

# Committee of the Whole (Working Session) Report

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**DATE:** Wednesday, March 5, 2025

**WARD(S):** ALL

**TITLE:** 2024 CITIZEN AND BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

**FROM:**

Michael Genova, Deputy City Manager, Strategic Initiatives

**ACTION:** FOR INFORMATION

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## **Purpose**

To share insights and findings from the 2024 Citizen and Business Surveys.

## **Report Highlights**

- The City of Vaughan conducted the 2024 Citizen and Business Surveys in fall 2024 through a third-party market research consulting firm, Ipsos. The results of both surveys are statistically significant.
- The surveys were delivered through an updated methodological approach and the results are not directly comparable to previous years.
- Quality of life is high in Vaughan, with 91 per cent of residents rating their quality of life as “very good” or “good.”
- Eighty-seven per cent of residents are satisfied with the delivery of services provided by the City, with only 12 per cent saying they’re dissatisfied.
- The most important issues facing Vaughan in the eyes of residents are transportation (39 per cent) and public safety (31 per cent).
- Businesses view the local business environment positively, with 85 per cent rating the city’s business environment as “good” or “very good.”
- Vaughan’s location continues to be a major draw for businesses, as its proximity to major transportation assets, supply chains and talent provides a strong value proposition.
- The results will be shared across all City departments to guide the implementation of the current Strategic Plan and inform future plans through data-driven decision-making.

## **Recommendation**

1. That the presentation and staff report be received for information.

## **Background**

Every two years, the City conducts a statistically significant Citizen Survey and Business Survey to gather feedback from residents and businesses on topics such as top-of-mind issues, preferences for accessing City services and satisfaction with City services. These surveys provide an important opportunity to build stronger relationships with the public and showcase Vaughan's commitment to Service Excellence. As we continue to deliver on the 2022-2026 Term of Council strategic priorities, the information gathered through the 2024 Citizen and Business Surveys will contribute to measuring the impact of City services and inform data-driven decision-making.

Ipsos, a third-party market research consulting firm, was retained to complete both surveys.

### **2024 CITIZEN SURVEY**

The City has conducted the Citizen Survey since 2007, with the last survey conducted in 2022. The questionnaire is designed to determine the issues most critical to the community and measure quality of life, satisfaction with City services and value for tax dollars, among other crucial topics. The data collected is a key driver for decision-making and informs policy decisions, budgetary spending and continuous improvement – ensuring organizational priorities are aligned with residents' needs.

The 2024 Citizen Survey was designed to collect insights from residents on:

- quality of life.
- service delivery and operations.
- contact with the City of Vaughan and its employees.
- financial sustainability.
- planning, growth and development.
- transportation and safety.
- community safety.
- public information and engagement.

***The 2024 Citizen Survey was conducted from Oct. 16 to Nov. 19, 2024, and garnered 1,102 responses – the highest response rate achieved to date for this survey.***

For the first time, the Citizen Survey was delivered using a mail-to-online approach. Twenty thousand randomly sampled Vaughan households received an invitation in the mail to complete the statistically significant survey. Each mailed invitation included a unique access code, ensuring residents could only participate in the survey once. Additionally, a 1-800 number was provided for those who preferred to complete the survey by phone or required an alternate format, and all residents were offered the opportunity to participate in an open-link (no code required) version of the survey.

***Given the updated methodological approach, the 2024 Citizen Survey data represents a new baseline for future benchmarking and comparison.***

Previous Citizen Surveys were conducted by telephone using random digital dialing. However, shifts in society away from landlines, the increasing cost and challenges associated with reaching Vaughan residents by cellphone and declining telephone survey response rates necessitated a new surveying approach to ensure the quality and representativeness of the 2024 Citizen Survey data. An address-based sampling method using mailed invitations was selected for this year's survey. This approach is the most representative means of sampling survey respondents as it includes all households within the city, including single-family homes and multi-unit buildings. Additionally, the address-based sample was stratified by ward to ensure survey completions were proportionate to the population of residents in each ward, and the final survey sample was weighted according to the latest Statistics Canada census to enhance representativeness further.

