



ORILLIA

5-YEAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2029

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1. Introduction

Orillia has experienced a significant amount of growth in institutional, commercial, industrial, and residential development since the creation of their last economic development strategic plan. With new growth and opportunity springing up within and all-around Orillia, the time is right for the City to reevaluate how best to support the community's future growth and vitality given the shifting nature of industry, community, opportunities, and challenges.

Orillia is an idyllic community of 33,411 nestled between Lake Couchiching and Lake Simcoe, and at the intersection of Highway 11 and Highway 12. It is home to a number of enviable cultural, natural, and recreational assets, and its vibrant downtown is host to many unique attractions and events. The City benefits from strategic partners, such as Lakehead University and Georgian College, the Orillia and Area Community Development Corporation (CDC), and the County of Simcoe who provide a broad suite of business and workforce development supports and resources to the community. It recently launched Fuel Innovation to help catalyze local business growth and is working to capitalize on their beautiful waterfront with a major redevelopment project underway. Orillia is well positioned to leverage the City's entrepreneurial energy to drive new business and community investment.

With its numerous and expanding assets, Orillia has a strong foundation for to support future economic growth within the community. The City of Orillia 5-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan (2025-2029) provides a comprehensive guide for fostering economic growth and development within Orillia. It will enable the City to focus on key economic development initiatives that maximize the impact of future growth opportunities by fostering new and expanding industry, enhancing the local economic development ecosystem, and creating a vibrant quality of place. The development of the strategy involved a comprehensive background document and data review, asset identification, community consultation process, and competitive analysis to identify and unlock Orillia's most valuable opportunities for economic growth and sustainability. Data was central to the development of this strategy, and ongoing collection and analysis of data from businesses and the public will be critical to guide its implementation and measure its success.

The following report provides an overview of the strategy methodology, Orillia demographic and labour market trends, an economic development SWOT assessment that highlights key themes from the research, a review of sector opportunities and a brief comparative analysis. It introduces the 5-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan and includes a full implementation plan with mission, vision, goals, objectives, actions, rationale, timelines, and performance measures. Subsequent appendices provide a review of important assets and partners; key themes and insights from the background and consultation data; detailed information on Orillia's role in economic development, placemaking, and innovation support; and more detailed survey responses. It also provides a matrix to enable the Business Development Office to evaluate the suitability and feasibility of undertaking new activities that may arise as a result of new opportunities and challenges.

2. Methodology

The development of the strategy involved an in-depth document review, analysis of Statistics Canada and local labour market data, and extensive community consultation. The consultation included a survey, interviews, focus groups, and two public meetings.

Background documents that were reviewed included:

- Orillia Youth Strategy
- Downtown Tomorrow Plan
- City of Orillia Strategic Plan 2019 - 2022
- Orillia Official Plan
- Orillia Library Strategic Plan
- Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan
- Orillia Affordable Housing Plan

The survey collected information on economic development needs and insights and received 549 responses from residents, businesses, and local organizations. In-depth interviews and small group discussions were conducted with over 60 key stakeholders, over 40 businesses, and City Council and staff. There were over 30 attendees who joined two public consultation sessions at the Orillia Public Library.

The background and consultation data were analyzed to identify key themes and undertake a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats assessment. Case study communities were identified to conduct a competitive analysis based on similar economic and demographic characteristics and best practices were highlighted from those communities. Considering the data and analysis, a draft strategic economic development plan was crafted consisting of a vision, mission, goals, objectives, and an implementation plan. The plan was reviewed by staff and any additional feedback was incorporated.

It should be noted that much of the data summarized under Appendix F, “Key Themes,” was derived from the community consultation. Thus, they reflect the personal perspectives and experiences of those who chose to participate in the process and may not be reflective of the views of the wider community or the actual practices of the City.



3. Orillia Demographics and Labour Force

This section provides an overview of Orillia's demographics and labour force characteristics to provide insight into barriers and opportunities facing residents, as well as the workforce and employment trends in the community.

3.1 Orillia Demographics

In 2021, Orillia's population was 33,411. Between 2016 and 2021, the City grew 7.2%, with further growth expected. 13.9% of the population is under the age of 15, 60.1% of the population is between the ages 15 and 65, and 26% of the population is over the age of 65. The City has a slightly older population when compared to Ontario as a whole. Orillia's average age is 45.8 compared to Ontario's average age of 41.8. Orillia's median age is 46.8 compared to 41.6 in Ontario.¹ Orillia has 5.4% less working age population and 1.9% less youth under the age of 14 compared to the province overall.

Median household income was notably lower in Orillia than the rest of the province at \$71,000 per household versus \$91,000 in Ontario. The average income of households in Orillia in 2020 was \$84,600 compared to \$116,000 in Ontario.

Orillia has a higher percentage of rental units compared to the rest of Ontario, as 38.8% of private households are renters versus 31.4% of households in Ontario. Despite the higher number of rental units, on average more Orillians are spending over 30% of their income on shelter costs compared to the province overall, 26.7% compared to 24.4%.

Orillia's education rates are generally lower when compared with the rest of Ontario. 19.5% of the population has no certificate, diploma, or degree, 31% has their high school diploma or equivalency certificate, 24.1% have a college, CEGEP, or other non-university certificate or diploma, 6% have an apprenticeship or trade certificate or diploma, and 17.5% have a bachelor's degree or higher, including 2.8% with a master's degree, and 0.4% with an earned doctorate. Orillia has a higher percentage of residents with an apprenticeship or trade certificate or diploma as well as with college, CEGEP, and other non-university certificate or diploma compared to the provincial average, however, is lagging behind provincial educational rates in all other categories.

[1] <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=ontario&DGUIDlist=2021S0504569,2021A000235&GENDERlist=1&STATISTIClist=1,4&HEADERlist=0>

Orillia has also been slow to welcome immigration compared to some of its more southern Simcoe County neighbours. Only 1.5% of the population are new to Canada since 2011 compared to 7.5% of Ontario overall, and only 9.7% of Orillia's population are immigrants versus 30% of Ontario.

Orillia has a lower participation rate (56.2%) compared to the province (62.8%), and a higher unemployment rate (15.2% versus 12.2%). However, these figures should be reviewed with caution as they reflect a point in time where the economy and employment were still significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overarchingly Orillia's demographic information points to some key considerations that have driven the development of several recommendations within the strategy. These include:

- Orillia's income levels are lagging behind provincial averages and improving income earning opportunities should be a focus for this strategy.
- Given the aging population consideration needs to be given as to how to better engage and retain youth and students within the community. At the same time, an aging population presents opportunities for economic growth related to service provision around the care of that population as they age.
- Orillia has been quite slow to welcome immigration compared to their counterparts further south. With an influx of international students and increasing population growth pressures from the GTA, Orillia should give consideration as to how to become a more welcoming community and be ready to integrate new immigrants into the community.
- Continuing to be a leader in college, trade, and apprenticeship education will be important, as will expanding access to university-level programming as Lakehead University looks to expand. Many Lakehead students come from Orillia and Simcoe County, and many of those are the first generation in their family to attend university.



3.2 Orillia's Labour Market

Orillia's economy is moderately diversified with several key sectors of employment that are strong and growing. These include healthcare and social assistance, retail trade, accommodation and food services, public administration, and manufacturing sectors. Between 2018 and 2023 all these sectors experienced growth, in particular the manufacturing sector, which grew by 70%. The following table displays the employment and growth rate of Orillia's top ten sectors by total employment in 2023, highlighting changes to Orillia's largest employment sectors.

Table 1: Orillia's Top Ten Sectors by Total Employment in 2023 (Data provided by Lightcast, 2024).

Description	2018 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2018 - 2023 Change	2018 - 2023 % Change
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,472	4,121	649	19%
Retail Trade	3,175	3,354	179	6%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,712	2,364	652	38%
Public Administration	1,825	1,849	24	1%
Manufacturing	882	1,495	613	70%
Educational Services	916	1,174	258	28%
Construction	828	1,071	243	29%
Administrative and Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services	905	891	(14)	(2%)
Wholesale Trade	633	869	236	37%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	626	733	108	17%

The following table displays the Top 10 fastest growing employment sectors between 2018 and 2023, highlighting sectors that have experienced the most change in the city over that time period.

Table 2: Top 10 Sectors by Employment Growth % in Orillia between 2018 and 2023 (Data provided by Lightcast, 2024).

Description	2018 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2018 - 2023 Change	2018 - 2023 % Change
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	20	38	18	87%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	21	38	17	78%
Finance and Insurance	368	628	260	71%
Manufacturing	882	1,495	613	70%
Transportation and Warehousing	373	582	209	56%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	198	292	94	47%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,712	2,364	652	38%
Wholesale Trade	633	869	236	37%
Construction	828	1,071	243	29%
Educational Services	916	1,174	258	28%

Location quotient is a key measure of economic development and examines employment concentration within a sector of one geographical region compared to a larger region. Communities with higher concentrations of employment, those with the location quotient above 1, are at a strategic advantage over other communities within that industry. For economic development analysis purposes, sectors that score above 1.25 are considered sectors of strength within the community. The following table displays the ten sectors with the highest location quotient in the City of Orillia in 2023, compared to the Province of Ontario.

Table 3: Top 10 Industry Sectors with the Highest Location Quotient in the City of Orillia in 2023 (Data provided by Lightcast, 2024).

Description	2018 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2018 - 2023 Change	Location Quotient
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,472	4,121	19%	1.61
Accommodation and Food Services	1,712	2,364	38%	1.61
Retail Trade	3,175	3,354	6%	1.55
Public Administration	1,825	1,849	1%	1.47
Wholesale Trade	633	869	37%	0.95
Administrative and Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services	905	891	(2%)	0.89
Manufacturing	882	1,495	70%	0.85
Other Services (except public administration)	642	696	8%	0.83
Educational Services	916	1,174	28%	0.78
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	198	292	47%	0.75

Labour market data should be analyzed regularly to measure changes in employment, wage rate, and location quotient. This section provides a brief overview of specific, identifiable trends within each of the City's Top 10 sectors. Additional details regarding sector trends and a full overview of labour market changes can be found in Appendix G.

