



Township of Selwyn Business Retention + Expansion Report



BR+E Background

Working with the Township's Economic Development and Business Committee the Township launched a Retail and Service Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) program in 2017.

The BR+E program is an initiative through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and the Township received funding through the Rural Economic Development Fund (RED) to support this project. It is a community-based effort to assist and encourage local businesses to stay and grow in the community. BR+E projects are conducted across the province, and consist of confidential interviews with businesses. BR+E projects can focus on any business sector within a community and though this project focused on the retail and service sectors, the Township of Selwyn hopes to conduct BR+E projects for all of its sectors in the future.

71 retail and service businesses across the Township participated in the face to face survey.

10 volunteer interviewers assisted with the surveys.

The purpose was to:

- Identify needs, concerns and opportunities of local businesses.
- Establish community-based programs to help local businesses grow.
- Prevent the loss of business from the community.
- Demonstrate a community's pro-business attitude.

Through the BR+E program, we were able to meet the following objectives:

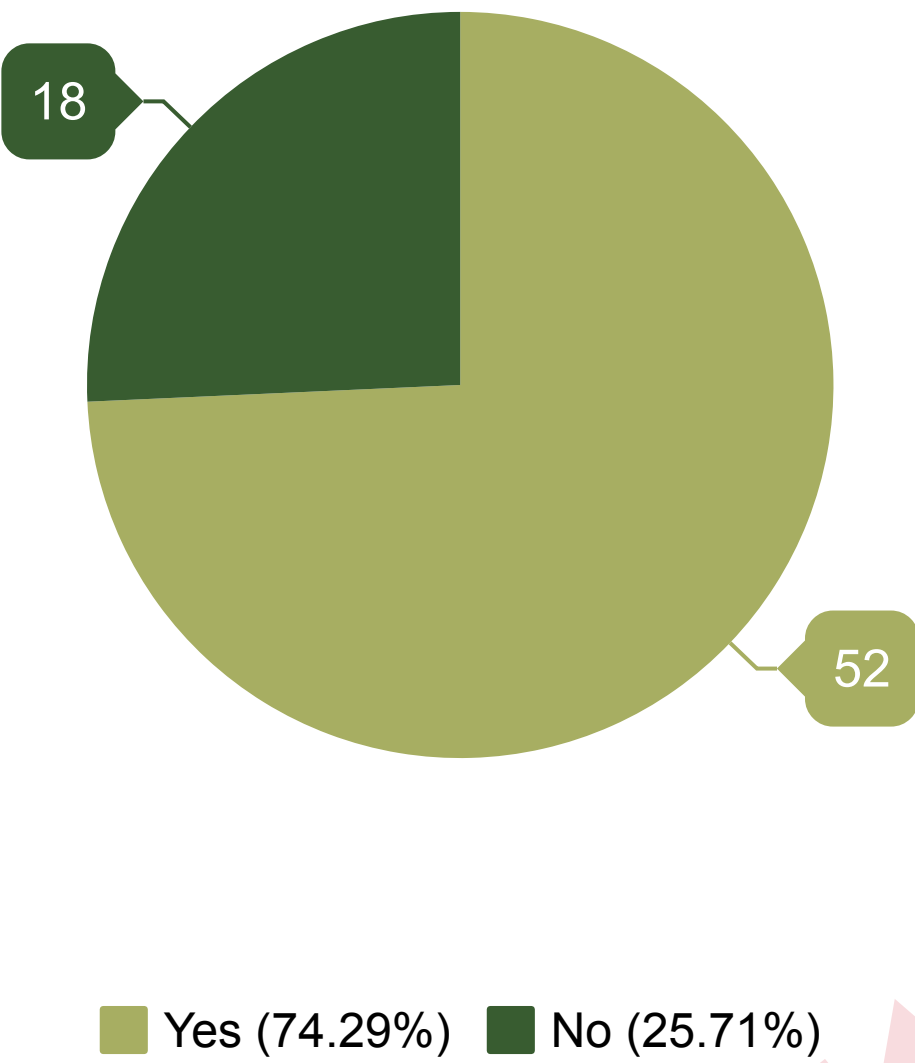
- Strengthen and build partnership opportunities for future projects.
- Build relationships between governmental agencies and businesses.
- Help identify strategies and challenges for businesses in the Township.



