production and craft beverages include the existence of specialty and organic food production, eco-tourism, agri-tourism/farm markets, and equestrian opportunities.
<b>Advanced/ Small-Scale Manufacturing</b>	
<b>Niche Opportunities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Computer and electronic product manufacturing</li> <li>11. Bio-fabrication and medical devises</li> <li>12. Fixtures and furniture manufacturing</li> </ul>
<b>Key Requirements or Value Chain:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Availability of Land</li> <li>✓ Availability of Skilled-Labour</li> <li>✓ Connectivity to Markets</li> <li>✓ Access to Technology</li> <li>✓ Light industrial and office spaces</li> <li>○ Aggressive Home-based business policies</li> </ul>
<b>Whitchurch-Stouffville Competitive Position:</b>	<p>Given the existence of a large pharmaceutical producer and various computer systems and design firms locally, there is an opportunity for advanced and small-scale manufacturing to supply inputs and related products to these firms. Small batch manufacturers can focus on getting quick prototypes to tech firms looking to rapidly iterate on a design.</p> <p>Bio-fabrication is the use of biomaterials such as cells, proteins and organisms as building blocks in a manufacturing process. For example, the global market for sustainable bio- packaging is poised to reach more than US \$142 billion in coming years. Presently, bio-plastics and green materials just constitute 1% of total packaging market share, so there is immense growth potential for manufacturers in this segment. Whitchurch-Stouffville has access to agricultural wastes, a commonly required input in the bio-fabrication process<sup>8</sup>.</p>

<sup>8</sup>The Medium: <https://medium.com/wedonthavetime/ikea-starts-using-biodegradable-mushroom-based-packaging-for-its-products-42d079f98bb1>

## Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Aspirations



The SCOAR® (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) is a McSweeney exclusive analysis based on the statistical analysis of the local economy, regional competitive outlook, trends and forecasts, investment readiness assessment, consultations, and document review.

This SCOAR® analysis for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville has been completed by McSweeney & Associates based on the information gathered through one on one consultations, the Socio-Economic Profile, and review of key documents provided by the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville to be used for the Whitchurch-Stouffville Economic Development Strategy Update.



### Strengths

- Located in York Region, with access to the Greater Toronto Area market and have neighbouring municipalities of Aurora, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Markham that are progressive with strong business communities.
- Historic Downtown Stouffville with an increased focus on improving Main Street and downtown.
- Population grew by 88% between 2006 and 2016 (Ontario grew by 11% over the same time period – Source: Statistics Canada Census).
- Good transportation linkages with easy access to the 404, connecting to the 400 series highways and a commuter GO train to Toronto via 2 GO train stations located within the Town.
- Well educated population with 51% attainment of at least a bachelor's degree or higher - major fields of study including business, management; health professions; education; engineering and engineering technology, social sciences; and computer and information sciences.
- Diverse population (i.e. 30% immigrant population).
- Blended quality of life offering an urban and a rural experience, safe neighbourhoods, and cultural amenities.
- The Oak Ridges Moraine and the greenbelt occupying 95% of the land within the town, provides a great amount of green space in the community.
- Lack of congestion and shorter commute times within Whitchurch-Stouffville.

- Strong sense of pride among residents of WS.
- The Town's 'On the Road' monthly publication supporting local business has been well-received – has won 3 Hermes awards.
- Long, rich history since 1792 when the Township of Whitchurch was incorporated.
- Small number but strong businesses in place including Pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing (213 jobs, or 1.1% of total) and Computer systems design and related services (656 jobs, or 3.5% of total).
- Total number of businesses grew by 3,293 between 2014-2019 (Source: Canadian Business Patterns 2014-2019).
- Strong entrepreneurial culture - 73% of the businesses in WS have no employees indicating that there are many start-up/home-based (Source: Canadian Business Patterns 2014-2019).
- An established culinary tourism experience has been developed and promoted.
- A branding exercise was recently completed which developed a new brand for WS that is current and representative of the new Stouffville.
- Affluent population with 53% of households making over \$100,000 (compared to 37% in Ontario), with an average household total income of \$150,340.
- Still good farmland located in WS that can be utilized more diversely.