4. SWOT Analysis

Detailed analysis was conducted to identify key assets, partners, and themes from the data collected. A summary of key information can be found in the Appendices. The image below provides an overview of the key themes that emerged in a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats assessment format.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Location » Transportation Corridors » Natural Environments » Caring Residents » Lake Couchiching and Lake Simcoe » Downtown » Waterfront and Access » Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital » Lake Simcoe Regional Airport (LSRA) » Hydro One » Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Headquarters » Community Improvement Plan » Regional Economic Development Ecosystem and Partners » Reasonably Diversified Economy » Manufacturing Sector » Tourism Sector » Health and Wellness Sector » Arts and Culture » Public Art
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Available Development Land » Low Income Levels » Workforce-Attainable Housing » Aging Population » Identity » Connectivity Within the Community » Education Rates » Cost-of-Living » Brownfields » Safety » Immigration » Awareness » Communication » Resources for Scaling Businesses » Business Engagement in Opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Improve Data Collection from Community and Businesses » Enhance Relationship and Communication with Business Community » Development Process Enhancement » Transit Improvement » Communication and Coordination Between Stakeholders » Placemaking and Community Identity Development and Enhancement » Enhance Vibrancy and Safety in the Downtown » Celebrate and Support Innovation » Enhance Business Development Supports » Shoulder Season Tourism Product and Promotions » Increase Orillia's profile as an Investment Destination for Target Sectors » Attract High Quality Jobs » Support the Development of Complete Communities » Better Integrate and Leverage Post-Secondary Institutions and Students into the Community » Be a Welcoming Community » Incentivize Transformative Investment (i.e. attainable housing, brownfield redevelopment) » Anchor Youth and Students in the Community » Enhance Retail, Service, and Entertainment Offerings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Cost-Of-Living » Changing Federal and Provincial Priorities and Funding » Shifts in the Supply Chain » Labour Mobility » Comparable Communities Enhancing Economic Development Efforts » Increasing Hostility » Global Political Instability » Climate Change » Unknown Shocks (i.e. another COVID-19)

5. Competitive Analysis

A competitive analysis was conducted with communities that were similar in size, assets, and trajectory to the City of Orillia to ensure this strategy's proposed goals and objectives learn from and go above and beyond current best practices. The following section details key takeaways from the case studies, which were based in Bradford West Gwillimbury, Collingwood, North Bay, Centre Wellington, Orangeville, and St. Thomas.

Full community case studies can be found in Appendix G.

5.1 Key Takeaways for Orillia

- There is general alignment between different economic development strategies at a goal or strategic level (addressing business development, investment attraction, quality of life, workforce, entrepreneurship and innovation, arts, culture, and tourism).
- Communities are focused on adding value to their downtowns – looking for new ways to draw in residents and visitors and stimulate investment in the heart of their communities. In many cases this involves Community Improvement Programs, creating engaging and appealing public spaces, and embracing arts and culture.
- Communities are embracing public art – creating programs and policies to support and invest in it.
- Partnerships can be key to unlocking growth and development potential, whether helping a fledgling sector grow, or attracting large investments to the community.
- Strategic, targeted incentives can help stimulate growth in the downtown and amongst broader industry.



6. Sectors of Opportunity

This section explores sectors that present strategic opportunities for investment attraction that were identified through consultation and data analysis. They include advanced manufacturing, tourism, health and wellness, green/environmental, film, and adjacent sectors. Insight is provided into why Orillia should pursue each sector and provides an overview of current sector trends and opportunities to enhance sector understanding and fine tune investment attraction materials.

6.1 Advanced Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector was Orillia's fifth largest sector by employment in 2023 and the third fastest growing between 2018 and 2023 with 1,495 jobs in the last quarter of 2023. Specifically, Orillia has experienced employment growth between 2018 and 2023 in a number of manufacturing sub-sectors including food manufacturing which grew 136%, beverage and tobacco product manufacturing which grew 41%, plastics and rubber products manufacturing which grew 72%, primary metal manufacturing which grew 77%, and miscellaneous manufacturing which grew 94%. These subsectors all have location quotients above one with the exception of food manufacturing, however it is worth noting given the number of jobs in the sector, 180 positions.

The rapid growth within the manufacturing sector highlights the scope of opportunity across the sector, and additional local developments, including the Honda EV battery plant expansion and ongoing development at the LSRA, warrant the need for additional consideration in the sub sectors of aerospace and renewable energy. Businesses within the manufacturing sector often create a number of well-paying jobs; thus, present attract investment targets, however, they may be challenged to locate in Orillia due to limited availability of land. In order to understand how to best leverage these emerging opportunities the City of Orillia should connect and work with the County of Simcoe Economic Development Office, who are playing a central role in facilitating both investments, when needed. The City of Orillia will also be aided by the development of their Investment Attraction Marketing Plan (Goal 1, Objective 1) to ensure they are ready to attract and welcome investment with the right informative materials, a strategic pitch, community connections to provide a soft landing and a budget to facilitate opportunities identified for building relationships through trade shows and missions.

Current trends within the manufacturing sector, including trends specific to sub-sectors of EV and aerospace manufacturing can be found in Appendix H.

6.2 Tourism

Orillia's accommodation and food services, and arts, entertainment and recreation sectors are major employers within the community. The accommodation and food services sector is the 3rd largest employer in the City and shares the highest location quotient (1.61). The arts, entertainment, and recreation sector is the 6th fastest growing sector, increasing employment by 47% between 2018 and 2023. There are several subsectors of interest within those sectors including the amusement, gambling, and recreation industries which grew 57% between 2018 and 2023, the accommodation services sector which grew by 74%, and the food services and drinking places sector which grew by 35%.

Orillia, known as the Sunshine City, and a partner in the Orillia and Lake Country Tourism brand, is the ideal location for tourism with a variety of attractions and anchors that draw visitors year-round within the City and around the region. Opportunities to expand and develop the tourism sector were frequently cited in throughout consultation with community.

Orillia has considerable potential for sports tourism, leveraging its existing infrastructure, natural beauty, and strategic location to attract visitors for various sporting events and activities. It hosts a number of sports facilities that could be explored as venues including the Orillia Recreation Centre, Rotary Plan, the Brian Orser Arena, and Kitchener Park. Further assessment of Orillia's best value proposition to approach sports tourism opportunities is needed, but additional sports tourism may require facility development and improvements such as enhanced outdoor facilities and water sport facilities. Consideration should be given as to how to utilize sports tourism to increase visitor spending on accommodation, food, transportation, and entertainment. An additional benefit of sports tourism is enhanced community facilities and infrastructure benefiting residents, increased community engagement and pride through hosting significant events, and increased brand recognition as a sports tourism destination.

The surrounding Townships and Rama First Nation are also home to a number of tourism anchors such as Casino Rama Resort, Horseshoe Valley and Mount St. Louis Moonstone, Vetta Spa, and Bass Lake, Mara, and McRae Point Provincial Parks.

While the strategy provides recommendations on how to enhance the existing tourism sector, there are many opportunities for investment attraction through the tourism sector. Tourism sector assets and specific investment attraction opportunities are provided in more detail in Appendix H.

6.3 Health and Wellness

Orillia also has a robust health and social services sector, making it the number one employment sector within the city. Reviewing labour market data for the sub-sectors revealed that ambulatory healthcare services grew by 32%, and nursing and residential care facilities grew by 27% between 2018 and 2023.

The health and wellness sector in Orillia has experienced significant recent growth, particularly driven by the rapid expansion of the hospital over the last five years, adding 62 beds and 200 highly skilled jobs. However, the hospital has now outgrown its current site and is seeking a new location, which could potentially generate 2,500 new jobs, ranging from physicians to support staff. There are plans for the old hospital site to be repurposed for transitional care and intensified to accommodate 600 units, including generational housing, seniors housing, and mixed-use facilities which could bring 1,200 new residents adjacent to the downtown. The hospital redevelopment is expected to take place over a 10-15 year timeframe. The hospital is also exploring virtual care and training initiatives. Partnerships with post-secondary institutions are deemed important to drive innovation and to support future workforce needs, and the hospital and Lakehead University have committed to a Memorandum of Understanding to work together. Despite being a community of its size, Orillia's pediatric department was noted as second only to Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto, indicating significant healthcare capabilities and strength in this area of care. The expansion of the hospital would be best complemented by commercial zoning that would be supportive of the creation of a health hub.

The hospital expansion represents an exciting opportunity to build on the wealth of Orillia's existing health and wellness assets including the Couchiching Family Health Team, senior and long-term care facilities such as Leacock Care Centre and Trillium Manor, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), physical rehabilitation services, chiropractic clinics, alternative medicine practices, and home care and community support organizations like Helping Hands Orillia, and Hospice Orillia.

The health and wellness sector is experiencing dynamic growth across various sub-sectors, driven by technological advancements, demographic shifts, and changing consumer preferences. Embracing these trends can offer significant opportunities for innovation, business development, and improved health outcomes. Given Orillia's existing population and asset-base, the City is best positioned to explore opportunities in aging population and geriatric care, functional foods and nutraceuticals, and health and wellness tourism, however, Orillia's environs would support a range of health and wellness sub-sectors.

Further information on Orillia specific opportunities and overall sector trends can be found in Appendix H.



6.4 Green, Sustainable, and Environmentally Focused Businesses

As a result of the City's commitment to sustainable growth and development, climate change action, and environmental protection, a number of background strategies and documents identified that the community is well positioned to attract businesses with a green, environmental, or sustainable lens to their business. This is further enhanced by Lakehead University's commitment to sustainability programming and support for industry adoption of sustainable practices.

These types of businesses can be found across sectors including but not limited to manufacturing, retail, transportation and warehousing, and even tourism, and have a range of different space and resource requirements to establish in a community depending on the sector. Information on current trends related to these businesses can be found in Appendix H.

The green, sustainable, and environmentally focused business space is characterized by rapid growth and innovation across multiple sectors. Embracing these trends can lead to significant environmental benefits, innovation and economic opportunities. Based on Orillia's existing strengths and assets they are positioned to have the most success with electric vehicles and sustainable transportation, leveraging Honda's recent EV investment into the region and LSRA's proximity; renewable energy, leveraging Hydro One's renewable energy expansion; sustainable agriculture and food production, given the regional strength in agriculture; and circular economy, given the community's commitment to green and sustainable practices.

