

## King's Economic Development staff are here to help businesses

A shift towards establishing a formal King Business Concierge program is unfolding during this unprecedented crisis. King's economic development staff have connected virtually with more than 500 business stakeholders since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared on March 12. Staff have been proactively reaching out to businesses and responding to questions about what kinds of supports and resources are available to help them weather the economic uncertainty caused by this crisis. Within a week of the pandemic being declared King's Economic Development Office developed a business resource portal to help business owners navigate the various assistance programs available to them, accessible at [www.economicking.ca/covid-19](http://www.economicking.ca/covid-19). As a result of this new portal, traffic to the website increased to more than 4,200 visitors in both March and April, almost doubling the number of visits in February. King Township is a proud partner in the Northern York Region (N6) COVID-19 Business Recovery Information Centre. The Northern Six (N6) municipalities of York Region (Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Newmarket and Stouffville) and the York Region Economic Strategy Office are working together to assist local businesses through this crisis. As a result, an intake form has been developed and businesses are encouraged to submit their information at [bit.ly/businessrecovery](http://bit.ly/businessrecovery). The N6 municipalities will be using the responses and aggregated data to develop appropriate measures and actions to support and assist businesses to adjust and adapt. A ShopKING portal was also quickly launched on March 19, to promote essential businesses that were connecting safely with customers through physical distancing purchasing options, accessible at [www.economicking.ca/physical-distance-shopking](http://www.economicking.ca/physical-distance-shopking). "We're seeing some encouraging news out of this quick action," said Mayor Steve Pellegrini. "On their own, and with our help to get the word out, 60 per cent of King's restaurants managed to quickly pivot to provide take-out and delivery options, while adhering to physical distancing orders put in place by the Province." As the province takes a measured and staged approach to fully re-open for business, the Township will be there to provide guidance and support for our businesses and local economy to be more resilient and stronger than ever," he added. To help the Township identify concerns and challenges, and to assist with developing a plan moving forward, Mayor Pellegrini will be hosting a "Virtual Business Roundtable." The roundtable will include a cross-section of local business leaders, King Chamber of Commerce members, and elected officials from other levels of government. Hon. Deb Schulte (MP, King-Vaughan), Hon. Stephen Lecce (MPP, King-Vaughan) and Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria (MPP, Brampton South) will be participating in the roundtable. In the months to come, council, staff and local businesses will continue to work together, including as participants on the York Region Business Recovery Support Partnership initiative. This collaboration, led by York Region's Economic Strategy Division, with local business and economy stakeholders are joining forces to coordinate a regional response to COVID-19. The goals of the partnership include economic impact assessment, streamlined business advisory support and business community communications. "While all levels of government have taken swift and unprecedented actions and measures to support local businesses adapt and recover, we collectively are always looking and listening for ways to do more," said Mayor Pellegrini.