The results collected via an address-based sampling approach are not directly comparable to those collected previously by phone. This is due to the inherent biases associated with each administration method, which may create slight differences in survey findings. Therefore, any differences between the 2024 Citizen Survey results and past surveys may be due to the change in methodology and not because of a real change in resident perspectives. Given the challenges associated with telephone surveys will only increase over time, the 2024 survey represented an opportunity to reset and establish a new benchmark that aligns with current surveying best practices, as many municipalities across Canada are making similar methodological transitions.

***By conducting a statistically significant survey, the results collected are representative of all Vaughan residents.***

The sample collected has been weighted based on age, gender and geographic location within Vaughan to match the city's general population based on 2021 census data. The survey results are accurate to within +/- 3.6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. This is referred to as the margin of error. It describes the maximum deviation of the sample results from the real values. The larger the margin of error, the less confidence there is that the results match the "true" figures for the entire population. In surveys that are referred to as representative of the entire population, an acceptable margin of error is between four and eight per cent. A margin of error below four per cent is considered even more representative and reflective of the perceptions of the entire population.

Where available, national normative comparisons were added to the report findings. These comparisons are drawn from a database of municipal norms maintained by Ipsos, providing valuable context and benchmarks against which Vaughan can evaluate its performance. The database comprises survey findings for select questions from other municipal governments nationwide.

## **2024 BUSINESS SURVEY**

In 2018, the Economic Development department undertook its first business survey to gather insights and establish benchmarks on the private sector's operating outlooks, industry needs, readiness for change and service requirements from the City. A follow-up survey was conducted in 2022 to support ongoing improvement and benchmarking. Survey findings are used to enhance programming and services and provide strategic insights for current and future Economic Development Action Plans.

Business and job growth are fundamental to Vaughan's economic vitality. With more than 19,700 firms employing nearly 220,000 people, Vaughan's economic base is the largest employment centre in York Region. Attracting and retaining high-quality, well-paying jobs across various sectors promotes economic resilience and ensures residents can work and thrive where they live.

The objectives of the 2024 Business Survey included the following:

- gauge whether local businesses are growing, declining or stagnating
- determine factors influencing business operations and growth (macro- and micro-economic trends)
- understand readiness for change
- understand planned investments
- understand the perception and use of municipal business services
- understand perceived opportunities that will make Vaughan more competitive as a business investment location

***The 2024 Business Survey received responses from more than 350 respondents. Of the businesses that participated, 82 per cent had fewer than 20 employees. These results closely align with the breakdown of the city’s business community, where 87 per cent of all businesses have fewer than 20 employees.***

The Business Survey was delivered using a mixed-method approach of mail-to-online surveying and telephone interviews. Survey respondents were drawn from the 2022 York Region Employment Survey (YRES) database, which includes a variety of industries and business sizes. One thousand letters were sent to randomly selected businesses, asking them to participate in the survey. Mailed invites included a unique access code, ensuring businesses could only participate in the survey once. In addition, emails were sent to businesses inviting them to participate. All Vaughan businesses were offered the opportunity to participate in an open-link (no code required) version of the survey.

As the sampling framework was limited to contacts from the 2022 YRES database, the survey results can be considered accurate within +/- 5.2 per cent, 19 times out of 20 on the overall sample.

The 2024 Business Survey received responses from more than 350 respondents (276 via telephone and 77 online) between Oct. 18 and Dec. 10, 2024. Of those businesses that responded, 39 per cent have less than five employees, 42 per cent have five to 19 employees, eight per cent have 20 to 49 employees, seven per cent have 50 to 99 employees, two per cent have 100 to 299 employees and one per cent have 500 employees or more. These results closely align with the breakdown of the city’s business community, where 87 per cent of Vaughan’s 19,700 businesses have fewer than 20 employees.

The top five industry sectors that participated in the business survey were:

- construction (17 per cent)
- education, healthcare and/or social assistance (14 per cent)
- professional scientific and technical and/or business services (11 per cent)
- manufacturing (11 per cent)
- accommodation and food services (nine per cent)

**Previous Reports/Authority**  
[RESULTS OF THE 2022 CITIZEN AND BUSINESS SURVEYS](#)  
Committee of the Whole (2), Feb. 14, 2023

## **Analysis and Options**

### **2024 CITIZEN SURVEY RESULTS**

***Quality of life is high in Vaughan, with 91 per cent of residents rating their quality of life as "very good" or "good."***

The majority (71 per cent) rate their quality of life as "good," and less than one in 10 residents (nine per cent) rate their quality of life as "poor" or "very poor." When compared with normative data from other municipalities across Canada, Vaughan is on par, with the normative average resting at 90 per cent. Quality of life is high across all wards in the city, but particularly so in Ward 2 and Ward 5 (94 per cent each). When analyzed demographically, residents aged 55 years and older are more likely to rate their quality of life as "very good" compared to those aged 35 to 54, who are more likely to rate their quality of life as "poor."