6.5 Film

The film sector represents an emerging opportunity for the City of Orillia. A number of nearby communities in central Ontario have experienced success with film production as an economic development driver. Others within the region, like neighbouring Oro-Medonte, are looking to further explore opportunities within the sector, lending itself well to partnership. Orillia has diverse assets that would make it attractive for film production, such as a charming downtown and beautiful waterfront, as well as an existing arts and culture sector that could transition to support film production. An additional benefit would be new employment opportunities, in particular for Lakehead University media, film, and communication students. Information on current trends and opportunities in the sector can be found in Appendix H.

Benefits that could be garnered from the film sector include:

➤➤ **Direct Employment:**

Hiring local crew members, actors, and extras.

➤➤ **Indirect Employment:**

Boosting demand for local services such as catering, transportation, and accommodation.

➤➤ **Business Revenue:**

Increased patronage of local businesses including restaurants, hotels, and shops by film crews.

➤➤ **Long-term Tourism:**

Fans visiting filming locations, boosting tourism revenue.

➤➤ **Facility Upgrades:**

Investment in filming facilities and local infrastructure improvements.

➤➤ **Technological Advancements:**

Encouraging the adoption of new technologies and services that can be utilized by other industries.

➤➤ **Local Promotion:**

Increased visibility and promotion of the municipality as a filming location can attract future projects.

➤➤ **Community Pride:**

Enhancing community pride and cultural recognition.

6.6 Adjacent Industry to Key Sectors or Employers

Orillia has a number of major sectors of employment and large employers in the city and region who require support and servicing for their operations. This could range from services such as trades, facility cleaning, and catering, to the development of innovative products and process solutions to address challenges or evolutions in a sector or business. Better understanding the gaps that exist in the community, through regular business visitation, will help the community narrow in on the best opportunities. Opportunities may include serving the needs of and supporting innovation in the defense-related sector, given the OPP presence and close proximity to CFB Borden; the health and home care sector, which can support the expanding hospital and aging population; and the energy sector, exploring opportunities to support Hydro One operations.

7. The Strategy

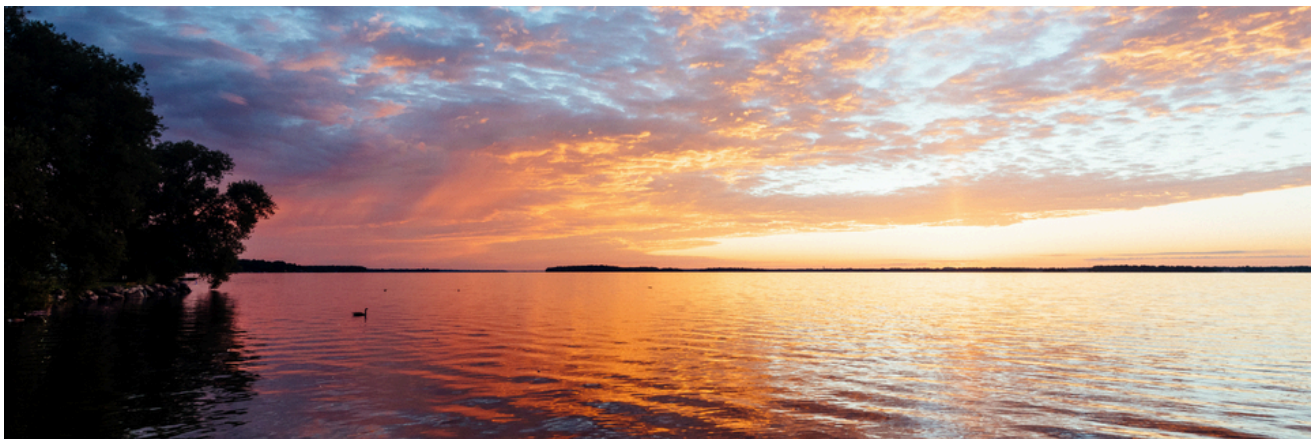
This section lays out the City of Orillia's 2025-2029 Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan, including departmental mission, vision, goals, objectives, actions, timelines, and performance metrics that can be utilized. This strategy is designed to support the City of Orillia as it grows over the next 5 years, solidifying it as an innovative and desirable destination for investment, living, and tourism. Overarchingly, it is meant to provide guidance to the Orillia Business Development Office and the broader City of Orillia on how best to support economic growth and development as the community continues to see ongoing population growth. The strategy should be considered a living document and revisited on an annual basis to evaluate performance, when possible, and ensure the relevance of upcoming tactics to implement.

7.1 Implementation Timelines and Notes

This strategy lays out several timelines which are defined as the following:

- **Short:** Activities that will start within Year 1
- **Mid:** Activities that will start in Years 2 -3
- **Long:** Activities that will start in Years 4 - 5
- **Ongoing:** Activities that are already taking place or will begin shortly and should continue.

Generally, unless an activity is to establish or undertake a very specific task, once started, most activities should be considered ongoing tasks. For example, from Goal 1, Objective 1, developing the investment attraction marketing plan, the plan will be developed at a single point in time, but marketing collateral and activities should be undertaken, reviewed and updated regularly throughout the five-year period to ensure their relevance.





7.2 Mission

The Orillia Business Development Office will promote and foster economic and tourism growth to benefit the residents and business community within the City of Orillia.



7.3 Vision

A vibrant, thriving, connected Orillia that is celebrated for its diverse and innovative business community and high quality of life for residents. The City enables and attracts investment that adds value to its existing employer base and is responsive to the needs of the community.

7.4 Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Plan

7.4.1 Goal 1

Increase jobs and Orillia's average income through targeted investment attraction and workforce development.

Lower income and education levels in the City of Orillia were a noted challenge from the research and consultation process. Consultation and background data also revealed a number of retail, service, and entertainment gaps and investment opportunities to target. With limited land ready and available for new investment, the City of Orillia must be strategic about the type of investment they are attracting. Investment attraction efforts should focus on creating high quality employment within identified sectors of opportunity including advanced manufacturing; tourism; health and wellness; green, sustainable, and environmentally focused businesses; and industries adjacent to key sectors and employers; as well as addressing identified retail and service gaps within the community. The City must also prepare for on-going growth and consider where and how they will support future employment given their existing land constraints.

Goal 1 aims to coordinate and enhance the City's investment attraction efforts, drive investment in areas of critical need, enhance the workforce to support new and growing businesses, and enable improved participation in the workforce. Investment attraction and workforce development are two key needs within a community that has lower than average wage and education rates.

1 Objective 1:

Attract and enhance Orillia's sectors of opportunity, as well as retail and service industry.

Actions		Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Develop and implement an investment attraction marketing plan targeting the identified key sectors of opportunity.	31.19% of survey respondents say they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with current job opportunities in Orillia. Many of them noted a prevalence of low-wage and low-skill employment opportunities.	Short Term	The gap between Orillia average income and Simcoe County's overall average income decreases. A follow up survey indicates residents are more satisfied with the job opportunities in Orillia.
A2	Work with Planning to support the attraction of new retail and commercial opportunities to newly developed neighbourhood commercial space.	City of Orillia's planning division indicated they are focussed on complete community development. Major employers noted the importance of complete and livable communities.	Mid Term	Inventory of all residential communities is created with specific target needs to provide a complete community.
A3	Update the retail mix analysis.	58% of survey respondents shop outside of Orillia because they can't find what they need in the City and 57% shop outside of Orillia for a better variety of stores.	Long Term	Follow-up survey results indicate Orillia residents are visiting retail stores, services, and entertainment outside of the City less frequently.

2 Objective 2:

Stimulate and support transformative investment to meet the needs of the community.

Actions		Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Revise CIP to prioritize brownfield redevelopment, attainable housing, medical facilities and commercial property ownership.	Consultations identified the need for brownfield redevelopment, and attainable housing was the number 1 ranked economic development need in the community.	Short Term	New funding levels created to support priorities and annual CIP budget is leveraged fully while commercial property ownership increases by 15%.
A2	Update CIP application process to make it more business friendly.	Consultations revealed high dissatisfaction with the current application process.	Short Term	Total number of applications received increases by 50%.
A3	Create brownfield revitalization plan.	Fort Erie created a brownfield strategy and tax incentive program in 2009 that has since resulted in over \$1.2 million increase in property tax from redeveloped brownfield sites and 600 jobs for remediation and clean up work alone.	Long Term	A plan is created that provides incentives and disincentives by the City to stimulate brownfield development.

3 Objective 3:

Improve local and regional workforce attraction and development efforts.

Actions		Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Support the Physician Recruitment Committee	Consultation with residents, employers, and stakeholders all identified there is a significant need for more doctors and medical facilities in Orillia.	On-going	The number of family physicians in Orillia increases
A2	Work with partners to develop and support initiatives that improve workforce attraction, retention, and development for Orillia businesses.	The City and partners have a strong record of success in supporting workforce development and attraction efforts, and residents perceived their job options to be limited, especially with lower education rates.	On-going	On follow up surveys, less businesses (by sector) identify workforce as a challenge.
A3	Educate local elementary and high-school students about future career opportunities in Orillia.	With an older population on average, employers noted that they anticipated many upcoming retirements and have not seen an interest from youth in the community, who will be key to maintaining the stability of the workforce.	Mid Term	The number of youth who have a better understanding of employment opportunities in Orillia have increased.
A4	Work with partners to enhance the "Living in Orillia" website page for workforce attraction purposes.	Orillia has many attractive assets to showcase, however the current Living in Orillia webpage is no longer competitive compared to the workforce/resident attraction webpages and efforts of other communities, who are now adapting content to be more personal and engaging (i.e. with video or audio storytelling).	Mid Term	Awareness of Orillia as a place to work has increased. On follow up surveys, less businesses (by sector) identify workforce as a challenge.
A5	Collect information on future employer skill requirements to share with partners to advocate for future program development and enhancement.	Collecting data about employment needs will assist post-secondary and workforce development partners to plan future programming to meet the needs of the community.	Short Term	New educational opportunities are created to meet employer needs today and in the future.

4 Objective 4:

Improve access to employment opportunities for residents facing barriers.

Actions	Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Work with community partners to create and implement a plan to better support people in the community facing significant barriers to find employment.	Long Term	The number of individuals facing barriers who find employment as a result of partnership intervention increases. Perceptions of safety in the downtown increase.



7.4.2 Goal 2

More businesses start and grow in Orillia.

