



Municipality of Brockton

**Business Retention and Expansion Project
Final Report**

September 2018





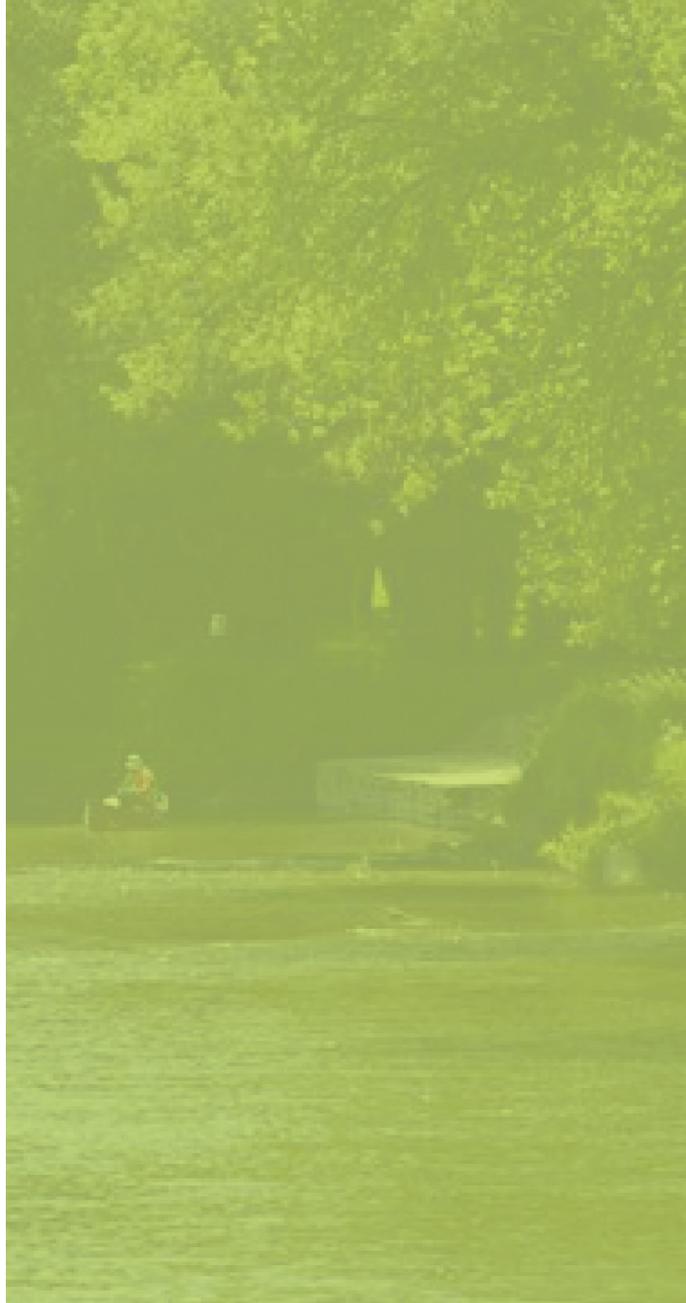


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Message from the Mayor



Business retention and expansion are important parts of economic development and our report on BR+E in Brockton emphasizes that.

Throughout this process, we connected with Brockton businesses via questionnaire and/or interview in order to hear to hear their thoughts and concerns. As a Municipality and a Council, we need to support our businesses and industry so that they have every opportunity to succeed and remain in the community.

I would like to thank Kathleen Arseneau, our Community Development Coordinator for her work on this project. She was also assisted by Cheryl Brine of OMAFRA, the Brockton Economic Development Committee and the resident volunteers. Thank you to all involved, including our businesses that participated.

The feedback and results of this project will be used to sustain and improve economic development in Brockton.

David Inglis

David Inglis
Mayor

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Project.

Alex Baran	Paul Crysler
Barry Dohms	Paul Rosebush
Brian Folmer	Racheal Bye
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Dan Gieruszak	Rose Austin
David Inglis	Stephen Morris
David Smith	Susan Wright
Dean Leifso	Tim Mancell
Dwayne Kaster	Tina Rupert
Jamie Doherty	
Jenelle Bannon	
Katrina Wei	
Mike Dupuis	
Paul Bromby	

Municipality of Brockton Economic Development Committee

The mandate of the Brockton Economic Development Committee is to maintain and support the existing ranges of business trade and industry within Walkerton and the Municipality of Brockton.