## Challenges

- Public transit system is poorly connected across the community (especially east-west) and lacks services to support businesses outside of the regular business hours.
- Lack of rural broadband and high-speed internet.
- Downtown Stouffville lacks a critical level of retail, needs revitalizing and there is little space or land available for new businesses to locate.
- Landlocked with 90% of Whitchurch-Stouffville covered by sensitive lands including the Oak Ridges Moraine and the greenbelt.
- Demand by developers to convert IC lands into residential to satisfy residential density requirements.
- Lost opportunities as a result of having no serviced employment lands available.
- Negotiations with the province are struggling around the servicing for employment lands along 404.
- Lack of common vision, identity - suffers from a disconnect between what it could be and what it is and what it is going to be – needs a refresh.
- Negative publicity over the past number of years has been difficult on the community's psyche.
- The town is in a period of transition and it is losing its small-town feel, which threatens the community's identity due to the changes taking place.
- Highly educated residents leaving WS daily to work in the high-tech industry, health care and R&D facilities.
- Pressure on the residential tax base due to limited number of businesses located in WS.
- Nowhere for entrepreneurs/home-based businesses to move into when they outgrow their current location (i.e., limited options for office space available).
- Limited business support from the Town– economic development is a high priority, but resources are limited.
- Housing is unattainable.
- Better understanding by council and staff on business needs.
- Competing against all the municipalities in the bordering communities that have well established economic development offices.
- The Town has operated as a lean community by keeping taxes low resulting in a weak financial situation.



## Opportunities

- Embrace the growing diversity of the population and provide support structures for them too.
- WS needs to be more competitive when it comes to investment attraction and retention.
- Develop or support the development of shovel ready employment lands available for business to grow or relocate.
- Build on the existing agricultural uses by finding innovative, on-farm opportunities to support tourism and food production (e.g., micro-farming).
- Develop a vibrant community hub at the centre of the Town of WS, that is pedestrian-friendly, and offers a greater number of niche restaurants, shops and experiences to support tourism attraction into the downtown.
- Partner with the Markham Stouffville Hospital (located in Markham) to establish employment opportunities related to healthcare that could take place in WS and support the WS residents.
- Help to grow innovation and entrepreneurial infrastructure including providing collaborative workspaces and supporting industry and postsecondary partnerships.
- Be more flexible about home-based business support and provide locations for entrepreneurs and home-based businesses to grow (e.g. a Business Growth Hub/incubator could provide space for firms to run their operations, share facilities for research product development, offer collaboration-networking, and provide services to help identify and take advantage of opportunities and to broker relationships).
- Work closely with Central Counties Tourism to identify prime opportunities for sustainable tourism investment in WS.
- Continue to work towards developing serviced employment lands in WS.
- Attract industries that could employ those residents that are leaving Town for work (i.e. the professional and managerial class of workers, with expertise in business administration, health care, and engineering and technology).
- Put together a process to alleviate any 'red tape' that impedes a smooth development process for developers/business.
- Promote the newly approved (2020) town-wide CIP supporting the economic development vision 'open for sustainable business growth' is in place.



## Aspirations

- A progressive thinking, cohesive community with a shared vision.
- Pedestrian-friendly downtown with a greater number of niche restaurants, shops and experiences to bring more people into downtown.
- Shovel ready employment lands in place for new businesses to locate to support the requirements for the Provincial Growth Plan projections.
- Increased number of appropriate businesses located in WS to reduce the number of skilled workers leaving the community for work.
- Strong farming component that supports agri-tourism and food production.
- Improved public transit within WS and all day two way GO train to allow skilled and unskilled workers to get to their place of work in WS.
- Better balance of residential and business tax base.