Orillia is home to many unique and exciting businesses, creative ideas, and resources to help those businesses grow. Best practices identify that most employment growth comes from existing businesses, and small urban communities in the surrounding region have focused on dedicating resources geared towards supporting entrepreneurs to innovate and grow within their own communities. Similarly, Orillia has taken a critical step towards supporting entrepreneurial growth through the recent creation of Fuel Innovation which should be a key tool to drive innovation within the City and its business community and harness broader local and regional resources. Orillia and Simcoe County is home to a rich ecosystem of small business supports that should be considered key partners to enhance communication, connection, and data collection with the business community.

Goal 2 aims to catalyze and enhance the existing entrepreneurial ecosystem in the city by better connecting and coordinating the partners and businesses; supporting, celebrating, and fueling innovation; connecting with businesses to collect data, provide direct support, and better meet their needs; and working with post-secondary institutions to leverage their expertise and connect their students into the community. Creating a local ecosystem that seamlessly supports business development and growth and celebrates innovation will encourage and assist more businesses to start, locate, or expand their operations in Orillia.

1 Objective 1:

The local economic development and tourism support ecosystem and business communities are well-connected to facilitate growth.

Actions		Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Create and implement a Communications Plan and process that will improve, centralize, and streamline communications between economic development and tourism stakeholders and the business community.	Consultation revealed confusion between business development service providers making it difficult to access information or participate in relevant events that would enable business growth. Shared promotion also reduces costs and duplication.	Short Term	A Communications Plan is created. Participation by Orillia businesses in local and regional business-development events and resources increases.
A2	Host bi-annual business networking sessions.	45.83% of businesses that responded to the survey indicated they are interested in more networking opportunities and further consultation revealed that some businesses are not well-connected to others operating in the same sector.	Mid Term	Orillia businesses are making new B2B connections, measured by follow up surveys.
A3	Make Orillia's economic development website more business friendly.	Despite an existing website with links to resources and information for businesses, consultation noted that many businesses did not know where to find relevant economic development information. 58% of businesses who responded to the survey identified that they would like more information on business development resources.	Mid Term	Business Development Website usage increases.

2 Objective 2:

Fuel Innovation is utilized to catalyze a culture of innovation in Orillia.

Actions		Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Build awareness of Fuel Innovation and excitement for innovation in the community through education, storytelling, and celebration.	Fuel Innovation is new to the Orillia business development ecosystem and needs to generate awareness amongst potential partners, referrers, the business community and community at large.	Short Term	The number of business accessing Fuel services increases. The number of events and partnerships Fuel is involved in increases.
A2	Support and enable the adoption of corporate intrapreneurship by Orillia organizations.	Most job growth comes from existing businesses. The Fuel Innovation business case identified this as a key area of opportunity to support business development.	Short Term	Businesses are growing (products, sales, employment) as a result of accessing Fuel services.

A3	Connect businesses to capital and resources.	Fuel Innovation business planning identified that access to capital was a challenge for many businesses. Businesses often found that completing government funding applications was too complex.	Short Term	The number of successful funding applications to support business development increases.
A4	Champion innovation across Orillia, including the City's operations.	Consultation revealed a desire for an Orillia that embraces innovation and change with a strategic and forward-thinking approach. Implementing innovation should also result in the identification of efficiencies.	Short Term	The number of City projects utilizing Fuel Innovation increases.
A5	Dedicate the resources necessary to incorporate innovation support services as a core mandate of the business development office.	Innovation is a core driver of economic growth, resulting in the development of new products, processes, ideas, and efficiencies and in-house programming ensures the specific needs of the local business community are targeted. Many Simcoe County communities offer supports and services related to innovation making this a key local need to maintain competitiveness amongst your neighbours.	Mid Term	Fuel Innovation becomes an on-going service delivered by the Business Development Office.

3 Objective 3:

There is an established Business Visitation Program to monitor trends and provide support for organizational needs, challenges, and opportunities.

Actions		Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Define and implement a formal Business Visitation Program.	87% of jobs are created by businesses that already exist in a community. On-going visitation will enhance two-way communication and data collection with the business community, better enabling businesses to take advantage of local and regional resources.	On-going	Increased engagement from business contacted (participation in events/resources)
A2	Provide assistance to businesses to address major challenges and opportunities, as required.	Supporting businesses as they address major challenges or leverage major opportunities will enhance your relationship, improve the likelihood they will continue to operate and grow in Orillia, and encourage them to become champions for the City of Orillia.	On-going	Businesses facing challenges are retained, businesses with opportunities are able to grow (sales, employment, physical/digital footprint)

A3	Collect and analyze data to guide future activity development and implementation, monitor progress on strategy goals and objectives, and collect business information.	Data collection and analysis is critical to monitor the success of strategy tactics, as well as to inform future program and resource development.	On-going	The BDO analyzes and reports on the data collected on an annual basis and adjusts strategic tactics where necessary.
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4 Objective 4:

It's easy and desirable to start and grow a business in Orillia.

Actions	Rationale	Timeline	Measurement	
A1	Work with Planning to increase the City's openness to investment. This can include improving communications between the departments, working with planning to support and enable new strategic developments, and providing input and support on Zoning By-Law, Official Plan, and other review processes.	43.48% of business survey respondents noted that doing business with the City can be challenging. There is significant alignment between Business Development and Planning departments goals/activities but no existing formal collaboration.	On-going	On-going survey feedback indicates that fewer respondents feel it is challenging to do business with the City.
A2	Work with and support partners to offer business development supports and networking opportunities to businesses in the community.	There are a number of local and regional partners that offer basic business development supports and networking, and consultation revealed a desire to enhance these.	On-going	Participation in programming and networking results in the creation and expansion of jobs and businesses.
A3	Advocate for identified business needs to the appropriate partners and/or government bodies.	There are a number of policy, regulatory, and funding barriers to economic development in Orillia that are dictated by upper levels of government, including immigration, housing, and transit.	On-going	Advocacy goals are addressed by upper levels of government.



5 Objective 5:

Post-secondary institutions and students are well-integrated into the community and are key contributors to local economic development.

Actions	Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Address the needs and challenges of students, as identified through regular engagement with student and post-secondary representatives.	On-going	The number of engagements with students by the BDO and it's partners increases. Engagements include targeted programming, resources, events, and communications.
A2	Create opportunities to share information about and better connect post-secondary students, faculty, and business development resources with the business community.	Mid Term	Follow up surveys reveal an increasing number of students are finding and staying in employment in the City of Orillia. The number of Orillia businesses utilizing post-secondary supports and resources increases.
A3	Improve access to information about the community for students.	Mid Term	The number of promotions and advertisements directed to students from local non-profits, businesses, and the City increases. Follow up surveys with businesses and organizations reveal a perception that more students are visiting the downtown and engaging in community opportunities.



7.4.3 Goal 3

Orillia is an ideal location for living and visiting to attract and retain a stable workforce.

With its beautiful waterfront and strategic transportation assets, Orillia presents an attractive location for investing, living, and visiting. Downtown Orillia was highlighted as a key community asset that attracts people to the community as a result of interesting and appealing stores, good restaurants, and engaging art displays. Many noted the art displays are an important feature of the downtown, and arts and culture is central to Orillia’s identity. There is an opportunity to leverage and enhance these features to truly set Orillia apart from other communities through a coordinated placemaking effort, which is proven to enhance time spent in communities in the short-term, and connection to communities in the long-term, ultimately attracting and retaining residents, investment, and visitor spending. Despite being a great place to live and visit, the consultation process identified several challenges facing the community including the cost-of-living, access to housing, transit, perceptions of safety in the downtown, the physical divide presented by Highway 11, and newcomer integration. Consultation also revealed demand for additional recreation, entertainment, event, and festival opportunities, as well as on-going public space enhancement.

Goal 3 aims to establish Orillia as a top-tier destination for living and tourism by enhancing the look and feel of the community through coordinated placemaking, improving housing and transit options, creating a more welcoming community, enhancing safety and access in the downtown, and ensuring economic development considerations are a priority when undertaking city planning activities. Offering a high quality of place and life will encourage more people to consider relocating to Orillia, expanding the capacity of the workforce, and stimulating new investment.

1 Objective 1:

A coordinated community brand and strategy to support placemaking across the community.

Actions		Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
AI	Enhance the working relationship between culture, business development, and tourism by bringing the culture position into the Business Development Division.	By bringing culture and business development into one department this will ensure the creation of vibrant public spaces and fostering cultural development are directly connected to generating economic opportunities and improving Orillia as a great place to invest, live, work, visit, and enjoy. A culture position is located within economic development organizations across many communities including St. Thomas and Kawartha Lakes to ensure cultural investment is aligned with economic development goals.	On-going	Culture and business development are working closely on placemaking initiatives. Feedback from businesses indicates increased sales as a result of culture-related programming.

A2	Develop a coordinated Community Identity and Placemaking Strategy to guide public space enhancement and connectedness across the community. Include consideration for public art, public space development, and events and festivals.	Consultations revealed that Orillia has a reputation for it's charming downtown that embraces arts and culture. However, barriers, such as the physical division of Highway 11 and negative community perceptions from some residents were noted as reasons why people are not spending money in the community. A coordinated approach to community placemaking and identity development will create a better place to live, help instill community pride, and encourage movement and spending around the community. Section 5.3 details the economic and intangible community benefits derived from placemaking activities.	Short Term	Feedback from businesses and residents indicates increased spending, usage, safety, and enjoyment of placemaking areas of focus, and community overall.
A3	Celebrate the identity and placemaking successes through economic development and City communication channels.	Sharing exciting developments that enhance the community will get residents and visitors excited about Orillia and encourage them to visit and shop in the community more frequently.	Mid Term	Follow up surveys indicate residents are leaving the area less frequently to shop and recreate

2 Objective 2:

The City advocates for and supports the attraction of diverse, attainable housing development.

Actions		Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Communicate and advocate for the needs of economic development and the business community to enable the development of housing that is affordable and accessible for the workforce.	Access to affordable and available housing for average wage earners was identified as the most important economic development need according to the resident survey and was regularly noted as a challenge to finding workforce by businesses and stakeholders throughout consultation.	On-going	More housing that is considered affordable for Orillia's average wage earners is created.
A2	Create and promote CIP opportunities related to workforce attainable housing.	The CIP program provides financial incentives for property enhancements. This can and should include the development of workforce attainable housing.	Short	The number of new workforce attainable housing created through the CIP program.

3 Objective 3:

Orillia is a place where students and newcomers feel at home.