Provincial Staff Advisors

The BR+E program is supported by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

BR+E Leadership Team

The BR+E Project team coordinated community outreach, conducted confidential business interviews, identified and acted upon red flag issues and entered data. This team also came together to analyze, discuss and present BR+E findings.

Sonya Watson

CAO, Municipality of Brockton

Kathleen Arseneau

Community Development Coordinator, Municipality of Brockton (BR+E Project Coordinator)

We wish to thank all business owners who participated in BR+E Project interviews and surveys. Thank you also to the Rural Economic Development (RED) program for providing partial funding for the Brockton BR+E Project.

Introduction & Summary

What is a BR+E Project?

The Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) program is a process undertaken by municipalities in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). It is an action-oriented and community-based process. The goal of the BR+E program is to enhance the business environment by reducing and eliminating challenges to economic growth and job retention. BR+E projects are designed to open a two-way channel of communication with local businesses. Through the business visitation process, BR+E teams connect with business owners in the community to identify issues, concerns and potential opportunities.

Why is a BR+E Project Important?

DID YOU KNOW?

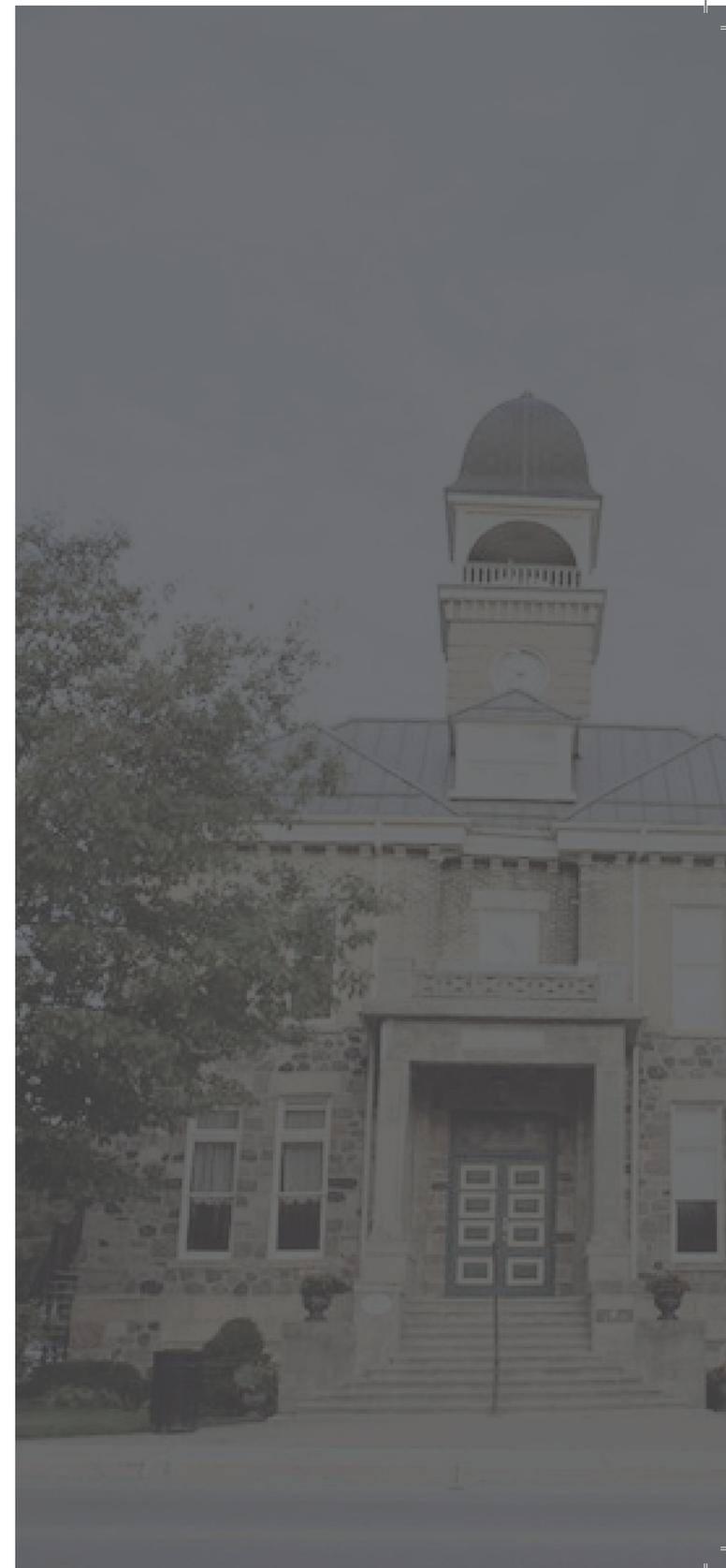
existing businesses create

74-90%

of new jobs

Understanding and responding to the needs of established local businesses is one of the most cost-effective ways to promote local economic growth. Investment attraction is difficult and expensive due to the high volume of competition. By undertaking a BR+E, we can help keep current businesses healthy and happy so that they stay, grow and become more competitive in the community. BR+E projects are also an early warning system that allows communities to notice red flags within existing local business climates and be proactive.