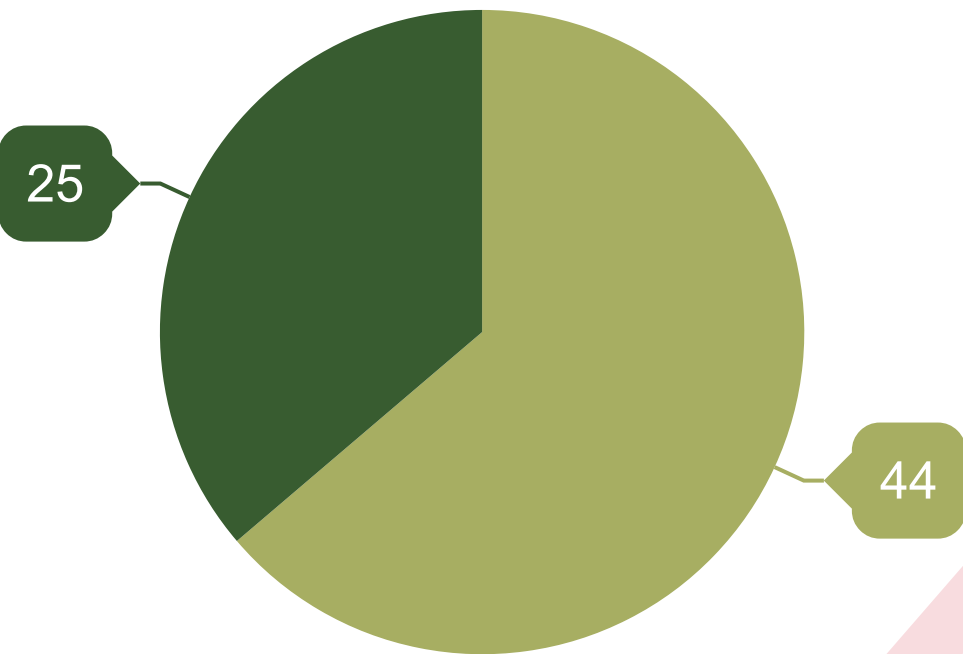
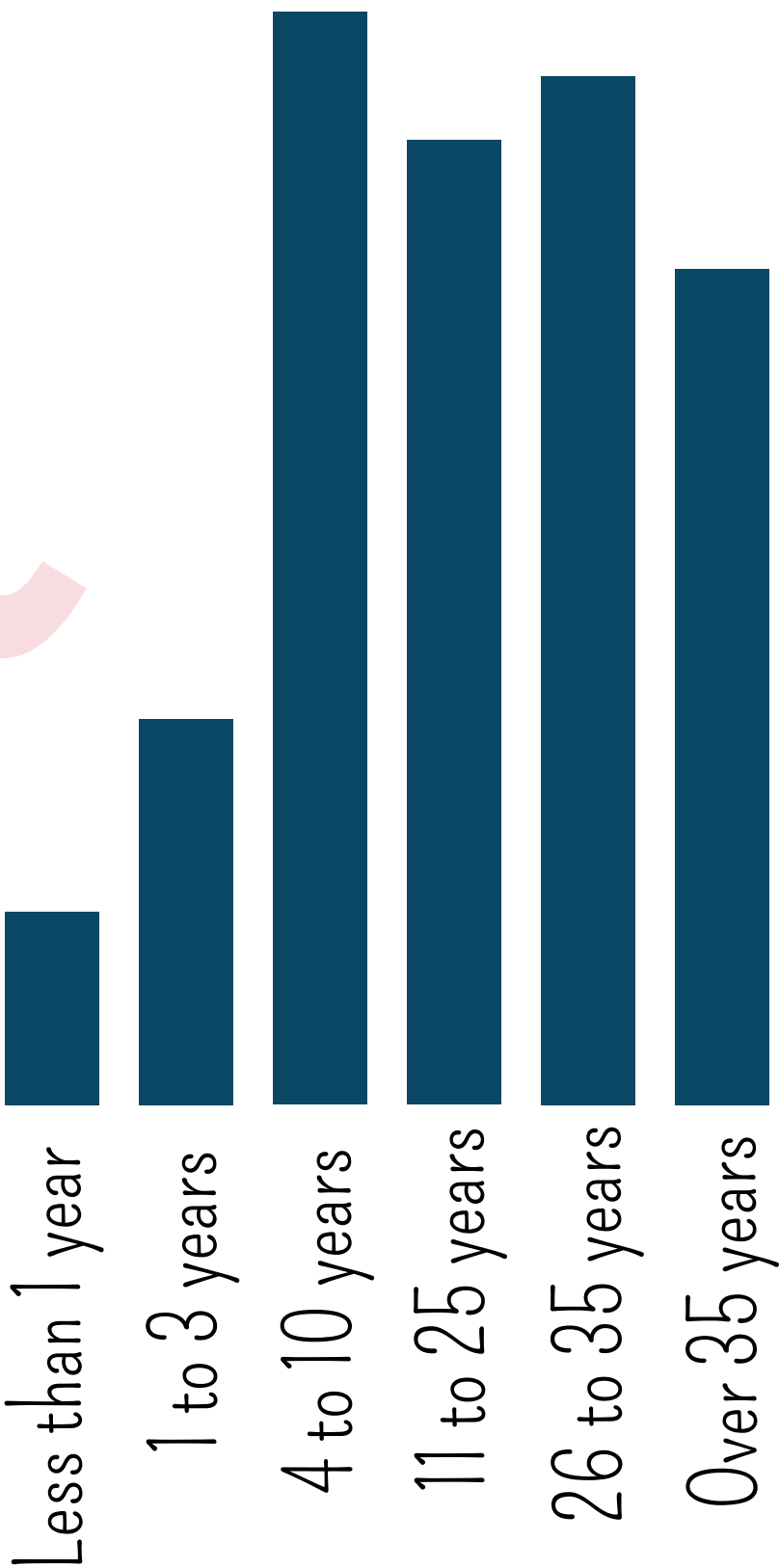
Business Information