Actions		Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Dedicate staff and resources to relationship development with the Local Immigration Partnership, community cultural groups and local organizations.	Consultations revealed that Orillia lacked cultural amenities and, in some cases, residents experienced racism, which limits the City's ability to attract immigrants and people of diverse backgrounds to pursue employment in the City. Building relationships with the Local Immigration Partnership and local representatives of cultural groups and organizations helps facilitate better two-way information sharing so the City can promote employment and business development resources and the community can inform the City about their needs.	Mid Term	New relationships are established and data on immigrant economic needs is collected and analyzed.
A2	Determine pathways for ongoing collaboration to co-create supports and programming to address student and newcomer identified needs.	Several community needs were identified through consultation with key stakeholders such as a need for additional ethnic grocery facilities, ESL support, and connections to employment and employment readiness support. Cultural communities will have the best insight on how to approach those needs.	Long Term	The percentage of immigrants in Orillia increases. Survey results indicate improving perceptions of locating in Orillia amongst newcomers.

4 Objective 4:

Improved public transit service and active transportation corridors better meet the needs of employers and the student community.

Actions		Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Advocate for transit schedule changes to better meet the needs of community employer and students.	Consultation revealed that the current transit schedule and coverage present a challenge in terms of accessing employment opportunities, as well as to access the downtown and other parts of the community for retail, service, and entertainment needs.	Mid Term	Usage of transit amongst the workforce and students increases. Follow up survey and consultation data with the business community indicate more employees are able to utilize transit.
A2	Advocate for the improvement of cycling infrastructure, such as lanes on the road, bike racks in key locations (near employers, downtown, Couchiching Park), signage at strategic points along the trail.	Consultation revealed a desire for improved cycling infrastructure within the City to support active transportation (help employees get to and from work) and tourism.	Long Term	Survey and consultation data reveal increasing satisfaction with workforce transportation options.

5 Objective 5:

There is an improved perception of safety in and access to the downtown area.

Actions		Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Invest in enhancing street lighting, to provide well-lit public spaces at night. Prioritize areas between parking, transit, open venues, and the waterfront.	Consultation revealed that Downtown Orillia is major asset to the community, however there is a perception that is unsafe in the downtown, especially at night, and improved lighting was considered critical to improving those perceptions and usage of downtown in the evening.	Mid Term	Follow up consultation indicates that sales in the evenings have increased in the downtown, and that perceptions of safety in the downtown have improved.
A2	Explore partnerships with OPP, local post secondary programs, and social service agencies to improve perceptions of safety in the downtown community.	<p>Consultation revealed people feel unsafe in the downtown as a result of the increased presence or perception of presence of homelessness, drug usage, and mental health issues.</p> <p>Orillia is home a critical mass of partners focused on community safety and serving populations facing barriers. Partners need to work collaboratively to better address perceptions of safety in the downtown.</p>	Mid Term	Negative perceptions of safety in the downtown decrease.
A3	Work with Development Services to ensure accessibility on sidewalks, roads, and downtown storefronts.	Consultation identified that the sidewalks and storefronts in downtown Orillia are not always accessible. This is a barrier when those with mobility challenges want to access retail and services in the downtown.	Short Term	Follow up consultation reveals that sidewalk accessibility is no longer a barrier to accessing the downtown.



6 Objective 6:

Economic development goals are an important consideration when making planning decisions

Actions		Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Regularly connect with large institutions and employers to collect information on development needs and advocate outcomes that best align with economic development goals (such as new hospital site, Lakehead University expansion, Hydro One).	Orillia will continue to experience rapid growth in the foreseeable future. There are several large projects in planning and development stages within the community that could have a significant economic development impact. These can be further leveraged with the right planning policy and support for strategic infrastructure, connectivity, and development.	On-going	Large project needs have been clearly identified and the business development team is supporting their implementation in the form of future policy and advocacy for strategic/supportive investment.
A2	Establish internal checks and balances that integrate economic development goals and considerations in the development of new residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational spaces.	As growth continues, there is a need to consider economic development goals in overall community planning and development activities, plans, and strategies to ensure that all strategic efforts seek to position and enhance Orillia as a community with a great quality of place to live, work, visit, and run a business.	On-going	Economic development goals are considered and integrated, where relevant, into future plans and strategies for the City of Orillia.

7.4.4 Goal 4

The tourism sector grows by maximizing opportunities to increase visitor spending year-round.

The tourism sector is a major employer within the community, and a key driver of traffic to retail and services in the downtown and across the community. Consultation revealed there were opportunities to enhance the strength of the sector through shoulder and off-season tourism development, targeted sub-sector development (i.e. of sports tourism), better connectivity between assets, and improved packaging of experiences. It was also noted that while strides have been made to align partnerships and roles, there is still the opportunity to ensure partners are communicating and working on initiatives that engage within and across Orillia's tourism sector partners to add additional value to tourism-related businesses.

Goal 4 aims to increase tourism visitation, spend, and stay by refining collaboration and coordination of tourism marketing and development activities amongst partners, and enhancing shoulder season product development and appeal of the City. By targeting these elements, the City will ensure the tourism sector remains vibrant and grows in strategic and value-added ways for the community, resulting in higher paying employment opportunities and new assets in the community.

1 Objective 1:

Formal channels for marketing, communication, and collaboration with and amongst local tourism stakeholders results in improved visitor attraction.

Actions		Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Facilitate improved partnership and connectivity within the tourism sector.	The tourism sector has many players involved and consultations revealed that many businesses and stakeholders would like to see a more coordinated effort to create and promote tourism activities to maximize the economic and social impact of efforts.	Short Term	Business and non-profit participation in events, activities, and advertising increases on a per-event basis.
A2	Work with sector partners to promote a shared event calendar of public and private tourism-facing events in Orillia	Consultation revealed a perception that there are many competing sources of visitor and event information, with most being incomplete, resulting in confusion for visitors on where to find accurate information.	Mid Term	Shared calendar website visitation increases. Events see an increase in year over year participation.
A3	Work with sector partners to develop targeted marketing materials and features to draw visitors into and around downtown Orillia and other strategic areas of the community.	Consultations reveal that businesses feel there are opportunities to enhance the promotion of key tourism assets, retail, and service providers to a broader audience of visitors. A print and digital community map would better enable visitors to move around the community, spending more and staying longer.	Mid Term	Demand for physical maps/digital community map visitation increases.



2 Objective 2:

Orillia boasts strong shoulder season product development and appeal.

Actions	Rationale	Timeline	Measurement
A1	Provide support to public and private partners to establish new festivals, events, and programming that support a thriving downtown and community.	Festivals, events, and programming help draw people into the community and downtown for spending. Consultations revealed a desire for additional and more coordinated festivals, events, and public space programming.	Short Term The number of festivals, events, and public space programs increases. Follow up surveys with businesses note an increase in sales as a result for tourism-related businesses (including retail).
A2	Work with partners to coordinate opportunities for tourism packaging to increase visitor stay and spend. This could include the development and promotion of day tripping itineraries, tourism experiences and packages, and festivals and events that extends visitor spend and stay.	Consultation with the tourism sector identified barriers that guests face accessing regional attractions due to a lack of transportation and understanding of the geography. An opportunity to expand visitors' spend and stay through better connections and packaging of product between operators was identified.	Mid Term Average visitor stay (# of nights) increases.
A3	Undertake targeted investment attraction of key gaps in the tourism sector.	Based on consultation, key gaps in the tourism sector still exist including restaurants, tour operators, recreational rental operators, family entertainment centres, and broadly, additional entertainment options.	Mid Term Investment in key sector gaps increases.
A4	Assess the feasibility of success in sport tourism development based on current assets.	Consultation revealed a desire to further explore how the sports tourism sector can add value to the community, building off the recent success of the Ontario Winter Games and Orillia's existing recreational assets.	Long Term New sports tourism events are established.
A5	Enhance and develop the necessary infrastructure to attract and welcome cyclists.	Orillia has excellent local and regional trails for cycling, however signage, wayfinding, and infrastructure along the route is minimal. Improvements would enable the City to better capture visitor spending and leverage the promotional efforts of Tourism Simcoe County.	Mid Term Use of cycling infrastructure increases. Visitation by cyclists to the downtown increases.
A6	Improve linkages between trails and nature assets and commercial spending opportunities.	Orillia has excellent outdoor recreational experiences that draw visitors to the region and support a high quality of life for residents. To maximize economic impact, trail signage should draw users into the downtown or to points of interest/commerce in the community.	Long Term There is an increase in foot and bike traffic in key commercial areas identified via signage.

APPENDICES

- **Appendix A: What is Economic Development?**
- **Appendix B: Local and Regional Economic Development Assets**
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Appendix A: What is Economic Development

With the internet and global travel well established, businesses can locate and operate virtually anywhere in the world, as we have seen with hybridization of work through the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that the City of Orillia is competing against every other municipality in the world for investment, workforce, and visitors. Orillia has many worthwhile assets that enable it to stand out among similar sized and structured cities, however thanks to economic development efforts, competitor communities are making themselves increasingly attractive on a regular basis. Businesses will locate where it is easiest and most favourable for them to do business, meaning communities that support business growth, development, and innovation and create high qualities of place that make people want to live there will be the most successful. Continuing and refining its economic development activities will enable Orillia to further spur impactful growth and development in the community by coordinating and engaging assets and partners in a meaningful way and creating awareness about the opportunities within Orillia to live, work, study, and visit. Economic development and the role of an economic developer in a city the size of Orillia is varied, including enhancing the local economy, creating job opportunities, and improving the overall quality of life for residents. To guide strategic considerations, there are several key areas where economic development work is focused including:

Attracting Investment:

Economic developers work to attract new businesses, industries, and investments into their community. They may do this through marketing campaigns, networking with potential investors, and offering incentives such as tax breaks or subsidies.

Supporting Local Businesses:

Economic developers focus on supporting existing businesses within the community. This might involve providing resources and assistance to help them grow, expand, or overcome challenges. Strong local businesses contribute to economic stability and job creation.

Workforce Development:

A skilled workforce is essential for attracting businesses and fostering economic growth. Economic developers often collaborate with educational institutions, training programs, and workforce development agencies to ensure that residents have access to the education and training they need for available job opportunities.

Infrastructure Development:

Infrastructure, including transportation, utilities, and technology, plays a vital role in economic development. Economic developers may advocate for infrastructure improvements and work with government agencies and private partners to develop necessary infrastructure that supports business growth.