The BR+E process inevitably brings a number of challenges to light. However, few communities can realistically tackle every one. BR+E projects help communities focus their priorities, develop concrete action plans and implement solutions through a four-stage journey:





Municipality of Brockton Profile

The Municipality of Brockton is a community of almost 10,000 residents located in Bruce County, Ontario. The Municipality was incorporated in 1999 when the former municipalities of Brant, Greenock and Walkerton were amalgamated. The three names combined to create Brockton. While Brockton operates as a united rural municipality, the community has worked to preserve the unique character of its original hamlets of Cargill, Chepstow, Elmwood, Glammis, Lake Communities, Pinkerton and Riversdale, as well as the former town of Walkerton, where the Brockton municipal offices are located.

The history of Brockton's agricultural heritage dates back to the mid-1800s, when settlers within and around the current municipality first began cultivating the area for its rich farmland. While the community has maintained its strong farming tradition, today, Brockton is known for much more.

The municipality is home to a welcoming, friendly and supportive community. With a variety of programs, events and activities for people of all ages, Brockton promotes an inclusive community of many generations and interests. Its top-notch schools, child care, health facilities and government services make Brockton a safe, affordable and desirable place to put down roots.

The vibrant local economy mixes urban energy, rural charm and state-of-the-art innovation. Brockton features one-of-a-kind downtown shops, a strong agri-business community and leadership in drinking water excellence. While the Municipality has all the conveniences of urban living, it occupies a rich natural environment that offers recreational opportunities in all four seasons.

Purpose

BR+E Project Rationale

Our community recognizes the importance of retaining our valued businesses and is ready to develop an action plan that supports existing businesses, retains and creates new jobs and opportunities and identifies local issues and business needs. This work builds on three prior initiatives that involved collaboration between the Municipality of Brockton, the Brockton Economic Development Committee and the Walkerton Clean Water Centre (WCWC).

- ▶ “Building a Better Brockton” (2013): The Municipality’s Sustainable Strategic Plan prioritizes manufacturing retention and attraction, with the action plan to develop and implement a strategy.
- ▶ Municipality of Brockton Technology Incubator Feasibility Assessment (2013): This feasibility study determined that incubators create an entrepreneurial culture, attract and retain talent within the community and allow existing business to acquire innovations, supply chain management and spinoffs.
- ▶ Municipality of Brockton Planning Strategy for Water Cluster Investment Opportunities (2013): This report identifies the WCWC as a single large advantage in attracting future investment in the water technologies sector, which could enable the development of a local workforce and new employment opportunities. It identifies the need for a collaborative community-based strategy supporting entrepreneurship and business creation.