***Overall satisfaction with City services is strong, with 87 per cent of residents "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with services received.***

Almost nine in 10 (87 per cent) are satisfied with the delivery of services provided by the City, with almost a quarter (24 per cent) saying they are "very satisfied." Just over one in 10 (12 per cent) are dissatisfied with the delivery of the services provided by the City. Similar to quality of life, this finding is also in line with other municipalities, as the normative average is 85 per cent satisfied (very or somewhat) and 13 per cent dissatisfied (very or somewhat). Demographically, residents in Ward 5 rate their satisfaction the highest (91 per cent), and residents aged 55 and older are more likely to say they are "very satisfied" with the delivery of services compared to those aged 35 to 54.

***Satisfaction is highest for Vaughan Fire and Rescue Service, Vaughan Public Libraries and waste collection, and lowest for planning-related services and traffic management.***

When asked to individually rate the City's services, satisfaction was the highest for fire services (97 per cent), local public libraries (94 per cent), waste collection (86 per cent) and off-road multi-use trails/natural trails (84 per cent). Satisfaction ranges between 70 per cent to 82 per cent for the majority of services, including recreation facilities and

programs, snow removal (roads, sidewalks and windrows), arts and culture, development and maintenance of parks and greenspaces and Vaughan Animal Services. Fewer are satisfied with financial services (68 per cent), cycling infrastructure and bike lanes (68 per cent), maintenance of local roads (65 per cent), by-law and compliance (62 per cent), and building permits and inspection services (60 per cent). The greatest areas for improvement are processing and involving the public in the review of development applications (59 per cent), land use and community planning (52 per cent) and traffic management (29 per cent).

When analyzed geographically, satisfaction levels are relatively consistent across wards. The following table provides a breakdown of satisfaction by ward, with statistically significant differences bolded.

**Table 1. Satisfaction with the City's services by ward**

<b>TOTAL SATISFIED (VERY + SOMEWHAT)</b>					
	WARD 1	WARD 2	WARD 3	WARD 4	WARD 5
Arts and culture (e.g. Canada Day event, Concerts in the Parks)	87%	80%	77%	76%	82%
Building permits and inspection services	68%	56%	53%	60%	<b>67%</b>
Business support services	78%	<b>86%</b>	63%	71%	<b>80%</b>
By-law and compliance	<b>72%</b>	56%	55%	63%	<b>71%</b>
Cycling infrastructure and bike lanes	68%	<b>78%</b>	59%	64%	<b>72%</b>
End of driveway snow removal (windrow clearing)	67%	<b>76%</b>	68%	71%	65%
Financial services, such as property tax bill, bill payments and City accounting	71%	71%	61%	67%	<b>71%</b>
Fire services	98%	<b>99%</b>	93%	97%	<b>98%</b>
Garbage, recycling, organics and yard waste collection	89%	82%	87%	85%	88%
General road condition and maintenance of local/neighbourhood roads	63%	69%	60%	65%	68%
Land use and community planning	52%	53%	44%	52%	<b>59%</b>
Local public libraries	92%	94%	92%	96%	95%
Maintenance of parks and greenspace	79%	84%	79%	76%	82%
Off-road multi-use/natural trails (e.g. Humber River Trail, Bartley Smith Greenway Trail)	84%	88%	81%	78%	<b>89%</b>
Online services	88%	86%	80%	79%	81%
Parks development (including quantity and quality of playgrounds, sports fields and trails)	<b>88%</b>	<b>79%</b>	74%	64%	<b>80%</b>
Processing and involving the public in the review of development applications	56%	59%	53%	65%	63%