Community Development:

Economic development is not just about economics; it's also about improving the overall well-being of the community. Economic developers may collaborate with local government, nonprofits, and community organizations to address social and environmental issues, enhance public spaces, and promote cultural activities.

Promoting Entrepreneurship and Innovation:

Encouraging entrepreneurship can drive innovation and create new economic opportunities. Economic developers may provide support and resources for aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators, such as mentoring programs, workshops and education, access to funding, and assistance navigating regulatory requirements.

Destination Development and Promotion:

By enhancing the appeal and visibility of a location, these efforts drive visitor spending in sectors such as hospitality, retail, and entertainment. This stimulates the local economy, encourages infrastructure improvements, and fosters community pride. Moreover, a well-promoted destination can attract new residents and businesses, contributing to long-term economic growth and sustainability.

Data Analysis and Planning:

Economic developers often conduct research and analysis to identify economic trends, opportunities, and challenges facing the city. This data-driven approach helps them develop strategic plans and policies to guide economic development efforts effectively.

A.1 Orillia's Economic Development Efforts

Orillia's Business Development Office is responsible for leading and implementing economic development initiatives within the City. Their role is multifaceted and involves a combination of planning, partnership building, project management and implementation, community engagement, resource mobilization, program monitoring, and advocacy. They will play a pivotal role in coordinating community stakeholders and facilitating project and program development and implementation.

Currently, the team consists of a Director of Business Development, Tourism & Modernization, a Manager of Economic Development, an Economic Development Coordinator, a Manager of Fuel Innovation and a coordinator at Fuel Innovation. To undertake some of the more human resource heavy tasks, such a business visitation and data collection, the economic development department should look to supplement their staff team where possible with students or subsidized positions.

A.2 The Role of Innovation in Economic Development

Activities that foster innovation typically fit within the broader ecosystem of economic development initiatives in a city or region and serve as a focal point for entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, and collaboration among various stakeholders, including startups, established businesses, researchers, investors, and community members. Supporting innovation drives economic growth through increased efficiency, the development of new businesses and salable products and services, and enhanced support for business sustainability. Innovation activities can include:

 **Entrepreneurship Support:**

Innovation activities often provide resources and support services tailored to the needs of startups and entrepreneurs. This may include access to co-working spaces, mentorship programs, business incubation services, and networking opportunities. By nurturing a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem, communities contribute to job creation, economic diversification, and business growth.

 **Technology Commercialization:**

Many innovation activities focus on bridging the gap between research and commercialization by facilitating collaboration between academic institutions, research organizations, and industry partners. They may offer technology transfer services, licensing assistance, and funding opportunities to help turn innovative ideas and research discoveries into viable products and businesses.

 **Industry Collaboration:**

Innovation activities support industry collaboration and partnership development. They provide a platform for businesses to connect with each other, share best practices, and explore opportunities for collaboration on research, development, and innovation projects. This collaborative environment fosters knowledge exchange, accelerates innovation, and enhances competitiveness across industries.

 **Workforce Development:**

Innovation activities can focus on creating the innovative workforce of the future. This can include things like educational programs, workshops, and training opportunities to develop the skills and talent needed for the innovation economy. These may include coding bootcamps, entrepreneurship courses, technical skills training, and professional development programs.

 **Community Engagement:**

Innovation activities engage with the local community to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. They may host events, meetups, and outreach activities to raise awareness about innovation opportunities, inspire creativity, and encourage participation from diverse groups. By involving the community in the innovation process, these centres ensure that innovation benefits are accessible and inclusive.



Economic Impact:

Innovation activities contribute to the economic development of the region by attracting investment, creating high-quality jobs, and stimulating economic growth. They serve as magnets for talent, capital, and ideas, driving innovation-led development and positioning the region as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship on a national or global scale.

Innovation activities help set communities apart with regards to support available for businesses. They support the creation of higher value employment, address challenges related to lower incomes in Orillia, and spur creative thinking, that can be leveraged to address barriers facing Orillia. These activities also generate increased efficiency and effectiveness in organizational operations.

A.2.1 Fuel Innovation

Fuel Innovation (Fuel) is a relatively new initiative of the City of Orillia, initiated in July 2023. Fuel has a mandate to increase innovation in the community and is crafting a suite of programming to support businesses, organizations, and community members with the development of innovative projects and ideas and access the resources to realize them. Initially, services will include workshops, hackathons, connections to resources, and support for grant writing. From there, Fuel will continue to evaluate community needs and evolve programming to adapt.

Part of Fuel's suite of activities will engage post-secondary students in the development of creative solutions facing business challenges. This will continue to demonstrate the value of the student base to the business community, as well as offer opportunities to establish students in high value roles within the community, building experience and networking connections.

Fuel provides an important bridge for the business community to connect to supports that will enable them to innovate within their business, leading to meaningful employment, business growth, and community innovation. Providing local innovation support is an increasingly competitive landscape and a number of municipalities in Simcoe County have created or are in the process of creating initiatives that support innovation within their own community. At the same time, the Ontario government has announced the creation of a new Regional Innovation Centre, based in Barrie, just half-hour down the road. It is recommended that Fuel connect with these regional innovation partners regularly to share information and resources, plan events and workshops, and build bridges between regional innovators.



A.3 The Role of Placemaking in Economic Development

This economic development strategy places emphasis on placemaking, its importance in enhancing resident and visitor spending and more importantly enhancing residents and visitor connection to the community. Placemaking is an approach to community-building that connects people to their built environment by making everyday shared and public spaces into destinations and gathering places. The practice combines public art, beautification, activation, and wayfinding as interconnected solutions.

Effective placemaking invites communities to shape shared spaces, layering them with meaning, values and identity and reflecting the community's uniqueness and diversity. While beautification and revitalization are often byproducts of placemaking initiatives, the act of collectively and collaboratively making a place promotes a community's health, happiness, and well-being. Creating spaces that residents, local business owners, and community groups love and appreciate, in turn, enhances the community experience, ultimately supporting the attraction and retention of workforce, business, youth, visitors, and economic growth, in addition to other benefits.

Placemaking initiatives can be temporary or permanent, large or small scale. The outcomes might include signage and wayfinding, public artworks and installations, events and festivals or programs and initiatives. The critical piece is that the community defines the sense of place and shared vision, which then comes to life in the built environment.

Placemaking is a vessel for expressing community distinctiveness, which is an often-overlooked ingredient to economic success. A 2010 study with 43,000 responses across 26 American cities found that the most important factors in creating emotional bonds between people and their community is "physical beauty, opportunities for socializing and a city's openness to all people." Additionally, the study finds that communities with the highest attachment levels had the strongest economies ([study link here](#)).

Placemaking is both a creative and collaborative action, and a form of strategic public investment in the economic vitality that entices people and businesses to choose a particular location. In city building, private investment often follows public investments made in elements like street renovations, pedestrian-friendly areas and environments that support businesses. Cities and towns that pursue placemaking efforts are more likely to attract new residents, businesses and investment and see a return on investment than those who pursue traditional economic development methods. New populations move to — and invest in — places that have their own sense of community and offer continuous city-wide experiences for their visitors.

A.3.1 Arts and Culture-Based Tourism and Sector Development

Supporting and supported by municipal placemaking efforts is the arts and culture sector. This sector includes a wide range of sub-sectors including music, visual arts, performing arts, literature, music, film, heritage, and more. A strong arts and culture sector contributes significantly to the vibrancy, identity, and economic vitality of a city or region through a number of mechanisms:

➤ **Tourism and Cultural Tourism:**

A robust arts and culture scene attracts tourists and visitors, who contribute to the local economy through spending on accommodations, dining, shopping, and entertainment. Cultural tourism can drive foot traffic to museums, galleries, theatres, and cultural events, generating revenue for local businesses and supporting jobs in the hospitality and tourism sectors.

➤ **Quality of Life and Livability:**

Arts and culture enhance the quality of life for residents by providing opportunities for creativity, expression, connection, and enrichment. Access to cultural amenities such as theatres, art galleries, parks, and festivals enriches community life, fosters social connections, and promotes overall well-being. Cities with vibrant arts and culture scenes are often perceived as more attractive places to live, work, and visit.

➤ **Creative Economy and Innovation:**

The arts and culture sector contribute to the creative economy, which encompasses industries such as design, fashion, media, and entertainment. Creative industries drive innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic diversification by generating new ideas, products, and services. Cities with strong arts and culture sectors attract creative talent, spur innovation, and fuel economic growth in related industries.

➤ **Place Branding and Identity:**

Arts and culture play a crucial role in shaping the identity and character of a city or region. Cultural landmarks, public art installations, festivals, and events contribute to the distinctiveness and uniqueness of a place, helping to differentiate it from competitors and attract attention on a global stage. A strong cultural identity enhances place branding efforts and promotes civic pride among residents.

To enhance the arts and culture sector for economic development purposes, cities utilize the following strategies:

1 **Investment in Placemaking and Cultural Infrastructure:**

Cities can invest in cultural infrastructure, including public stages, arts venues, museums, theatres, galleries, and public art installations. By providing spaces for creative expression and cultural exchange, cities can attract artists, performers, and cultural organizations, driving cultural tourism and economic activity.

2 Support for Arts and Cultural Organizations:

Cities can provide financial support, grants, and incentives to artists, arts organizations, and cultural institutions. This support can help sustain the arts ecosystem, promote artistic excellence, and ensure access to cultural experiences for residents and visitors alike.

3 Cultural Districts and Creative Hubs:

Cities can designate and develop cultural districts or creative hubs where arts and culture activities are concentrated. These areas serve as focal points for cultural tourism, creative industries, and community engagement, fostering collaboration and innovation within the arts community.

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5 Promotion and Marketing:

Cities can actively promote their arts and culture offerings through marketing campaigns, events, and cultural tourism initiatives. Effective promotion can raise awareness, attract visitors, and generate positive publicity for the city's cultural assets, driving economic impact and supporting local businesses.

6 Cultural Planning and Collaboration:

Cities can develop comprehensive cultural plans in collaboration with stakeholders from the arts community, government agencies, business leaders, and community organizations. These plans can outline strategies for supporting the arts, enhancing cultural infrastructure, and integrating arts and culture into broader economic development efforts.

By recognizing the value of the arts and culture sector and investing in its growth and sustainability, cities can leverage its economic potential to create a more vibrant, resilient, and inclusive urban environment for residents and visitors alike.

