



February 25, 2020

Richmond Hill City Council
225 East Beaver Creek
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3P4

Dear Mr. Mayor and members of Council,

I am writing regarding Agenda Item 13.9 at the City Council meeting on February 26, 2020.

Part of the mission of the Richmond Hill Board of Trade (“RHBT”) is to build a better Richmond Hill Business Community. In order to do that, we believe it is necessary to:

- 1) Protect existing employment lands where businesses are operating so they can continue to operate;
- 2) Protect the vast majority of existing vacant employment lands so new businesses can find locations and existing businesses can grow in Richmond Hill; and
- 3) Ensure Richmond Hill is meeting its employment growth targets.

The 2006 Provincial growth plan provides a forecast for both population and employment growth to 2031 for York Region. The Region then determines how these numbers should be distributed amongst the 9 municipalities. Page 75 of the [York Region Official Plan](#), attached, lays out the distribution of the forecasts. In 2016, Richmond Hill should have been providing 86,100 jobs. By 2021, it should provide 94,300 jobs.

According to the [2018 York Region Employment Survey](#) results, attached, in 2018 Richmond Hill was providing 72,020 jobs. This is only 83% of the 2016 targets. To meet the 2021 targets, Richmond Hill would have had to provide approximately 7,500 new jobs every year after 2018, growing at a rate of over 10%. Average job growth from 2008 to 2018 was 3.9%, but down to 3.5% from 2017 to 2018. Even if we assume 3.9% growth, we should expect approximately 80,750 jobs by 2021, which would be only 86% of the target.

In contrast, Richmond Hill’s residential population of 195,022 in 2016 was 90% of the target of 216,900. While the City needs to continue to work on meeting its residential growth targets, it is important to keep in mind that, at compliance between 83% and 86%, the City is ever further behind on its job growth targets. This has many negative effects, for example:

- 1) A smaller employment tax base results in higher property taxes for residents.
- 2) When there are fewer local jobs, residents will have a longer commute to find jobs.
- 3) Longer commutes lead to more pressure on transportation and higher greenhouse gas emissions.

- 4) Longer commutes also lead to a lower quality of life, which makes Richmond Hill a less desirable place to live.
- 5) When people tend to work outside of the community, they are less likely to feel a connection to Richmond Hill and our community spirit will suffer.

For these reasons and more, Richmond Hill will benefit from a focus on providing more jobs and ensuring that space is available for them.

The RHBOT is particularly concerned about applications to convert employment lands where businesses currently operate into residential or mixed-use lands, such as in the Newkirk Business Park, where any new residential buildings will be near at least one factory and a foundry. Compatibility issues will likely arise that result in new residents who do not like existing commercial neighbours or some who may experience difficulties in being approved for a residential mortgage. Before converting operating business lands into residential lands, a more detailed compatibility study should be undertaken.


The RHBOT understands that one might look at the vacant employment lands east of Leslie and wonder why we need to hold those lands for jobs that do not yet exist. However, our experience suggests that many businesses want to locate in Richmond Hill but have difficulty finding space. Commercial rents are higher in Richmond Hill than in surrounding municipalities and a lack of available office space is surely a factor.

The RHBOT respects the rights of property owners and we urge Council to take them into account. However, a person who buys employment lands at the price of employment lands should expect to build for employment. If council allows landowners to convert employment lands to residential lands without extremely good reasons, then they will be encouraging other owners to make similar applications. More and more employment lands would then be at risk as time goes on.

The RHBOT respectfully requests that Council vote against converting existing employment zoning into residential uses where businesses currently operate. At the very least, we ask that you ensure the conversion is not to residential, but mixed use, and that the space devoted to business is more than one floor of retail.