## Results

- A shared vision in place that is supported by the community.
- Be in a financially strong position to support future initiatives.
- An entrepreneurial environment that supports home-based businesses and entrepreneurs.
- A tourism destination that focuses on its strengths including its significant green spaces and farms across WS.
- Increased number of good quality jobs and businesses to keep residents in WS living and working in the community.
- Strong agricultural sector supported by agri-tourism and food production.
- A well-connected community through broadband, public transit linkages and communications.
- Will have a diverse housing stock and sufficient rental options to support the growth of businesses by being able to support a diverse workforce.
- Downtown Stouffville is the centre of the community where residents come to celebrate.

## Key Strategic Economic Development Pillars

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The following themes have been derived through a rigorous process that included a thorough study of the Town’s economic development base analysis, a full consultation and stakeholder engagement exercise and the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville’s SCOAR®.

During the branding process that took place in 2020, several pillars were established that paralleled the economic development pillars derived from the research. It was determined by Whitchurch-Stouffville staff along with the consultants to use the existing pillars from the branding strategy that were relevant to economic development to ensure that the economic development report parallels the branding strategy. The branding strategy did not have a specific pillar for tourism, but tourism was found in various pillars.

The following **six strategic pillars** are recommended as areas to where the Town should focus its economic development resources:

BRANDING PILLARS		ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PILLARS
1	Prime Location	Ready for Investment
2	Enriching the Core	Downtown as the ‘Centre City’
3	Green Routes/roots	Supporting the Rural Economy while being Environmentally Sustainable
4	Strategic Growth	Supporting Existing Business and Attracting New Business
5	Collective Ambition	Supporting Entrepreneurship and Home-Based Business
6	Tourism was found in various pillars in the branding pillars	Building on Arts, Culture, Tourism as an Economic Driver

The following diagram shows the relationship between the 6 pillars. They are all integrated and work together to advance the economy.

Developing Whitchurch-Stouffville as a **Prime Location that is Ready for Investment** is the central element to attracting and retaining business. When the **PEOPLE** are in place to support business and there are **PLACES** where business can locate, along with having **supportive business policies**, being ready for investment will support the remaining 5 pillars.



## Strategic Pillars & Actions

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### PILLAR 1: Prime Location - Ready for Investment

Understand that economic development is a long-term initiative and there is a need for a solid base. Make Whitchurch-Stouffville a premium location to do business and when business is interested in investing in Whitchurch-Stouffville ...be ready. Build on the exceptional quality of life that Whitchurch-Stouffville offers with the advantages of extensive green space, unique urban areas and proximity to a large market area.

#### Things to think about...

Do you have places for business to locate if they were interested in opening in Whitchurch-Stouffville? Do you have the services in place to support industry? Is it easy to move through the Town's development process? Do you have shovel ready land available? Do you have an office or commercial space for a business to open in? Are there adequate resources in place to support the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy once it is completed?

#### SUGGESTED ACTIONS:

- Increase the understanding around being a pro-business community by providing Investment Readiness training and coaching for Council and staff to educate them on the importance of economic development.
- Investigate the advantages of having a concierge/expeditor program in place to provide a smooth transition through the development process for industrial commercial investors.
- Continue to provide sufficient resources to the economic development department to ensure a continuous momentum to allow for completion of short and long-term goals and to implement the new economic development strategy.
- Identify expansion areas for industrial and commercial growth that offer diverse locations supporting target industries, but not limited to the 404 Corridor.
- Develop and/or support the development of shovel ready employment lands for business to locate that supports the requirements for the Provincial Growth Plan projections.
- Have in place a current industrial commercial land and building inventory with a comprehensive list of assets for each property.
- Continue to develop the economic development section on the Town website and, if possible, develop a new site focused specifically on investing in Whitchurch-Stouffville.
- Continue to push for high-speed internet accessibility throughout the entire town including the rural areas.
- Continue communicating the 'good news stories' about the town and the business community through a variety of mediums (i.e. OTR publication, social media, etc.).
- Continue to broaden the economic development toolkit (i.e. special incentives for attracting potential sectors, etc.).
- Promote the newly approved (2020) town-wide Community Improvement Plan supporting the economic development vision 'open for sustainable business growth'.