Quantifying the return on investment (ROI) of the arts and culture sector can be challenging due to its multifaceted nature and the diverse range of benefits it provides. While some economic impacts of the arts and culture sector can be measured directly, such as ticket sales, tourism spending, and job creation, others, such as improved quality of life and community well-being, are more difficult to quantify. However, several studies and research efforts have attempted to assess the ROI of the arts and culture sector from various perspectives, and a snapshot of economic benefits include:

➤ **GDP Impact:**

Arts and culture in Ontario directly contribute \$27 billion annually to the provincial economy, representing 3.4% of Ontario's GDP.²

➤ **Tourism Impact:**

Cultural tourists tend to spend more and stay longer than other tourists. For example, arts and culture tourists make up 13% of all tourist trips in Ontario but accounted for 30% of tourist spending. On average arts and culture tourists spent \$618 in economic impact on a weekend trip, while non-arts and culture tourists averaged \$213 in economic impact. Canadian arts and culture tourists tended to stay in a location for longer with 40% staying for 3 or more days compared to only 13% of non-arts and culture tourists.³

➤ **Job Creation:**

There are more than 254, 985 culture jobs in Ontario, comprising 3.8% of Ontario's total employment.⁴

➤ **Return on Public Investment:**

Studies have found public investments in the arts yield positive returns in terms of tax returns, job creation, and economic growth. For example, a 2016 report by the Toronto Arts Council found that every \$1 the City of Toronto invests in the non-profit arts sector generates \$8.25 in earned revenues plus an additional \$11.77 from other levels of government and the private sector.⁵

While these figures provide a glimpse into the economic impact of the arts and culture sector, it's essential to recognize that the full ROI encompasses not only economic benefits but also social, cultural, and educational outcomes that contribute to the overall well-being and vitality of communities.

A.3.2 Placemaking in Orillia

Placemaking presents an attractive economic development opportunity for Orillia, both leveraging its strengths as a creative community and utilizing it as a tool to address challenges, such as lack of connectivity across the community. Many businesses, residents, and stakeholders noted that historical placemaking efforts in the downtown have built on Orillia's strengths in arts and culture to create unique and engaging pieces that appeal to visitors and residents. It was also noted that Orillia is generally considered a creative community, with many local artists, performers, and creative thinkers.

[2] <https://www.arts.on.ca/research-impact/impact-of-the-arts-in-ontario>

[3] <https://onculturedays.ca/arts-and-culture-tourism/#:~:text=Arts%20and%20Culture%20tourists%20make,culture%20trips%20averaged%20at%20%24213.>

[4] <https://www.arts.on.ca/research-impact/impact-of-the-arts-in-ontario>

[5] https://torontoartsfoundation.org/tac/media/taf/Research/Toronto%20Arts%20Facts/2016_Toronto-Arts-Facts.pdf

Now there is the opportunity to elevate that identity and activate engaging community spaces around the city to truly set the community apart from others as a place to live, visit, and operate a business. There were a number of themes that arose in the consultation the suggested that placemaking would enhance Orillia's economic and community potential that are summarized below.

A.3.3 Public Space and Art

Orillia's downtown currently lacks functional public gathering spaces, prompting discussions on creating better spaces for people to sit, eat, and enjoy activities like live performances and community events. The closure of Mississauga Street for summer events has been well-received, and residents and businesses expressed a desire for more pedestrian and bike-friendly initiatives in the downtown and community.

Orillia is recognized as a creative community with existing public art pieces, yet feedback suggests a desire for more public art, including murals in the downtown area. Although Orillia has a public art committee, there are challenges with the speed of process and available funding for new art projects. There is also an opportunity to involve the broader community, especially students, in art creation projects to drive community engagement and shared identity building.

Consultation suggested there is the potential to better integrate art into public places in ways that better engage community users to enhance those spaces, such as encouraging chalk art and live music performances. It was suggested that the Peter Street Arts District requires more support, utilization and celebration from the city. Overall, consultation revealed a significant desire to further supporting the integration of engaging public gathering spaces and art in Orillia's downtown and community revitalization efforts.



A.3.4 Identity

During consultations, the question of Orillia's identity repeatedly emerged. In answer to that, two key themes arose. First, Orillia is recognized as the home of art, culture, and music, boasting connections to notable figures like Gordon Lightfoot, hosting events such as the Mariposa Folk Festival, and based in close proximity to major events venues such as Casino Rama and Burl's Creek. Second, Orillia is seen as a caring, committed, and volunteer-driven community, one where residents generally desired to give back and be involved in the community. However, there was also a perception that some in Orillia harbor self-loathing for the city and fail to recognize or engage in the city's positive aspects, leading to negativity on social media platforms.

A.3.5 Lack of Connectivity Between the Community

Orillia's layout is split by Highway 11, creating a physical division between West Ridge, which hosts big-box stores, affluent neighborhoods, Lakehead University's satellite campus, and a sports complex, and the downtown/"older" side of town, which is home to a number of smaller neighbourhoods, the waterfront, and another recreation centre. It was suggested that strategies should be identified to encourage residents to frequent businesses and community amenities across the community.

A.3.6 Leveraging Sports Tourism

A number of those consulted noted Orillia's recent success and on-going potential to host sports tourism opportunities. Sports tourism offers a dynamic avenue for placemaking. By hosting sports events, communities can enhance their identity, boost local economies, and foster a sense of pride among residents.

Sports tourism attracts visitors, drives infrastructure development, and generates revenue for local businesses, creating a positive economic ripple effect. Facilities like stadiums, parks, and sports complexes often become community landmarks, promoting active lifestyles and community engagement.

Furthermore, sports events provide opportunities for cultural exchange and community celebration, strengthening social bonds and enhancing the area's appeal. By strategically leveraging sports tourism, communities can create inviting, inclusive spaces that reflect local values and offer memorable experiences for both residents and visitors.



Appendix B: Local and Regional Economic Development Assets

Orillia has a host of economic development assets that help set it apart from other communities and will be crucial to driving future growth. These assets are discussed in the section below.

B.1 Location

Orillia boasts excellent transportation infrastructure, including major highways (such as Highway 11 and Highway 12), and close proximity to the Lake Simcoe Regional Airport in neighbouring Oro-Medonte, and Lester B. Pearson International Airport, in Toronto, an hour and a half down Highway 11 and 400. This ensures efficient logistics and connectivity for businesses, facilitating easy access to suppliers and customers. Orillia is situated near major cities including Toronto and Barrie, providing businesses with access to large markets, a significant customer base, and ample business opportunities without the high costs associated with operating in larger cities.

B.2 Geography

Situated between Lake Couchiching and Lake Simcoe, Orillia boasts extensive waterfront areas that are ideal for tourism and recreation. The lakes provide opportunities for boating, fishing, swimming, and other water activities, attracting tourists and supporting businesses in the hospitality and leisure industries. The natural beauty of Orillia and the region, which is home to a number of parks, trails, and green spaces, make it an attractive destination for both residents and visitors and supports a high quality of life, which is a key factor for businesses seeking to attract and retain talent.

B.3 Downtown

From the consultation, Orillia's downtown is seen as a major asset, with its charming appearance and diverse mix of shops and restaurants. However, there are several concerns that were identified for consideration to further enhance this important asset. These include:

- Perceived safety issues that could be partly addressed through improved lighting and cleanliness.
- Inaccessible storefront and sidewalks in need of repair, presenting accessibility challenges.
- A desire for businesses to better understand the demographics of the downtown community.
- An interest from businesses in a networking night to facilitate connections between businesses and residents in the downtown.

- Brownfield funding removal was considered disappointing and detrimental towards downtown revitalization efforts.
- A desire to attract students to the downtown area. It was suggested that improved transportation, expanded nightlife and entertainment options, and better promotion of events to students would assist.
- Orillia's downtown is known for its arts and culture scene and there were suggestions to enhance events like Streets Alive and attract mural artists to increase downtown traffic and economic impact.
- Additional needs included more unique businesses, better signage to attract visitors, improved connections between downtown and the waterfront, and more evening activities to cater to diverse demographics.

Lastly, it was noted that the downtown receives a lot of focus, and it is also important to ensure vibrancy in other areas of the community, not just the downtown core.

B.4 Waterfront and Access

Orillia is bordered by the picturesque Lake Couchiching and Lake Simcoe and boasts multiple beaches such as Couchiching Beach and Tudhope Park. There is the potential to further capitalize on and promote these assets to benefit the community while avoiding overuse. The city also features several marinas, including the Port of Orillia, conveniently located near downtown. Many boaters frequent the town for supplies, presenting opportunities to attract more visitors, especially those traveling along the Trent-Severn Waterway. Leveraging these water-based attractions can enhance tourism and economic development in Orillia while preserving the natural beauty of its waterfront areas.

Orillia recently sold a significant portion of its waterfront land for redevelopment, which will feature townhomes, mixed-use retail areas with green space, and a gathering space. The development presents an opportunity to attract new and vibrant investment into high-value and community defining spaces along one of Orillia's key assets, its waterfront. Given the proximity to downtown, attention must be given to effectively connecting the downtown area to the waterfront redevelopment, ensuring smooth traffic flow for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles between the two areas.

B.5 Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital

Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital (OSMH) plays a pivotal role in the city's economic development efforts for several reasons:

- OSMH is the primary healthcare provider in the region, offering a wide range of medical services including emergency care, surgery, diagnostics, and specialized treatments.

- OSMH is one of the largest employers in Orillia, providing well-paying jobs for medical professionals, administrative staff, and support personnel. This employment generates significant economic activity through salaries and wages spent in the local economy, supporting other businesses and services. Having a reputable hospital helps attract and retain skilled healthcare professionals, such as doctors, nurses, and specialists. This influx of professionals often leads to higher standards of living and increased demand for housing, education, and other services, further stimulating economic growth.
- OSMH supports local businesses through its procurement needs. Hospitals require a wide range of supplies and services, from medical equipment to food and maintenance. If there is an opportunity to source these locally, the hospital will further stimulate economic activity and support local suppliers and contractors.
- The hospital often collaborates with educational institutions like Lakehead University and Georgian College for training and internships. These partnerships help create a pipeline of skilled workers and foster innovation in medical practices and technologies. Training opportunities, such as the impending establishment of the Family Medicine Teaching Unit also attract students and professionals to the city.
- OSMH can be a hub for medical research and innovation, potentially partnering with universities and research institutions. Research activities can attract funding, create high-paying jobs, and lead to the development of new medical technologies and treatments, contributing to the local economy.
- Healthcare is a relatively stable sector, less susceptible to economic downturns compared to other industries. This stability provides a steady economic base for the city, ensuring continuous economic activity and employment even during broader economic fluctuations.
- The presence of a comprehensive healthcare facility like OSMH enhances the overall quality of life in Orillia.