Recreation and fitness facilities (including community centres, arenas and pools)	<b>90%</b>	<b>86%</b>	77%	73%	<b>86%</b>
Recreation and fitness service programs	<b>87%</b>	81%	75%	75%	80%
Road snow removal	80%	83%	79%	81%	77%
Service Vaughan, which is the contact centre for Vaughan residents to call and email for questions about City services	73%	76%	78%	78%	77%
Sidewalk snow removal	77%	83%	80%	78%	75%
Sidewalks and street lighting	80%	84%	77%	82%	80%
Traffic management (including traffic calming and improving the flow of traffic)	<b>36%</b>	27%	20%	<b>32%</b>	<b>37%</b>
Vaughan Animal Services	81%	76%	76%	<b>81%</b>	67%

Vaughan’s satisfaction scores are similar to other municipalities for most services. Satisfaction is higher among Vaughan residents for fire services (+two percentage points), road snow removal services (+seven percentage points) and local public libraries (+three percentage points), but lower for maintenance of parks and greenspace (-10 percentage points), by-law and compliance (-14 percentage points), land use and community planning (-15 percentage points) and traffic management (-24 percentage points). While helpful, Ipsos has provided these comparisons with caution, as their municipal norms database still includes data collected by telephone-based surveying and methodological biases may exist.

To better understand the relative contribution of each service to overall satisfaction, Ipsos developed an action grid to display the correlation between overall satisfaction and the perceived performance of each service area (Figure 1). Primary strengths are services with high perceived performance and a higher impact on overall satisfaction. Efforts should be made to maintain high levels of satisfaction with these key services. Six services fall into this category – Service Vaughan, business support services, online services, maintenance of parks and greenspaces, recreation and fitness facilities, and sidewalks and street lighting. Conversely, primary areas of improvement are services with lower perceived performance and a higher impact on overall satisfaction. Efforts should be made to improve satisfaction in these areas to increase overall satisfaction scores. In this category were value for tax dollars, by-law and compliance, financial services (e.g. property tax bill, bill payments and City accounting), general road condition and maintenance, land use and community planning, and building permits and inspection services.



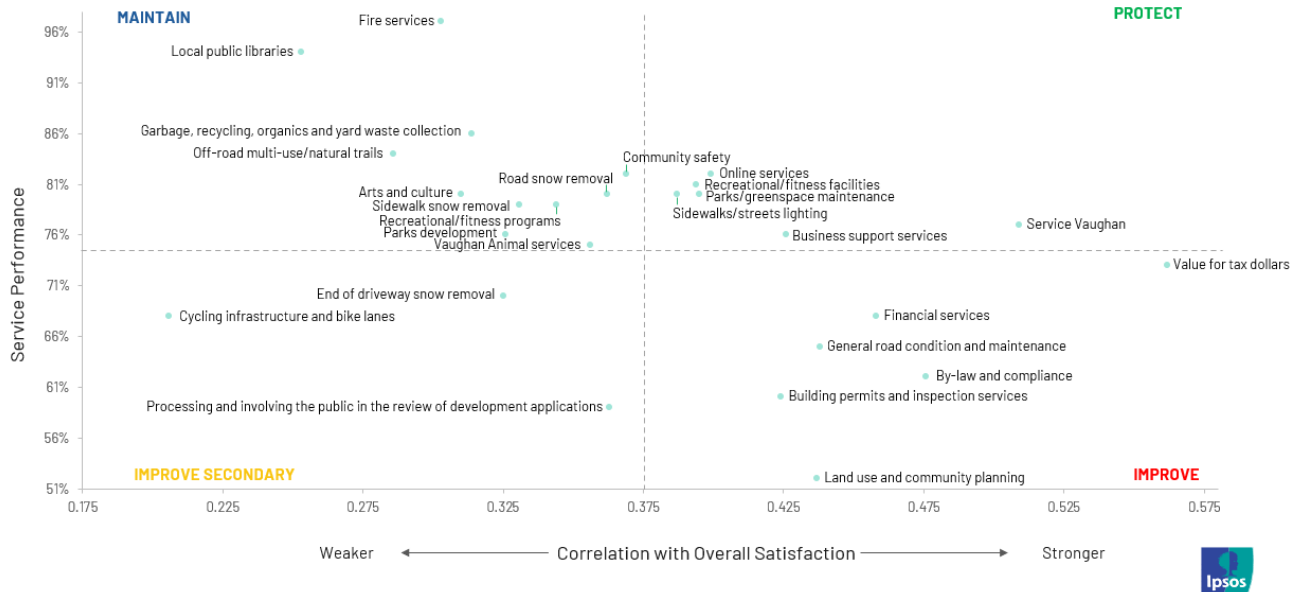


Figure 1 Key drivers for satisfaction with City services

**Almost three-quarters (73 per cent) of residents feel they get good value for their tax dollars, and a small majority (55 per cent) would prefer to maintain taxes, even if it means cuts to services.**