74%

of our businesses have at least one owner that is a resident of Selwyn Township



Number of years that the business has been in operation in Selwyn Township



64%

of businesses have a Business Plan

Yes (63.77%) No (36.23%)

Not surprisingly...

Fridays & Saturdays

are the two busiest days of the week for business

June, July & August

are the three busiest months of the year.



Business Climate



85%

of businesses reported Selwyn Township is a
'good to excellent'
place to do business

Factors of doing business in Selwyn Township

Highest excellent / good ratings 



Quality of
Life

93%



Support
from Local
Residents


81%



Support
from Other
Businesses

84%



Lowest ratings (fair / poor) 

Support from
Municipality



50%

Themes

Through analyzing the BR+E Survey results, four themes arose.



1. Workforce Development
2. Marketing Support
3. Economic Development
4. Business Development

Theme: Workforce Development

Over the last 3 years,

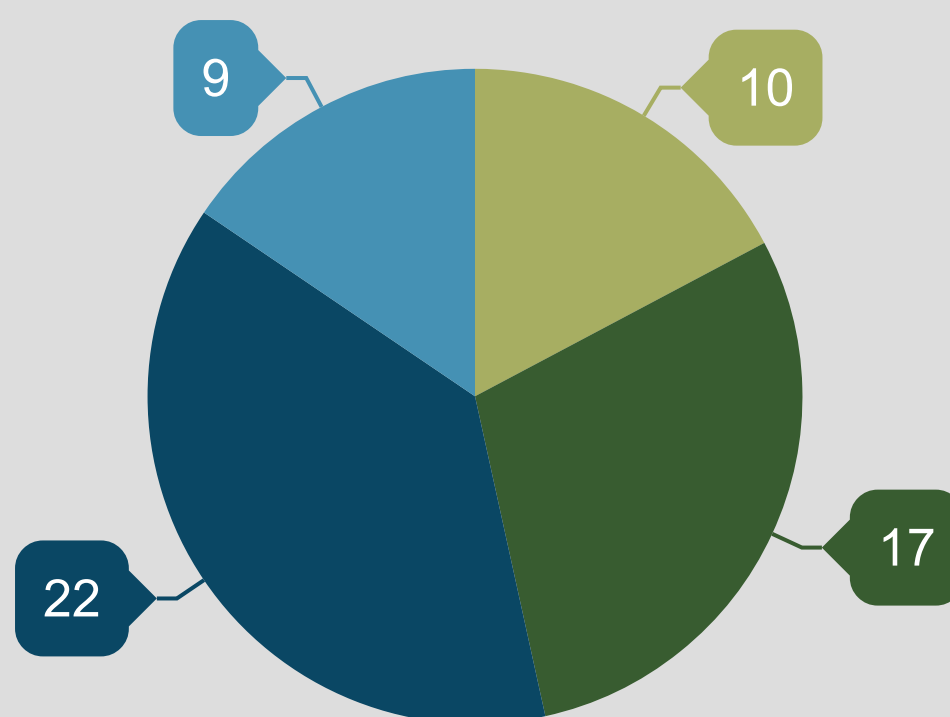
93%

of businesses have increased the number of people they employ or have remained the same.

When rating workforce as a factor of doing business in Selwyn Township...

53%

of businesses rated workforce as excellent/good



47%

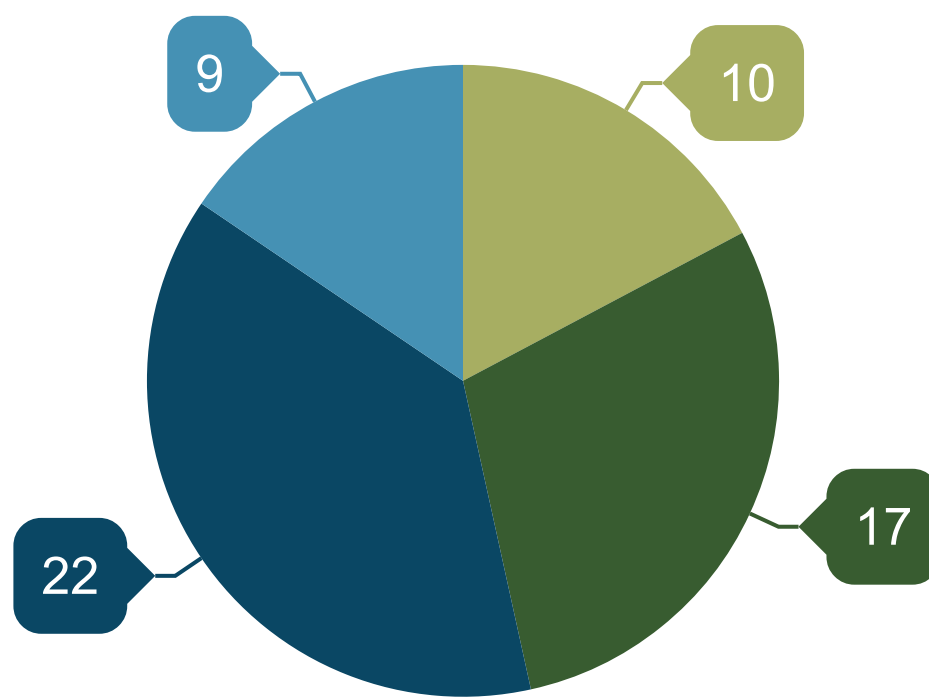
of businesses rated workforce as poor/fair