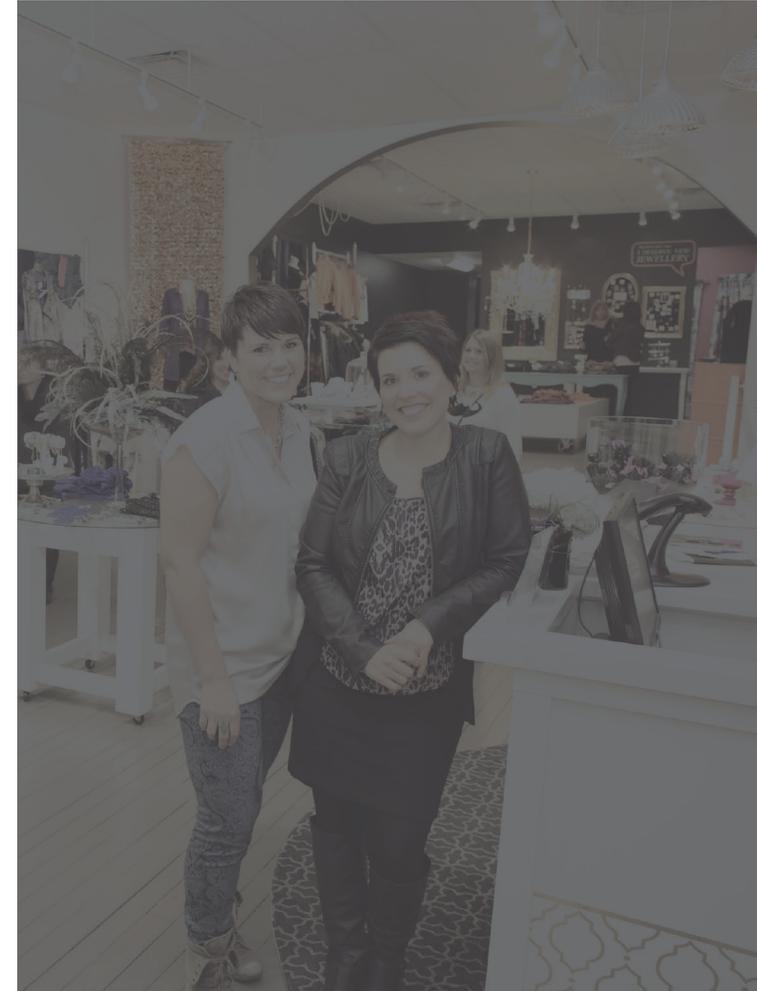
Objectives

The goal of the BR+E project is to keep and create local businesses and jobs. Our process has been focused on the following objectives:

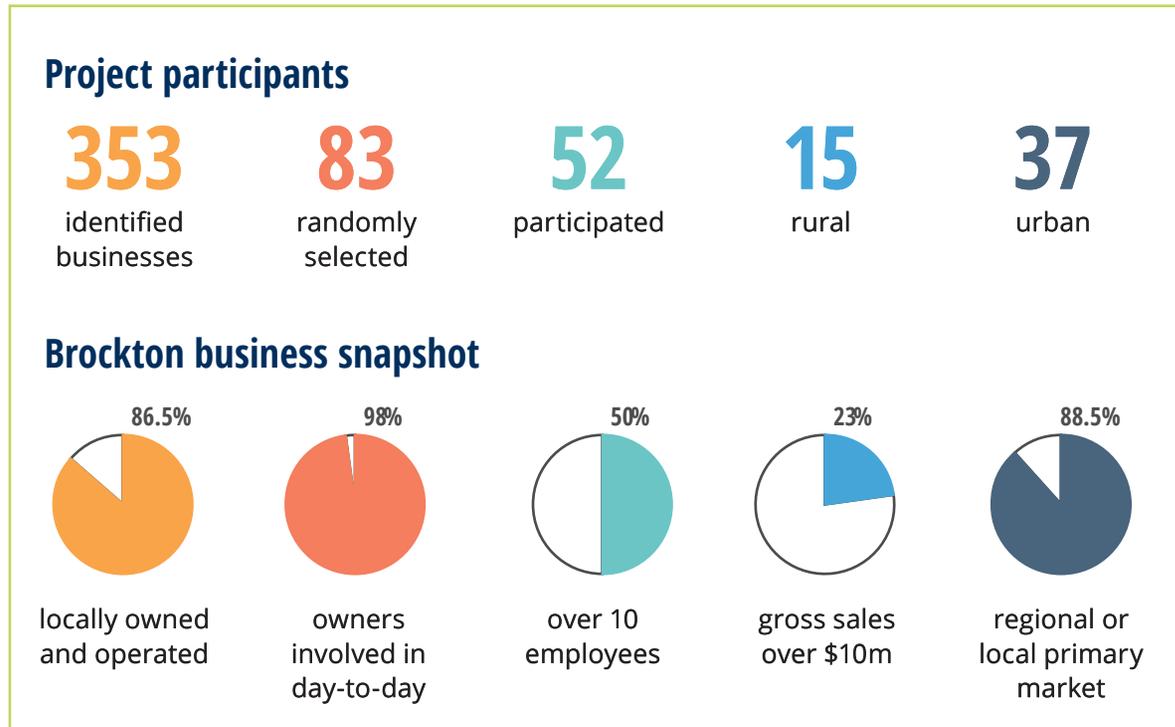
- ▶ The BR+E will be a community-focused collaborative study supported by the Municipality of Brockton, the Brockton Economic Development Committee, key economic development stakeholders and our local businesses.
- ▶ The project will focus on quality (depth and value of interactions) rather than quantity (number of interactions) with businesses.
- ▶ The project implementation will follow through on what we say we will do to resolve business issues and needs.
- ▶ We will track and publicize success stories and communicate the study results to participants and the community.