Thinking about the programs and services they receive from the City, 73 per cent of residents say they get “very good” or “fairly good” value for their tax dollars, with 12 per cent saying “very good” value. Just over a quarter (27 per cent) say they get “poor value” for their tax dollars, with eight per cent saying “very poor value.” This is slightly lower than other municipalities, where 76 per cent say they get “good” or “very good” value for their tax dollars, and 22 per cent say they get “poor” or “very poor” value.

When asked their perspectives on increasing or decreasing municipal taxes, a small majority (55 per cent) think the City should maintain taxes even if it means cuts to services. Conversely, 45 per cent support increased taxes, with 34 per cent of residents supporting an increase if needed to maintain current service levels, and fewer (11 per cent) supporting increased taxes to add new services and facilities in Vaughan.

When asked about funding City services, residents prefer increasing user fees (48 per cent) to increasing property taxes (two per cent). Over a quarter (26 per cent) would prefer no increase to user fees or property taxes, even if it means cuts to services, and 16 per cent would prefer a combination of user fees and taxes. Demographically, residents who own their home are more likely to prefer funding City services via user fees (54 per cent) compared to those who rent (29 per cent).

***Overall, residents are satisfied with their experience when they contact the City, particularly staff's professionalism and ability to understand their needs.***

Almost half (48 per cent) of residents say they have communicated with the City or one of its employees in the past 12 months. Just under two-thirds (65 per cent) did so by phone, followed by 32 per cent who chose email. Just under a quarter (24 per cent) contacted the City in person or via an online program/application. The primary reason for contacting the City was to report an issue (54 per cent), followed by public works-related service requests (39 per cent), registering or inquiring about recreation programs (33 per cent) and paying a City bill or fee (32 per cent). When asked about their experience, more than three-quarters (77 per cent) say they are satisfied with the overall service they received. This finding is slightly lower than other municipalities, which report 82 per cent overall satisfaction with the contact experience. In particular, Vaughan residents are satisfied with staff's professionalism (87 per cent), staff's ability to understand their needs (78 per cent) and the ease or convenience of accessing the service (76 per cent). Slightly fewer were satisfied with staff's ability to resolve their issue (71 per cent) and the timeliness of service (69 per cent).

When asked about their preferred method to contact the City, more than six in 10 (61 per cent) said via telephone or email, and more than half (54 per cent) said the City's website. Less preferred methods of contact are in person (17 per cent), social media (10 per cent) and through Members of Council (six per cent).

***Aligning with City and Council priorities, the most important issues facing Vaughan in the eyes of residents are transportation (39 per cent) and public safety (31 per cent).***

When asked to provide the most important issue facing their community, almost four in 10 (39 per cent) said transportation, consisting mainly of traffic congestion (30 per cent) and the need to improve public transit (nine per cent). Crime and safety is the second most important issue (33 per cent). The next most important issues are infrastructure improvements (18 per cent) and improving municipal government (15 per cent), which includes improving services, garbage collection, cleanliness and snow removal. Other issues further down the list are housing affordability (five per cent), taxes (five per cent) and the cost of living (four per cent).

***When asked about transportation and road safety, congestion, speeding and driver behaviour are the top concerns.***

Seven in 10 (72 per cent) feel road congestion and traffic are the top transportation issues in Vaughan, followed by speeding (38 per cent), disobeying the rules of the road (36 per cent) and distracted driving (31 per cent). Lower on the list are the state of the roads (23 per cent), pedestrian safety (17 per cent), cycling safety (10 per cent) and

road safety around schools (nine per cent). Geographically, those in Ward 3 are more likely to cite road congestion and traffic as their top transportation and road safety issue (82 per cent) compared to those in Ward 5 (65 per cent).