■ Poor (17.24%) ■ Fair (29.31%)
■ Good (37.93%) ■ Excellent (15.52%)

Attraction

Businesses rated the ability to attract new employees in Selwyn Township as:

55%
excellent/good



45%
poor/fair

■ Poor (17.24%)
 ■ Fair (29.31%)
■ Good (37.93%)
 ■ Excellent (15.52%)

61%

of businesses described having difficulty hiring, due to:

- Too few applicants
- Lack of appropriate skills or training
- Lack of relevant experience; and
- Generational gap!

62%

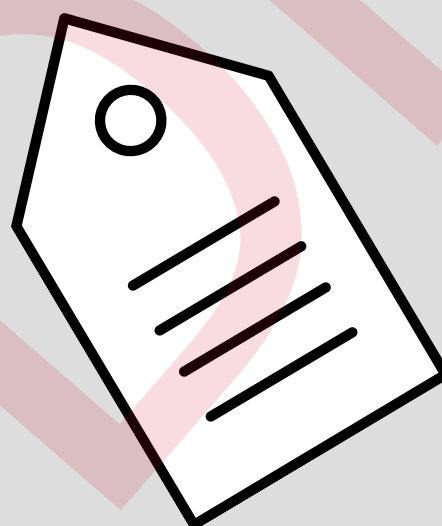
of businesses are "on the fence" about whether there are plenty of good workers available in Selwyn Township

62%

of businesses rate the availability of qualified workers in Selwyn Township as poor/fair

The occupations that are most difficult to recruit were split between:

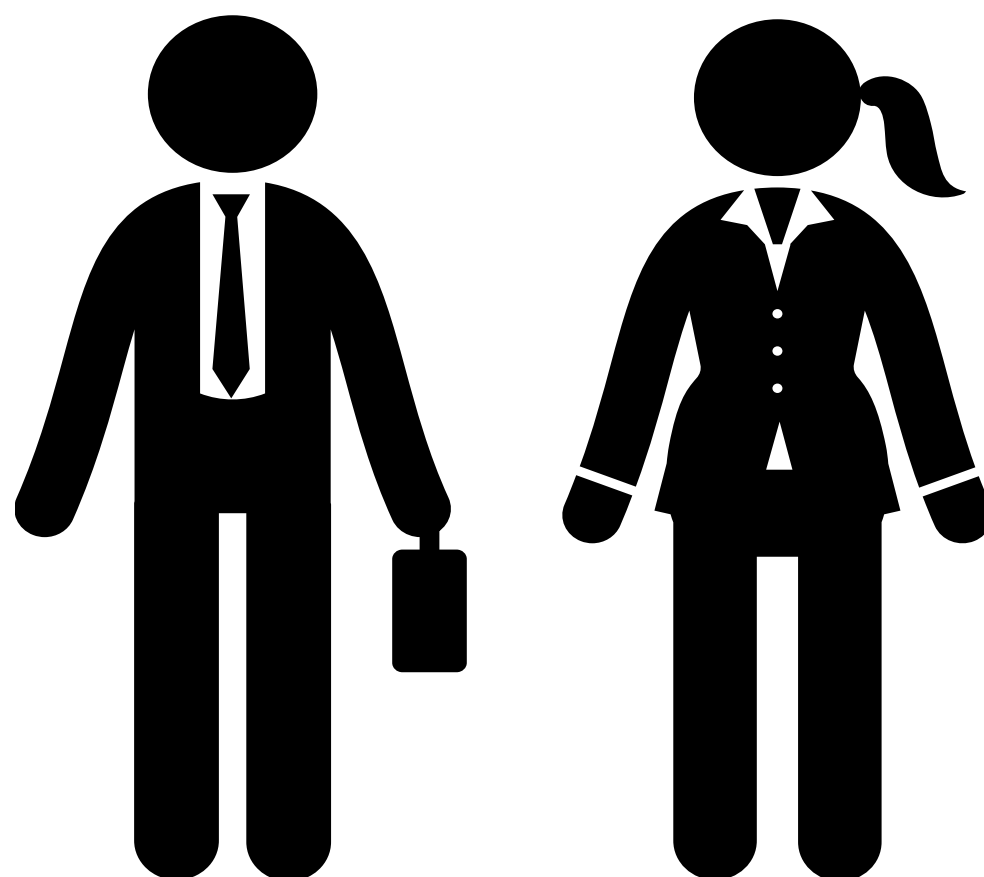
Sales Staff & Skilled Labourers



Retention

83%

of businesses DO NOT have difficulty retaining employees

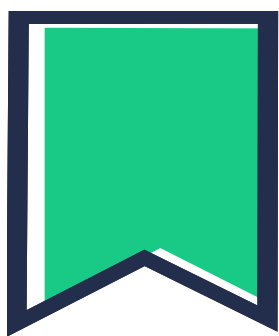


77%

of businesses rate the ability to retain new employees as excellent/good

Theme: Marketing Support

Factors of doing business in Selwyn Township
Lowest ratings (needs improving/fair) 🖐️



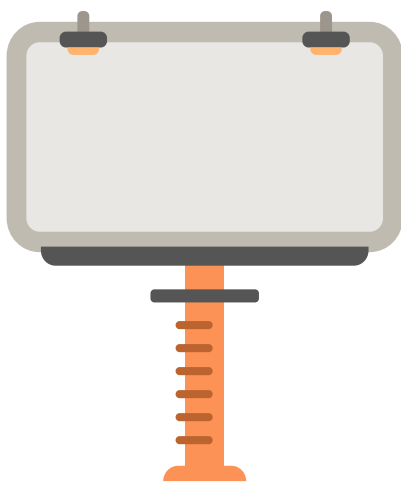
Visual identity of the area unifying banners

66%



Roadside advertising

55%



Advertising campaigns

80%

Over 80%

of businesses said that they would benefit from the following programs or services...

- Cooperative advertising/joint marketing (91%)
- Marketing on the web (84%)
- Business directories, brochures, maps (86%)
- Retail and special event coordination (81%)

69%

of businesses said that they would like to improve marketing

88%

of businesses said that they would participate in a marketing workshop