Scope

The BR+E Project involved visiting businesses to conduct confidential interviews with senior level management, owners or managers. The project team then undertook data analysis and action planning to address issues and opportunities. Some businesses in Brockton did not respond to invitations to participate. Of 83 businesses invited, 52 agreed to participate in the BR+E project.



Project Methodology



Participants

The BR+E Project team organized businesses by primary industry based on North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes. They randomly selected 83 businesses to participate in the project. A total of 52 businesses agreed to complete surveys. Survey responses were collected between December 22, 2017 and April 31, 2018.



Stage 1

Project planning and business survey development



Stage 2

Interviews and immediate follow-up of red flag issues



Stage 3

Data analysis and action plan development



Stage 4

Creation of an action plan and initiate implementation



**Sept. 28 to
Dec. 20 2017**



**Dec. 22 to
Apr. 30 2018**



**May 1 to
Jul. 10 2018**



**Jul. 11 to
Sept. 25 2018**

Surveys & Interviews

Interviews were conducted by Kathleen Arseneau (BR+E Project Coordinator), Racheal Bye, Jamie Doherty, Tim Mancell, Katrina Wei and Joan White. All volunteers signed confidentiality waivers.

Process

1. Invitation: The BR+E Project Coordinator contacted selected businesses requesting their participation.
2. Scheduling: The interviewers and coordinator contacted the businesses directly to set up interviews.
3. Interview: Interviews lasted between 30 – 90 minutes. Businesses could skip any question. Each survey used the following categories: Business Information, Business Climate, Future Plans, Business Development, Workforce and Community Development. (Note: Farm surveys were added to agricultural company interviews as part of the Bruce County Agriculture BR+E Project.)
4. Data entry: Once surveys were completed, the coordinator collected them and entered the results in Executive Pulse, the BR+E data management software.

5. Analysis: Kathleen Arseneau, Sonya Watson and Cheryl Brine evaluated the data, which is presented in the Summary of Results [insert link] section.
6. Priorities and action plans: Brockton hosted the BR+E Task Force Retreat, which assembled business specialists from the community to identify priority areas and create action plans.

Data & Analysis

All businesses that participated in the BR+E Project survey will remain anonymous. Only data that ensures the anonymity of all participants is showcased in this report. In the results section, the term “businesses” refers to all 52 businesses that participated in the project.

Creation of Action Plans

The Brockton BR+E Task Force came together on July 10, 2018 to evaluate the BR+E Project survey results. During the Task Force Retreat, the group reviewed findings, identified priorities and created the action plans detailed in this report. The action plans focus on achieving key goals prioritized by the Task Force that support existing business and foster development in Brockton.

Summary of Results

Results Overview

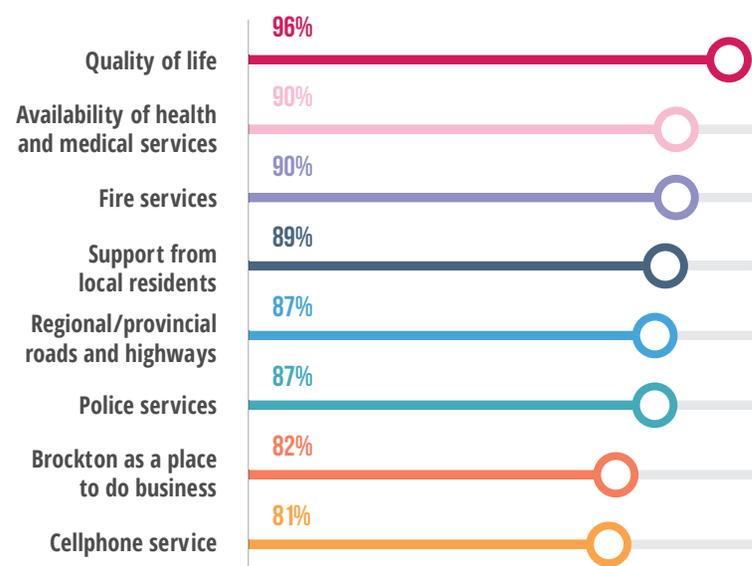
Of the 52 businesses surveyed in the BR+E project, many had positive messages to share about their attitude toward business in Brockton. They identified the location, cost of business, customer loyalty, quality of life, small town setting, attractive community and downtown as some of the top advantages to running a business in Brockton.

The BR+E Project also identified a number of key areas where we can focus our economic development efforts. The availability of qualified workers, recruitment and employee retention were all challenges faced predominately by large employers, trades and related industries, and health care organizations in Brockton.