***Eight in 10 (83 per cent) residents would describe the city of Vaughan as safe, but 54 per cent feel safety has worsened in the past three years.***

Of the 83 per cent who describe Vaughan as safe, almost two in 10 (19 per cent) say it's "very safe" and nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) say it's "safe." Conversely, 18 per cent would describe Vaughan as "not very safe" and three per cent would say it's "not at all safe." Geographically, residents in Ward 5 are more likely to describe Vaughan as safe (89 per cent), whereas residents in Ward 3 are more likely to say it's not safe. These findings are slightly lower than other municipalities, where 38 per cent say they feel "very safe," 52 per cent say they feel "somewhat safe," eight per cent say they feel "not very safe" and one per cent feel "not at all safe."

When asked if they feel community safety in Vaughan has changed over the past three years, more than half (54 per cent) said community safety has worsened, while four in 10 (41 per cent) say it has stayed the same and only five per cent think it has improved. Residents who are more likely to feel it has worsened have a higher household income (more than \$150,000 per year before taxes), own their home and live in Ward 3 compared to Ward 4 or Ward 5.

***Almost three-quarters (74 per cent) of residents think it's possible for Vaughan to grow while maintaining the quality of life they have come to enjoy in the city.***

Of the 74 per cent, a third (33 per cent) strongly agree with that sentiment. Six in 10 (61 per cent) think the City does a good job of managing the level of development and growth in Vaughan, and a similar proportion feel the City keeps residents informed about how it plans to deal with growth. However, four in 10 (40 per cent) disagree.

***More than three-quarters (76 per cent) of residents are happy with the communications they receive, with mailed notices, newsletters and brochures as the preferred method to receive information.***

When asked how well the City communicates with residents about its services, programs, policies and plans, more than three-quarters (76 per cent) rate this as "good" or "very good." Residents in Vaughan are slightly more likely to provide a higher rating for communications compared to residents in other communities across the country, as the normative average for a positive rating (very good or good) is 70 per cent.

When asked how they prefer to receive communications, 62 per cent chose notices, newsletters and brochures sent through mail. This was followed by eNewsletters sent by City staff (47 per cent), roadside signage (43 per cent) and the City's website (38 per cent). Less popular methods were digital signs in front of their local community centre or library (29 per cent), social media (29 per cent), media (26 per cent) and eNewsletters sent by a Member of Council (26 per cent).

***Of those who participated in a City engagement activity, many felt well-informed and able to share their thoughts, but fewer felt their input would inform decision-making.***

When asked if they had participated in an engagement activity in the past 12 months, more than a quarter (26 per cent) said they completed an online survey, and one in 10 (11 per cent) attended an event hosted by the City, such as an in-person open house, focus group, pop-up or virtual meeting. Other ways residents say they have provided feedback to the City are by email (two per cent) or by phone (one per cent). Almost two-thirds (65 per cent) said they hadn't participated in a City-run civic engagement activity.

Of those who participated, the majority said they were given the information they needed to participate meaningfully (80 per cent), had the opportunity to share their thoughts, ideas and perspectives (77 per cent) and felt participating was a good use of their time (75 per cent). Fewer felt their input would be used to inform decision-making (61 per cent) or felt listened to (57 per cent).

## **2024 BUSINESS SURVEY**

***Vaughan is the largest economy in York Region and a top destination for investment in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Businesses view the local business environment positively, with 85 per cent rating the city's business environment as good or very good.***

Vaughan remains the largest economy in York Region – accounting for more than 35 per cent of all employment and economic output in York Region in 2023, totaling more than \$25.5 billion in real gross domestic product (GDP). Vaughan's economic growth outpaced provincial and national growth rates in 2023.

The city remains a top destination for business investment and is the fourth-largest industrial market in the GTA. At the end of the fourth quarter of 2024, Vaughan had an inventory of more than 104 million square feet of industrial space with nearly an additional 750,000 square feet under construction, according to the latest industrial market report by Colliers.

When asked to rate the City's business environment, more than eight in 10 (85 per cent) respondents rated the business environment as either "very good" (19 per cent) or "good" (66 per cent).

***Vaughan's location continues to be a major draw for businesses. Vaughan's proximity to major transportation assets, supply chains and talent provides a strong value proposition.***

When asked what the major advantages of being located in Vaughan were, respondents said "location" (59 per cent), "customers are here" (22 per cent), "growing area" (16 per cent), "we live here/live near here" (15 per cent) and "community demographics" (13 per cent).