The following assistance or opportunities would be beneficial to support local businesses...



Marketing Seminars (38)



Business Networking Seminars (43)




Joint Advertising & Marketing (46)



E-Marketing, Social Media & Online Content Workshops (44)

Theme: Economic Development

Factors of doing business in Selwyn Township
Lowest ratings (needs improving/fair) 



Number of parking spots/facilities

48%



Appropriate mix of businesses

43%



Exterior appearance of facades

70%

66%

of businesses said that their industry is growing

20%


of businesses said that their industry is remaining stable

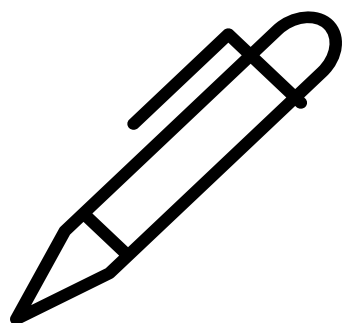
77%

of businesses said that they would benefit from a building improvement loan/grant program

83%

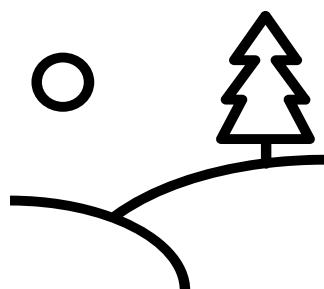
of businesses said that they would benefit from a sign improvement loan/grant program

Factors of doing business in Selwyn Township
Lowest ratings (poor/fair) 