## PILLAR 2: Enriching the Core - Downtown as the 'Centre City'

Downtowns play an important and unique role in the economic and social development of a community. Downtowns create a critical mass of activities where commercial, cultural, and civic activities are concentrated. This concentration facilitates business, learning, and cultural exchange. The heart of Whitchurch-Stouffville is where residents and visitors can have a unique experience of shopping, dining, entertainment, and celebration while providing a sense of community and place. It is not a short-term process to revitalize a downtown.

### Things to think about...

Do you have locations for businesses to open in the downtown? Is there infrastructure in place that supports downtown businesses (i.e. BIA, Chamber) and helps them to work together to build a stronger business community? Do you have a critical mass of activities to draw people to the Centre City? Does the Centre City look enticing and appealing to attract visitors and businesses and create vibrancy? Is there support from elected officials and residents for investing in the downtown?

### SUGGESTED ACTIONS:

- Provide entryways into the downtown that signal to visitors that they are entering somewhere unique and special.
- Strategically transform Downtown Stouffville by having a common vision of how the downtown needs to be developed, develop a plan and implement the plan (i.e. downtown master plan, design guidelines, assess the downtown heritage value, beautification plan).
- Determine unique and out of the box ways to attract people into the downtown (i.e. experimentation with pop up venues for art, food, music and hospitality).

## PILLAR 3: Green Roots/routes – Supporting the Rural Economy While Being Environmentally Sustainable

A significant amount of Whitchurch-Stouffville landmass is occupied by the Oak Ridges Moraine and Ontario's Greenbelt. As a result, the community has a valuable asset that makes it unique and provides a landscape that offers different opportunities. As it is a requirement to stay within the provincial regulations, Whitchurch-Stouffville is a steward of these environmentally sensitive areas and need to care for these lands while supporting and promoting sustainable rural tourism, farming and food.

### Things to think about...

Are the right policies in place that will allow for different types of agriculture that are sustainable and innovative? Are farmlands protected to ensure that farming remains a viable rural opportunity into the future? Are the Town policies and zoning bylaws in place to support the success of existing agriculture and rural businesses?

### SUGGESTED ACTIONS:

- Support the development of sustainable cultivation/tourism opportunities including wineries, cideries, fruits, etc.
- Provide support for more rural businesses including farms and rural-related business owners with inclusive policies, supportive zoning bylaws, etc.
- Develop and implement a rural wayfinding signage program.
- Develop a 'Grown in Whitchurch-Stouffville' brand that supports products produced by local farmers/business.
- Build on the existing agricultural uses by supporting and attracting innovative, on-farm opportunities to support food production (i.e. micro-farming, vertical farming, community gardens, greenhouses, etc.).
- Continue to build on and promote rural tourism resources that will bring residents and visitors to the rural area of Whitchurch-Stouffville.



## PILLAR 4: Strategic Growth – Supporting Existing Business & Attracting New Business

The majority of investment and business development opportunities occur through existing businesses currently located in the community. Understanding the business community requirements is a positive, cost-efficient way for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville to ensure that the base economic and community foundations are in place to keep and grow these businesses.

Attracting new business is about having a strong identity in place that exudes confidence and entices investors to invest. There is an opportunity to attract industry that could provide employment for those residents that are leaving town for work (i.e. the professional and managerial class of workers, with expertise in business administration, health care, and engineering and technology) and keep them living and working in the community.

### Things to think about...

Do you know the leaders of the business community and what businesses are currently located in Whitchurch-Stouffville? Do you have a comprehensive understanding of their needs - if they are planning on moving to another location within the community, growing and requiring new space or moving out of town to another location? Do you have in place what is needed to attract new business?