***Awareness of City services by the business community was highest for by-law enforcement (100 per cent), fire and emergency services (74 per cent) and building permitting services (69 per cent).***

Businesses were asked to indicate their familiarity with specific City services. Services identified as "most aware" of by businesses included by-law enforcement (100 per cent), fire and emergency services (74 per cent) and buildings, permits and standards (69 per cent). Awareness of additional City services available to businesses included waste management (62 per cent), library services (58 per cent), winter maintenance (58 per cent), recreation sport and wellness services (55 per cent), zoning support (49 per cent), planning and development services (44 per cent) and small business services (28 per cent).

When asked about awareness of services specifically for businesses, 40 per cent of respondents indicated they were "very aware" or "somewhat aware" of local business services. When asked about specific services, respondents noted awareness of business licensing support (47 per cent), business-to-business networking (34 per cent), seminars, training and workshops (31 per cent), information available on funding programs, local and regional support organizations and business development opportunities (28 per cent), and business advisory services (25 per cent).

***Vaughan businesses overwhelmingly indicated a positive outlook on the current state of business, with approximately eight in 10 businesses growing or staying about the same. Over the next three years, the outlook was positive but moderate, with 65 per cent of respondents expecting their business to grow.***

The economic landscape in Canada continues to change. Vaughan businesses overwhelmingly indicated a positive outlook on the current state of business, with 82 per cent of businesses expecting to grow or stay about the same.

When asked about their business' outlook over the next three years, nine in 10 businesses had either a positive or neutral view – 65 per cent indicated they expected to grow, and 27 per cent indicated they expected to stay about the same.

Businesses expect to continue to make investments into their business that could enhance productivity or business growth. Six in 10 businesses noted that in the next five years, they expect to make a “significant investment” or “some investment” into new or innovative technologies for their business.

***While business outlook and investment in technology remain positive, several challenges continue to place pressure on local companies, with top concerns cited as costs of doing business, staffing and traffic congestion.***

The biggest challenges identified by businesses included costs (34 per cent), staffing (24 per cent), cost of real estate (18 per cent), traffic congestion (16 per cent), competition (14 per cent) and municipal property taxes (11 per cent).

On staffing, when asked to expand on the challenges, more than half (51 per cent) responded that the largest challenge with staffing is hiring new employees, while one in four (25 per cent) cited the high cost of labour as the biggest staffing issue.

These findings are in line with national research reports such as the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's Business Insights Tracker, which identified rising inflation, input costs and the recruitment of skilled employees as major obstacles currently facing businesses across Canada and were expected to be key issues into 2025<sup>1</sup>.

***Vaughan's businesses are transformative, ambitious and purpose driven. Businesses continue to make investment into transformative and purpose-driven initiatives. Four in 10 businesses are embracing digital transformation, and more than five in 10 businesses have implemented or are in the process of implementing purpose-driven initiatives.***

Vaughan businesses continue to reflect the ever-changing digital landscape we live in. Through the survey, four in 10 businesses identified they've undertaken digital transformation. Specifically, businesses indicated they've undertaken online marketing (35 per cent), E-commerce (22 per cent), digital inventory management technologies (16 per cent), mobile applications (14 per cent) and artificial intelligence (12 per cent).

Businesses that provided insight into ongoing digital resilience and adoption also highlighted they would welcome increased City support to understand and implement online marketing practices (27 per cent), use of artificial intelligence (eight per cent) and E-commerce (seven per cent). The adoption of digital transformation initiatives provides

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Chamber of Commerce, [Business Insights Tracker](#), Q4 2024

businesses with the ability to remain competitive and adapt to an increasingly digital world.

More than half of the survey respondents had implemented or are in the process of implementing a purpose-driven initiative, which includes corporate social responsibility (CSR), diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), or environmental, social and governance (ESG) reporting. Businesses also noted they are actively adapting or have already made changes to meet accessibility standards (84 per cent).

***Of Vaughan residents who are currently employed, 35 per cent work in the office five or more days a week, 27 per cent work in the office two to three days a week and 10 per cent never work in the office.***

Through the Citizen Survey, Vaughan residents provided important demographic information on their employment status and location. More than half (57 per cent) are employed full-time, one in 10 (11 per cent) are self-employed, four per cent are employed part-time and four per cent are unemployed. Of those who are employed, 35 per cent work in the office five or more days a week, 27 per cent work in the office two to three days a week and 10 per cent never work in-office. Respondents were also asked where their workplace is located, with 73 per cent of residents working outside of Vaughan and 23 per cent working within the city.