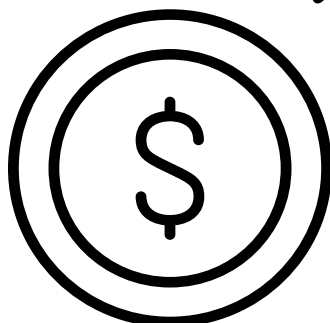
Development/building permit process

74%



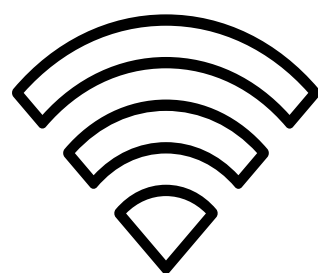
Land Costs

76%



Development charges

84%



Availability of serviced land

67%

Theme: Business Development

In order for businesses to be more competitive at retaining existing or attracting new customers...

82% of businesses would like to see customer service skills improved

76% of businesses would participate in a customer service related workshop

90% of businesses said that they would benefit from networking events

56% of businesses said that they would benefit from mentorship programs

Businesses are interested in working co-operatively with other businesses in the community to pursue...

Networking/information sharing, joint marketing and joint training

Currently, half of the businesses are experiencing barriers related to their information technology requirements. The majority of these barriers are:


Internet speed and knowledge and training

Most desired overall community assets:

- Waterfront access
- Walking and bike trails
- Public washrooms located downtown
- Sports or recreation facilities

Most desired community assets in the downtown:

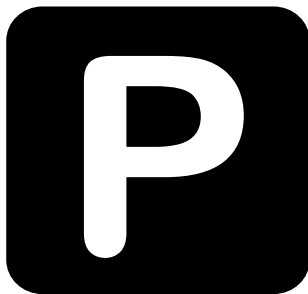
- Expanding parking
- Expanding Farmers' Market
- Community infrastructure (ex. road upgrades, garbage cans, lighting)

Factors of doing business in Selwyn Township
Lowest ratings (poor/fair) 



Accessibility for people with disabilities

66%



Parking signage

62%

Action Items

A Task Team was brought together to review the results of the BR+E surveys and create a list of Actions/Activities that would help to meet the needs of the business community in each theme area.

The top 3 Actions/Activities in each Theme are highlighted.

Workforce Development

- 1. Engage College and Universities in Co-op placements/internships in rural areas to support businesses through employee development and succession management.
- 2. Educate employers on programs available for wage subsidies to support employment costs.
- 3. Promote available training resources to employers. There are many existing industry-based training supports available to employers.

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- 4. Work with the School Boards to make the secondary school co-op program more accessible for rural areas (e.g. 1/2 day placements, addressing travel time and conflicts with class time).
- 5. Lobby the Province to maintain a student minimum wage and an entry level wage to better support business employment costs.
- 6. Support employers in working with employees and their needs (e.g. bridging the generation gap).
- 7. Promote the addition of seminars/workshops at Job Fairs to better prepare potential employees for the workforce.
- 8. Promote quality of life factors in attracting employees.

Action Items

Marketing Support

- 1. Research and review best practices in other communities that have successful downtowns (e.g. St. Jacob's, Merrickville, Huntsville, etc.) regarding marketing and branding.
- 2. Identify Selwyn's draw to establish its "brand".
- 3. Pull all related organizations together to maximize marketing opportunities (RT08, P&K Tourism, etc.).

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- 4. Common branding needed to attract people to the area - broader that simply Selwyn. Brand the 'Kawarthas' theme to consolidate businesses (e.g. at the Cottage Life Show in a 'Kawarthas/Selwyn' area).
- 5. Build awareness of workshops, training and other opportunities available to businesses to help market themselves (e.g. 'Selwyn welcome wagon').