### SUGGESTED ACTIONS:

- Create and implement an ongoing Business Visitation Program to build relationships between the Town and the local business community to identify issues, help to resolve them, and to help with potential investment opportunities.
- Continue to support existing businesses through Shop Local programs, On The Road Publication, etc.
- Develop a target-based program to attract future growth industry including sectors such as IT/Professional Services; Renewable Energy and Clean Technologies; Advanced/Small Scale Manufacturing; Food and Beverage Processing.
- Partner with the Markham Stouffville Hospital (located in Markham) to establish employment opportunities related to healthcare that could take place in Whitchurch-Stouffville and support Whitchurch-Stouffville residents.
- Partner with local business organizations to set clear objectives in place for each of the organizations to reduce duplication and strengthen relationships.
- Undertake an assessment to create a Business Development Centre that would create a one-stop-shop for business start-ups, expansions, support, etc. This model would include not only Town economic development staff but also provincial and federal support agencies (i.e. Collingwood Business Development Centre).
- Establish a Corporate Calling Program to meet with strategic C-Suite business leaders in the target markets to understand their needs, build rapport and find out what they are looking.

## PILLAR 5: Collective ambition – Supporting Entrepreneurship and Home-Based Business

Small business is the backbone of the economy. Entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as an important driver of economic growth. Whitchurch-Stouffville has had a strong home-based business community. As people move to more rural areas particularly due to COVID, more might see an opportunity to work from home and start their own business.

### Things to think about....

Is it a seamless process to set up a home-based business in Whitchurch-Stouffville? Do the policies that are in place support home-based businesses? What do entrepreneurs need to start and grow their businesses? Are there supports in place to help them? How do you connect with entrepreneurs and home-based business owners when they are out of sight? Are there locations available when their business outgrows their home?

### SUGGESTED ACTIONS:

- Better understand the home-based business community's requirements;
  - Strengthen home-based business policies and ensure zoning bylaws are up to date to allow flexibility to support business success.
- Stimulate an entrepreneurial spirit by providing co-working space to network, gather support and find leadership to help guide entrepreneurs through their business growth (i.e. innovation hub, incubation centre, etc.);
  - Support youth entrepreneurship by partnering with organizations to provide programs (i.e. coding classes, maker spaces, etc.).
- Build rapport with the home-based business community through one-on-one discussions, networking opportunities, etc.
- Develop a home-based business inventory to understand the types of home-based businesses are in the community.

## PILLAR 6: Building on Arts, Culture, Tourism as an Economic Driver

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, as part of York Region, offers a wide range of opportunities within the rural and urban context including 18 golf courses, 18 horse farms, 13 regional forests, 3 conservation areas, agri-tourism activities and an urban Centre City with an arts and culture scene. Building on the Arts and Culture as part of the Tourism sector is important to consider as not only an economic driver but a community builder, by enticing local residents to spend their leisure time enjoying the assets Whitchurch-Stouffville has to offer.

### Things to think about....

Are policies and zoning bylaws in place to support arts, culture and tourism industries? Is there a good synergy between the local tourism organizations and the Town?

### SUGGESTED ACTIONS:

- Growing and promoting Whitchurch-Stouffville's emerging Arts, Culture, Tourism sector;
  - Continue to identify and document what makes Whitchurch-Stouffville special in terms of arts, culture, events and attractions;
  - Continue expanding the Town's website pages outlining arts, culture and tourism assets;
  - Through the business visitation program identify and promote arts, culture and tourism business opportunities;
  - Continue to support and promote the town's growing eco-tourism opportunities.
- Work closely with Central Counties Tourism to identify prime opportunities for sustainable tourism investment in Whitchurch-Stouffville.
- Explore the opportunity to develop an Interpretation Centre for the Wendat (Huron) Ancestral Village.
- Review the Tourism strategy (2014-2019), continue to complete the actions that are still relevant and update the tourism strategy.
- Promote and support Whitchurch-Stouffville as a hub for diverse outdoor activities: trails, parks, golf, cyclists, riding, running, hiking, snowshoeing, etc.