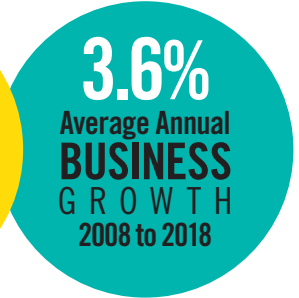
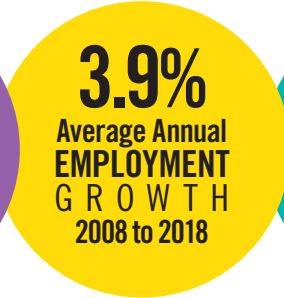
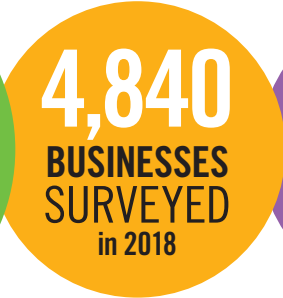
Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Yours truly,

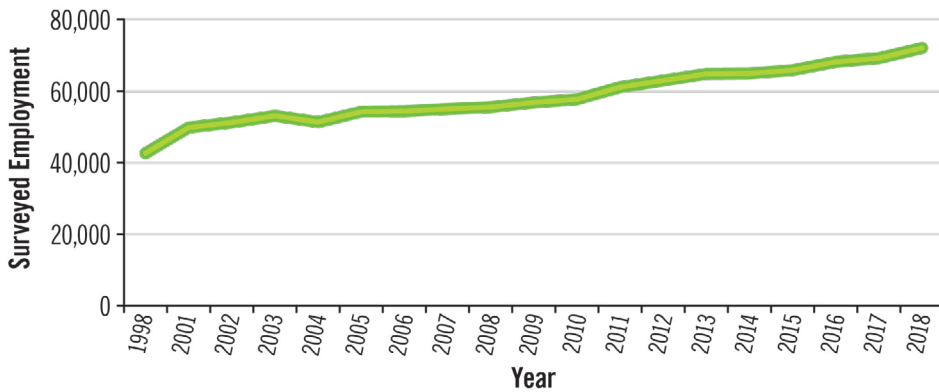


Jason Cherniak

Chair, Board of Directors
Richmond Hill Board of Trade

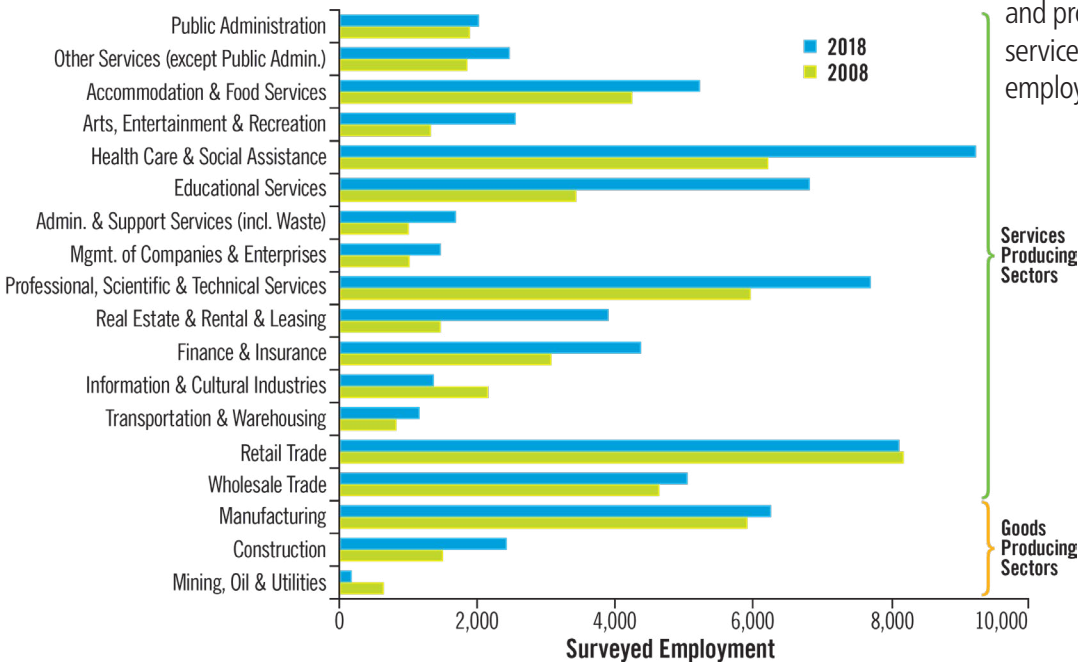


Historical Surveyed Employment, 1998-2018

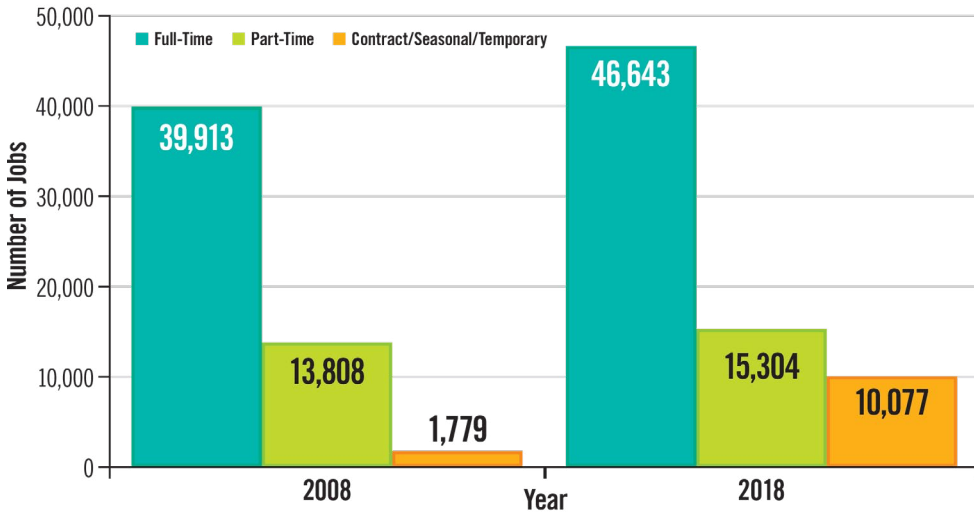


- ▶ The Town of Richmond Hill has added over 29,400 jobs to its employment base since 1998
- ▶ Over the past ten years, the educational services sector was the primary driver of growth increasing by 3,390 jobs, followed by the health care and social assistance sector which grew by 3,000 jobs
- ▶ Between 2017 and 2018, the educational services sector experienced the most growth, increasing by over 1,300 jobs
- ▶ Service oriented jobs accounted for 88 per cent of all employment in 2018
- ▶ Health care & social assistance, retail trade and professional, scientific & technical services held the largest shares of employment in 2018