A number of rural businesses experience barriers due to the limited availability of amenities like natural gas and high speed internet. Our process discovered a number of businesses who pose a negative impact to the local business landscape because they are downsizing, closing, selling or relocating. Retention and expansion of businesses will be crucial to these losses in the near future.

The key priorities and action plans outlined in this report respond directly to these areas for improvement and provide a roadmap for keeping Brockton's local economy healthy and prosperous.

Rated GOOD to EXCELLENT by businesses



What are your projected sales and what is the outlook of your industry?

		Projected sales	Outlook of industry
	Growing	56.9%	48.1%
	Stable	31.4%	38.5%
	Not sure	7.8%	3.8%
	Declining	3.9%	9.6%

What are your plans for your business within the next 18 months?

56%
stable

25%
expanding

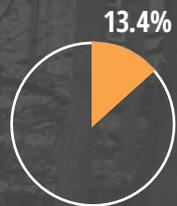
9%
selling

5%
downsizing

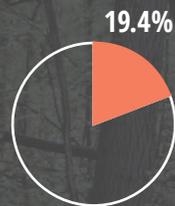
3%
relocating

2%
closing

Expansion plans include



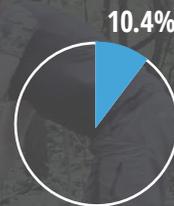
An increased need
for employee
training



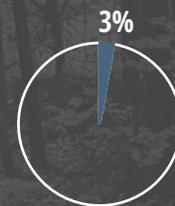
Additional
product line(s)



Additional services
for customers



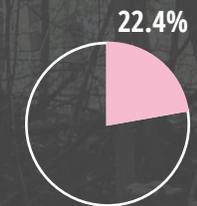
Process
improvements



Other



An increase
in floor space



An increase
in workforce

Top advantages of doing business in Brockton

Location

Cost of business

Small town

Attractive community

Recreation

Schools

Quality workforce

Quality of life

Customer loyalty

Friendly

Downtown

Health care and hospital

Bruce Power

Availability of land

Areas for Improvement

Key issues businesses face



Slow growth for new business and housing development



Poor communication in regards to municipal changes that affect the Business Community



Beautification needs



Difficulty finding employees

Challenges businesses are facing outside the urban area of Walkerton



73.3% say availability of natural gas is poor



73.3% say internet speed, cost and access are a barrier to business



Businesses that currently have difficulty hiring

72%

of large employers¹

77%

of trades and related industries²

100%

of health care³

45%

of all employers

¹ Large employers are those with 10+ employees.

² Trades and related industries includes the following industry-specific businesses, categorized by NAICS codes: 11- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting; 22 - Utilities; 23 - Construction; 31, 32 - Manufacturing; 48, 49 - Transportation. 14 businesses qualified in this category.

³ Health care includes businesses categorized by the NAICS code 62 - Health and Social Assistance. Five businesses qualify in this category.

The trades and related industries experience significant workforce issues

93%

say availability of qualified workers is poor to fair

57%

say stability of the workforce is poor to fair

71%

say ability to attract new employees is poor to fair

43%

say ability to retain new employees is poor to fair

46%

have difficulty retaining existing⁴ employees

The only category that struggles to retain both new and existing employees.

⁴ Existing employees are those employed for 1+ years.

Recommended Goals and Action Plans

The Brockton BR+E Project identified four key priority areas, each with an associated goal and related actions. Within each of these priority areas, there are immediate and future actions. The timeline for these items is detailed in the next section.



Population growth

Goal: Attract and retain residents.