***Businesses that used Economic Development's website found the information they needed and found the content useful.***

Accessing services and information related to the City's business services on [vaughanbusiness.ca](http://vaughanbusiness.ca) was viewed favourably, with nine out of 10 businesses saying they found exactly what they needed or part of what they needed when they visited the website. The usefulness of content on [vaughanbusiness.ca](http://vaughanbusiness.ca) was also rated highly, with 88 per cent finding the online content very useful or somewhat useful.

Digital methods remain the preferred communication channel for the Vaughan business community, with seven in 10 businesses preferring communication methods such as digital newsletters and email.

***Vaughan's businesses identified that the City should focus its economic development efforts on supporting businesses, improving road infrastructure and lowering taxes.***

Over the next five years, Vaughan businesses identified the following as the top five areas where the City should prioritize support:

- economic development and business services (e.g. financial help, encourage investment, community economic development) – 34 per cent
- improve road infrastructure (e.g. roads, highways and traffic) – 30 per cent

- taxes/lower taxes – 20 per cent
- improve public transit – 14 per cent
- other development (e.g. buildings, land or other) – 11 per cent

Additional areas for business support identified included improving technology infrastructure (nine per cent), government services (nine per cent), commercial development (six per cent), residential services (four per cent), affordable housing (three per cent), workforce development (two per cent) and strategic planning or training/education (one per cent respectively).

### **Financial Impact**

There are no new financial implications related to this report. Costs related to the Citizen and Business Surveys are budgeted for through the Communications, Marketing and Engagement and the Economic Development departments' budgets.

### **Operational Impact**

The results of these surveys will be shared across all City departments to guide the implementation of the 2022-2026 Term of Council Strategic Plan by informing Vaughan's strategic priorities through data-driven decision-making. The data will continue to be used to measure the impact of City services, guide service delivery improvements and direct future planning initiatives. Findings of these surveys will also inform the development of future strategic plans.

### **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

A copy of this report will be uploaded to [vaughan.ca](http://vaughan.ca) and [vaughanbusiness.ca](http://vaughanbusiness.ca) and be distributed to key local/regional partners and stakeholders, such as York Region Economic Development, the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, other Chambers of Commerce, ministries and other local and regional stakeholders.

### **Conclusion**

The results of the 2024 Citizen Survey continue to be positive, with 91 per cent of residents stating that quality of life is "good" or "very good" and almost nine in 10 residents expressing satisfaction with City services. To keep satisfaction high, the results point to maintaining Vaughan's primary strengths – including Service Vaughan, business support services, online services, maintenance of parks and greenspaces, recreation and fitness facilities, and sidewalks and street lighting – and investing in areas of primary improvement, including value for tax dollars, by-law and compliance, financial services, general road condition and maintenance, land use and community planning, and building permits and inspection services. Additionally, the survey results



confirm the issues that matter most to Vaughan residents – transportation and community safety – and underline the importance of many City programs and Council directives currently underway, including the Mayor’s Nine Point Action Plan to Fight Traffic Gridlock, implementation of the MoveSmart Mobility Management Strategy and strengthened partnerships with York Regional Police.

The Business Survey continues to act as an important tool to assess business satisfaction, awareness of City services and readiness for change. Vaughan’s Economic Development department uses the insights gathered to improve services and inform future projects and initiatives such as the Economic Development Action Plan. As Vaughan’s economy continues to grow, these findings will continue to inform the City’s efforts and investments to deliver a community and business destination of choice.

As staff continue to deliver on the 2022-2026 Term of Council strategic priorities, the information gathered through the 2024 Citizen and Business Surveys will contribute to measuring the impact of City services and inform data-driven decision-making.

Both the Citizen and Business Surveys will be repeated every other year to continue tracking satisfaction and issues of importance among residents and the business community, with the next surveys targeted for 2026.

**For more information**, please contact:

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## **Attachments**

1. City of Vaughan 2024 Citizen Survey Results Report, Ipsos, February 2025
2. City of Vaughan 2024 Business Survey Results Report, Ipsos, February 2025

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