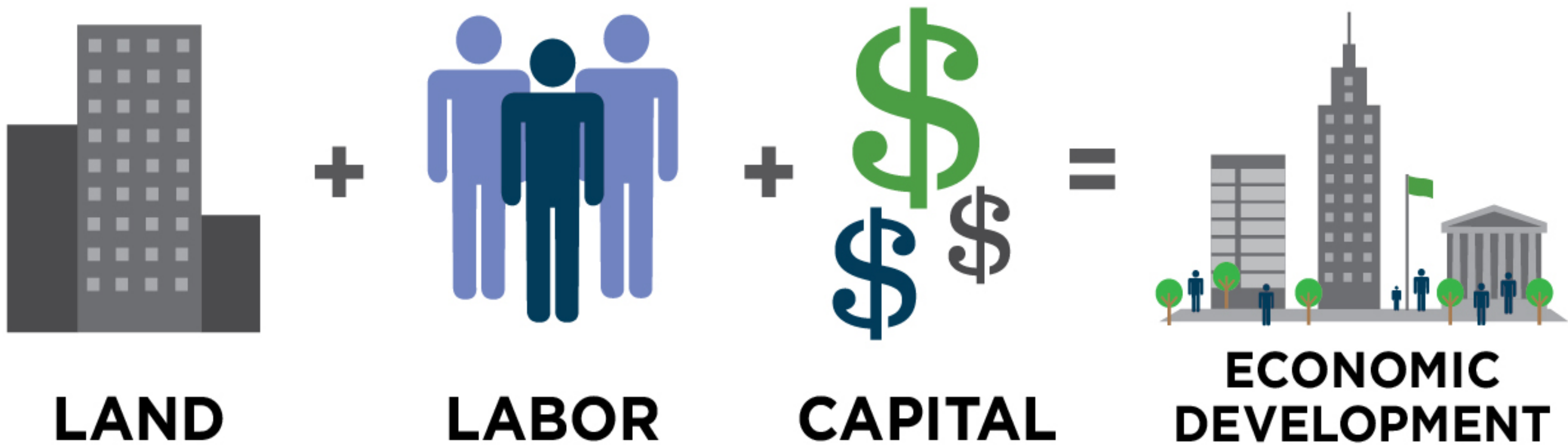


Action Items

Economic Development

- 1. Formalize a comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Plan looking out 10 years while identifying specific goals that are achievable within a 5 year horizon.
- 2. Initiate business newsletter inclusive of funding opportunities for business in Selwyn (e.g. Community Improvement Plan). Highlight new businesses that have come to the area.
- 3. Work with Real Estate Board to coordinate access to their database to help promote available businesses/properties to provide a land inventory that includes zoning and information on available services (gas, internet, etc.).

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Action Items

Business Development

1. Promote and build awareness within the community of the work of the Township, Economic Development and Business Committee, BR+E project and the role of the Township's Economic Development Coordinator.

2. Continue to implement "Infrastructure Plans" such as those included in the Township's Community Improvement Plan (e.g. benches, garbage cans, parking consolidation, etc.).

3. Identify training materials developed by the Province and others to train staff on accessibility, customer service and industry specific issues.

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4. Investigate development of mentoring programs for businesses.

5. Develop resources/guides for employers to maximize social media marketing programs using student assistance, internships and co-op placements.

6. Identify availability of public and private parking facilities in Lakefield.



Thank You!

A huge thank you goes out to those who volunteered their time to helping make the Business Retention + Expansion project a success in Selwyn Township!

This includes the volunteers who visited the 71 businesses to help conduct the surveys, those on the Task Team who reviewed all the results to come up with a list of actions, the Economic Development and Business Committee and, of course, the 71 retail and service sector businesses who participated in the project.

Volunteers

Sherry Boyce-Found Kawartha Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
Diana Carter Style Boutique
Arlayna Curtin Agilec
Elizabeth Ionson Community Volunteer
Erin McLean McLean Berry Farms
Kim Whynot Bridgenorth CIBC
David Wills DM Wills Associates Ltd.

Task Team

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Diana Carter Style Boutique
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Shaun Milne Shaun Milne Signs
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