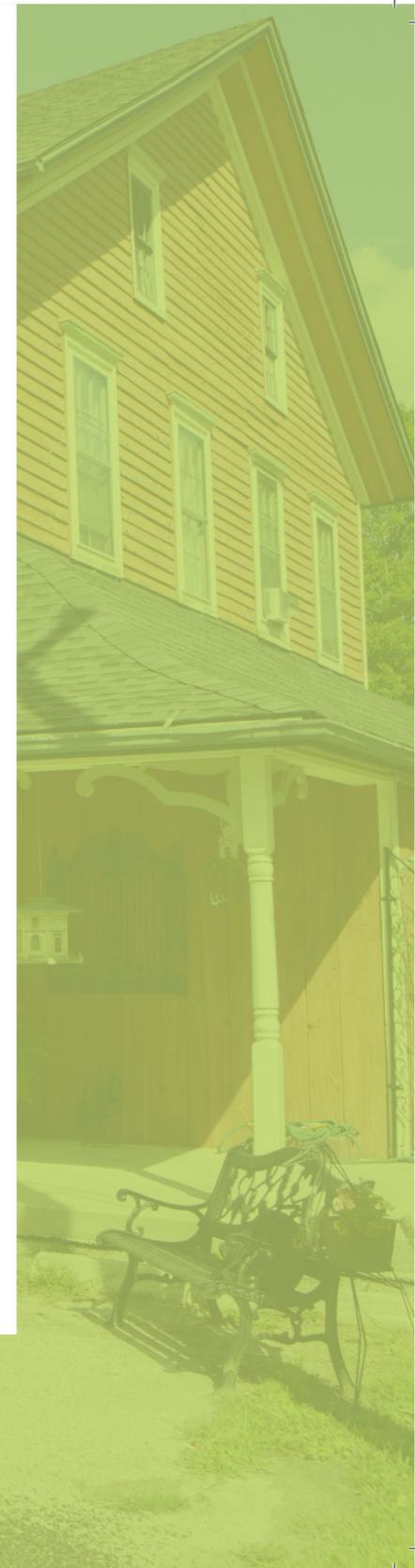
- ▶ Create a marketing campaign focused on the benefits of relocating to and working in Brockton.
- ▶ Support regional efforts in partnership with Saugeen Connects and Bruce County toward becoming a more welcoming community. Through partnerships, capitalize on opportunities that promote Brockton (such as bringing new immigrants to the area to see business and employment opportunities with Saugeen Connects).
- ▶ Continue efforts toward college satellite attraction of specialized skills needed for local employers.
- ▶ Host a large employer meeting to develop workforce strategy and to help develop a program to attract or better retain workforce.
- ▶ Create plan to capitalize on the childcare asset to support retaining and attracting families to Brockton.
- ▶ Review housing development policies and programs to encourage development of upper level apartments in the downtown.
- ▶ Host a developer and real estate forum to discuss local opportunities and initiatives.
- ▶ Create a welcome package for new residents.
- ▶ Create a newcomers group that welcomes newcomers, advises the municipality and hosts events.



Business growth

Goal: Attract new businesses and retain existing businesses.

- ▶ Better promotion of business workshops and existing programming offered by local organizations (i.e. Saugeen Connects, VPI, Business to Bruce, SEDC).
- ▶ Fill empty storefronts with attractive, brand conforming window displays (with the BIA).
- ▶ Create incentive program for landlords to fill vacant buildings.
- ▶ Continue to incentivize façade beautification (CIC and BIA).
- ▶ Engage business owners on a regular basis to help with growth and address concerns (CDC).
- ▶ Implement Search Engine Optimizer (SEO) strategy for Walkerton.
- ▶ Implement the Walkerton Business to Bruce Toolkit.
- ▶ Review CIP policy provisions and expansion opportunities for a larger CIP area throughout Walkerton and Brockton.
- ▶ Offer support to businesses nearing retirement through the Succession Matching partnership with Saugeen Connects to try and keep businesses in the community.
- ▶ Brockton Council supports and promotes growth in the community through an ongoing commitment to both financial and staff resources.
- ▶ Continue to support current initiatives to improve the availability of natural gas and fibre internet (SWIFT).
- ▶ Short-form handout for East Ridge Business Park.
- ▶ Local planning process approval facsheet.





Communication

Goal: Improve channels between the municipality and businesses.

- ▶ Develop a subscription-based e-newsletter that shares information relevant to businesses in Brockton.
- ▶ Create business welcome packages that emphasize opportunities, incentives for new and expanding businesses and fact sheets on municipal processes involving businesses. Combine with existing Walkerton Business to Bruce strategy Pitch Kits.
- ▶ Add more public parking signage so parking locations are easier to find, particularly in winter.
- ▶ Review Brockton's sign by-law to preserve the historic Walkerton



Amenities

Goal: Improve residential and public spaces.

- ▶ Encourage and support affordable housing, including family homes and single income homes.
- ▶ Introduce place making elements to the downtown core, including green space, public washrooms and public art installations.
- ▶ Incentivize apartment space above commercial units in downtown buildings.
- ▶ Offer multi-use room for business meetings, prayer and worship, events and community gatherings.
- ▶ Build a community focused recreation centre.