Distribution of Employment by Sector, 2008 and 2018

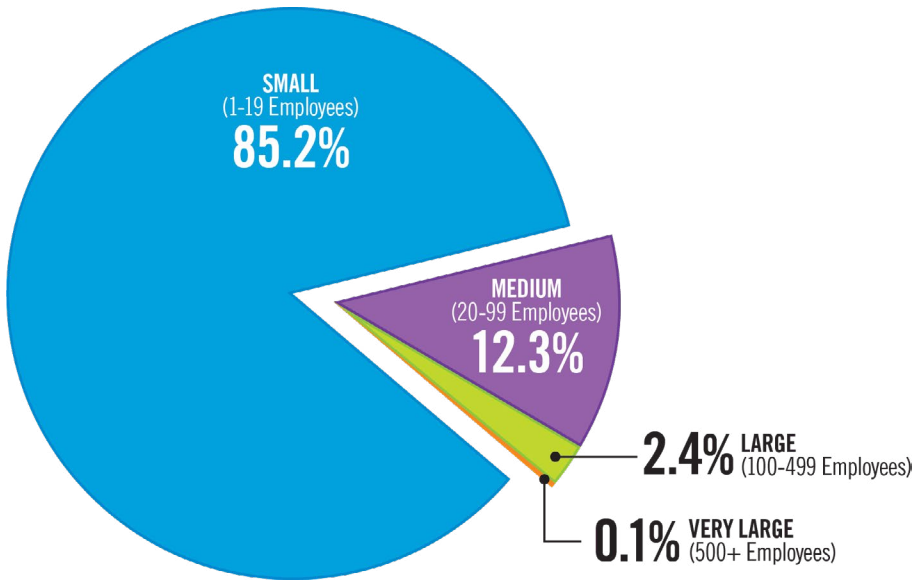


Employment by Type of Worker, 2008 and 2018



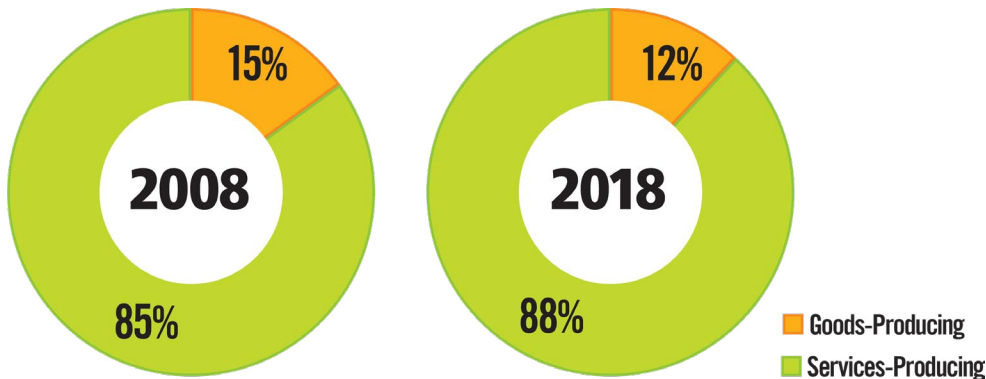
- ▶ Since 2008, full-time employment in Richmond Hill has grown by approximately 6,700 jobs and accounted for 65 per cent of the Town's employment in 2018
- ▶ The share of part-time employment decreased from 25 per cent in 2008 to 21 per cent in 2018 while the share of contract/seasonal/temporary workers grew from 3 per cent to 14 per cent
- ▶ The number of surveyed businesses has grown by 23 per cent or approximately 900 businesses since 2008
- ▶ In 2018, businesses employing less than 20 employees accounted for 85 per cent of total businesses
- ▶ Since 2008, the shares of medium sized firms has remained stable at 12 per cent
- ▶ Large and very large sized businesses accounted for a combined 3 per cent share of surveyed businesses in 2018

Surveyed Businesses by Size, 2018



Numbers contained within this profile include surveyed data collected from the 2018 Employment Survey. The 2018 survey was a comprehensive Region-wide survey of all businesses with a physical location across York Region and excludes farm and home-based businesses. Farm and home-based employment data is reported in the 2018 Employment and Industry Report.

Share of employment by Services-Producing and Goods-Producing Sectors, 2008 and 2018





► **Objective:** To ensure that growth in York Region occurs in an orderly and sustainable manner.

It is the policy of Council:

5.1.1 That the land use planning horizon for York Region is the year 2031.

5.1.2 That the population and employment forecasts in Table 1 be used as the basis for planning of new *development*.

5.1.3 That a minimum Region-wide 10-year supply of lands for housing be designated in this Plan and that the York Region 10-Year Capital Plan ensures timely servicing.

5.1.4 That local official plans shall not designate more than a 20-year supply of land for *development*.

Table 1 - York Region Population and Employment Forecast by Local Municipality

Municipality	2006	2016	2021	2026	2031
Aurora Population Employment	49,700 20,300	63,700 29,000	68,100 32,400	69,600 33,500	70,200 34,200
East Gwillimbury Population Employment	22,000 5,900	34,700 11,600	48,100 18,700	66,300 26,700	86,500 34,400
Georgina Population Employment	44,600 8,000	52,800 11,000	57,900 13,900	63,900 17,400	70,300 21,200
King Population Employment	20,300 7,100	27,000 9,700	29,900 11,000	32,500 11,400	34,900 11,900
Markham Population Employment	273,000 144,800	337,800 200,300	370,300 221,500	398,300 231,200	421,600 240,400
Newmarket Population Employment	77,600 42,100	88,700 47,600	91,900 48,700	94,500 49,000	97,100 49,400
Richmond Hill Population Employment	169,800 61,100	216,900 86,100	231,400 94,300	239,100 97,400	242,200 99,400
Vaughan Population Employment	249,300 162,200	329,100 226,000	360,400 248,900	388,800 257,600	416,600 266,100
Whitchurch-Stouffville Population Employment	25,500 10,900	49,400 19,200	55,800 21,900	59,100 22,700	60,600 23,000
York Region Population Employment	931,900 462,300	1,200,100 640,500	1,313,800 711,200	1,412,100 746,900	1,500,000 780,000