Timeline



- Attract college satellites
- Incentivize façade beautification
- Support retiring businesses through Succession Matching partnership
- Improve availability of natural gas and fibre internet (SWIFT)

- Support regional efforts to promote Brockton
- Promote business workshops and programs
- Regular engagement of business owners
- Business e-newsletter
- Handout for the East Ridge Business Park
- CIP area expansion
- New resident welcome package

- Marketing campaign
- Large employer workforce strategy meeting
- Newcomer group
- Window displays for empty storefronts
- SEO strategy for Walkerton
- Implement Walkerton Business to Bruce Toolkit
- Council support for growth
- Business welcome packages
- Incentivize apartments above downtown businesses
- Local planning process approval factsheets
- Developer and real estate forum
- Multi-use room for community

- Promote childcare asset
- Housing development policies and programs review
- Incentives to fill vacant buildings
- Public parking signage
- Affordable housing
- Downtown place making elements
- Build recreation centre



Municipality of Brockton
BR+E Detailed Action Plans



Priority: Population Growth

What	Grow the working age population in Brockton
Actions – How	Expand affordable housing, including family homes and single income homes
Timeframe – When	Start within six months (ongoing)
Responsibility – Who	Employers in need of workers Municipal staff Community ambassadors
Resources – With What	People, Marketing materials and funds, Landlord engagement and incentives, hosting a real estate and developer forum, strengthening Brockton's image an development process
Status	Not started
Performance measures	Population Increase (Census data)

Priority: Communication

What	Provide the business community with relevant information that will help them to be successful
Actions – How	Develop a subscription-based e-newsletter that shares information relevant to businesses in Brockton (email copy, hard copy and on website)
Timeframe – When	Start within six months (ongoing)
Responsibility – Who	Brockton Economic Development / Community Development Coordinator
Resources – With What	Up-to-date contact information for all businesses (through subscription process) A person to manage content Newsletter design template Funds to cover printing expenses Submissions from business owners
Status	Not started
Performance measures	Solicit feedback from subscribers to ensure relevant information is being delivered Increase in subscribers Improved relationships and feedback to the municipality

Priority: Amenities

What	Encourage people to spend more time downtown to promote businesses in the core
Actions – How	Introduce placemaking elements to the downtown core, including green space, public washrooms, WiFi, parking access, benches, shade, fountain, lighting, live music space and public art installations
Timeframe – When	Start discussions in 2019 for a 3-5 year plan to establish proper funding
Responsibility – Who	CIC, Municipal staff (including Community Development Coordinator), BIA, Council, EDC sponsors Downtown organizations
Resources – With What	Purchase property Planning meeting Public input Implementation plan Naming project Funding, e.g., from service clubs, grants, municipal budget, selling naming rights, selling bricks, materials donation, Bruce Power
Status	In progress
Performance measures	Increase in foot traffic, WiFi usage in the area, more activity in the downtown core, increase in downtown business revenue

Priority: Population Growth

What	Grow the working age population in Brockton
Actions – How	Create a marketing campaign focused on the benefits of relocating to and working in Brockton, including Brockton brand ambassadors who support the “Come Home to Community” mission
Timeframe – When	Start work immediately, implement beginning in 2019 Promote for a 3-4 year period
Responsibility – Who	Council support Businesses EDC BIA Residents who are ambassadors
Resources – With What	Motion at Council for a commitment to grow Marketing budget Communications strategy
Status	Not started
Performance measures	Population increase (Census data) School populations Number of businesses and hires

Priority: Communication

What	Grow community awareness of services, events, opportunities and alerts
Actions – How	Introduce a community wide communications plan to support display of municipality news, business information and events to be a more welcoming community
Timeframe – When	2019 fiscal year
Responsibility – Who	Municipality EDC BIA Service clubs Churches Associations Newcomers Group
Resources – With What	Welcome package for businesses and new residents, Visitor’s Guide, Sponsorships, Grants
Status	In progress
Performance measures	Demand for use by businesses, municipality and organizations Informal survey by businesses

Priority: Business Growth

What	Support Brockton businesses in their operations and growth
Actions – How	Implement Walkerton Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Strategy for the betterment of the local business and attraction of new business, and offer localized business education
Timeframe – When	Begin planning now and into 2019
Responsibility – Who	Municipality of Brockton Community partners, such as SEDC, banks, professional firms, Bruce County, Community organizations and associations
Resources – With What	Implement a Search Engine Optimization strategy for Walkerton, support existing business resources and events from partners (Saugeen Connects, Business to Bruce, etc.) and leverage sponsorships, grants and private sector partnerships.
Status	Not started
Performance measures	Google analytics Workshop and info session attendance numbers Evaluations of programming and surveys



Municipality of Brockton

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