Access to quality healthcare is a key factor for residents' well-being and ensuring Orillia is an attractive place to live and work. A healthy population is more productive and can contribute more effectively to the local economy.



B.6 Lake Simcoe Regional Airport (LSRA)

The LSRA is a key transportation hub located in between Orillia and Barrie in Oro-Medonte. It serves as a key access point for Simcoe County and supports overflow operations from Pearson, offering a range of aviation services. The airport is strategically positioned to support local and regional economic growth, in close proximity to Highway 400. It has undergone significant upgrades to enhance its infrastructure and capacity to be able to welcome larger aircrafts and international flights with a 6,001 ft runway, and customs and immigration services. They provide general, corporate, and air cargo services.

The LSRA is owned by the County of Simcoe, and they have a significant interest in expanding business opportunities at the LSRA. Further consideration should be given as to spin off opportunities related to the aviation industry that would be appropriate for Orillia, given the limited available industrial land. The airport's presence can also attract businesses requiring quick and convenient access to air travel, such as corporate headquarters, logistics companies, and manufacturing firms.

Future plans, as articulated in their strategic plan, include further extending the runway to 7,000 ft, enhancing charter and air service activities, and in the longer term, undertaking scheduled flight services. They also intend to undertake an economic impact study. Orillia should continue to connect with the County of Simcoe about future growth opportunities at the LSRA and explore the development of aviation and aerospace adjacent industries that align with airport needs locally, and beyond.

B.7 Hydro One

Hydro One's expansion into Orillia involved the acquisition and integration of Orillia Power Distribution Corporation (OPDC) and the construction of a new advanced electricity grid control centre. This expansion aims to enhance the reliability and efficiency of power distribution in Orillia and the surrounding region. Hydro One officially acquired OPDC in 2020. The acquisition aligns with Hydro One's broader strategy to expand its service territory and enhance operational efficiencies. It is expected to improve service reliability, introduce new technology investments, and provide the Orillia area with better outage management, quicker response times, and enhanced customer service.

The new state-of-the-art grid control centre is being constructed in Orillia and this facility is expected to play a crucial role in managing and controlling the electricity grid across the province. The centre will utilize advanced technologies to monitor and control the electrical distribution system, improving grid reliability and efficiency. The construction and operation of the grid control centre is creating well paying and meaningful employment opportunities in Orillia, contributing to the local economy.

Hydro One's expansion represents a significant investment in Orillia's infrastructure, which supports local economic growth. They are committed to working closely with the Orillia community to ensure a smooth transition and to address any concerns related to the acquisition and new developments. They are also eager to work with partners, such as local post-secondary institutions, to help enhance training and employment opportunities for students as they anticipate an upcoming wave of retirements.

Overall, Hydro One's expansion into Orillia marks a significant development in the region's energy sector, promising enhanced service reliability, economic growth, and community benefits.

B.8 Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Headquarters

The OPP Headquarters serves as the central command centre for one of North America's largest deployed police forces. The facility plays a critical role centralizing operations, administration, and support of the OPP's activities from across Ontario in Orillia. The headquarters encompasses multiple divisions, including administrative offices, specialized units such as forensic services, emergency response and cybercrime units, and support services. There are also training facilities for new recruits and ongoing professional development.

The OPP is a major employer in Orillia and offers well-paying employment to the community through law enforcement, administrative, and support service roles. It also creates a spinoff economic development impact through job creation in sectors such as maintenance, security, IT support, and local supplies and services. Further relationship building with the OPP would be beneficial as they represent a significant local employer and potential partner in the community. Future opportunities could explore partnerships for local technology firms to collaborate on developing advanced law enforcement technologies and solutions. This could be encouraged through innovation-related partnerships and pilot projects with the OPP.

B.9 Community Improvement Plan

The City of Orillia's Downtown Tomorrow Community Improvement Plan (DTCIP) Grant Program aims to stimulate economic development and revitalization within the downtown core. Launched in 2017, the program provides financial incentives to property owners and tenants for projects that enhance the downtown area. The program supports various types of projects including facade improvements, signage, feasibility studies, building improvements, and the creation of residential units. For 2024, the program has allocated \$200,000 in grants to support downtown projects. The program has successfully supported a variety of projects. For example, a grant was awarded to revitalize a downtown building to create a co-working innovation space and art gallery which generated over \$1,000,000 in investment. Another grant was utilized to revitalize a rear store façade and add additional retail space which helped expand product offerings and create new jobs within the downtown core.

The Downtown Tomorrow Community Improvement Plan (CIP) includes several incentive categories designed to stimulate economic growth and development in the downtown area including:

1 Facade Improvement Grants:

To encourage property owners to improve building exteriors, enhancing the downtown's aesthetic appeal.

2 Building Improvement Grants:

To support internal renovations that make buildings more functional and attractive for businesses.

3 Residential Grant Program:

To support internal renovations that make buildings more functional and attractive for businesses.

4 Feasibility/Design Study Grants:

To provide funds for preliminary studies that help property owners plan renovations or new developments.

These incentives align with the broader goals of enhancing economic vitality, attracting businesses, and fostering a vibrant downtown core, which are essential components of a successful economic development strategy for Orillia.

It's worthwhile to note that although the CIP represents an impactful tool to stimulate business investment in the community, business owners felt the application process was complicated and struggled to cover upfront costs to be reimbursed later. Streamlining the application process and providing more accessible funding mechanisms could help enhance the downtown area and facilitate eventual brownfield redevelopment.

B.10 Post-Secondary Institutions

Post-secondary institutions have the potential to create significant economic spin offs within the community, both through the students, and research and innovation supports. Post-secondary institutions also contribute to enhancing the social and cultural fabric of communities through university-sponsored events, lectures, and performances, as well as increased diversity and cultural exchange, fostering a more vibrant community.

Orillia is home to two post-secondary institutions, Lakehead University and Georgian College. This section will provide an overview of both institutions, as well as general considerations for students.

B.10.1 Students

Post-secondary students are an important group to consider when implementing this strategy as they represent a potential workforce of the future of Orillia. They want to be involved in and employed in the community, however, face several barriers to participation, including:

- Lack of awareness of events and engagement opportunities: marketing and promotions of these opportunities are often not geared towards students.
- Lack of awareness of community career paths and how to access employers in the community.
- Timelines for cooperative education terms that don't always align with industry needs.
- Limited transit routes and schedules.
- Access to in-community mental health support and walk-in clinics.
- More affordable housing options.
- Cultural differences and language barriers for international students.

Consultation highlighted a desire to attract students to commercial areas and, in particular, in the downtown as there was a sentiment they are not currently visiting the downtown. It was suggested that gearing marketing, activities, events, and initiatives to students and young adults would encourage more students to visit downtown. Consultation also noted that consideration should be given to commercial uses appropriate for students, including entertainment uses, based in closer proximity to post-secondary campuses as well.

B.10.2 Lakehead University

Orillia is home to a satellite campus of Lakehead University, which has its main campus in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Established in 2006, the Orillia campus offers a range of undergraduate and graduate programs, emphasizing interdisciplinary studies, sustainability, and community engagement. The campus is expanding, and they expect to have 3,500 students by 2032, including more international students. They also host a second location based in downtown Orillia. Ingenuity, the student incubator based on their Thunder Bay campus, is also expanding to Orillia to support business development for students. 47% of their students are from Orillia and Simcoe County, and many are the first generation in their family to pursue university education, highlighting the critical role Lakehead University plays in increasing education levels and opportunities within the city.

In addition to providing meaningful direct employment, Lakehead University contributes a significant economic impact to Orillia through their student community and connections with employers. It was noted that the impact of those opportunities could be further enhanced through better connections with the student community and faculty. This includes improving communications with the student community about local happenings, enhancing connections for employment and research, and continuing to work together to make the community a more welcoming place for students, in particular international students.

Lakehead University also collaborates with local industries on research projects, supporting the development of new products, services, and startups. They are regularly exploring new opportunities to connect with Orillia employers and share more information about the services offered. Leveraging Lakehead University's leadership on sustainability practices and environmental stewardship through university programs and community projects, there is the potential for Orillia to become a model for sustainable development, attracting eco-conscious businesses and residents. Lakehead has also signed an MOU with Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital on shared values, and commitment to community and working together, highlighting future opportunities for educational partnerships, work-integrated learning, research partnerships and potential collaboration on HR recruitment in the health and wellness space.

By leveraging these programs, resources, and opportunities, Lakehead University significantly contributes to the local economy, supporting business growth, innovation, and workforce development. These initiatives not only help businesses thrive but also foster a vibrant and sustainable economic landscape in the Orillia region.

C.10.3 Georgian College

Orillia is home to a satellite campus of Georgian College that specializes in human and social services, community safety, and veterinary programs, aligning well with key employers in the community. The College has an extensive cooperative education program and is committed to connecting students into the community, something they would welcome on-going partnership to enable. Georgian is also the first college in Canada designated a changemaker college by Ashoka U for its role as a leader in social innovation and changemaking in higher education. The Orillia campus is home to their flagship Community Impact Lab, which provides a space and model to support individuals and organizations to build flourishing communities and economies, tools that could be useful for future community-oriented economic development initiatives (placemaking, community safety, etc.).

Several key economic development considerations were highlighted related to the Orillia campus, including emphasizing holistic inclusion of students in the community, addressing transportation challenges for work-integrated learning, enhancing community marketing to retain students, providing socialization and recreation opportunities, and improving access to mental health support and walk-in clinics, particularly for international students facing cultural and language barriers. It was also suggested that the community could enhance their planning for recreation opportunities for all ages and abilities.

Creative problem-solving, partnerships, and tangible relationships between the College, employers, and the community are sought after, including discussions about a student village downtown, amplifying existing partnerships and integrating students into the community through collaborations with the City and businesses.

It was also noted that Georgian College is a leader in DEI training and partnerships could be explored to deliver training and support initiatives on a broader community scale.

Beyond the Orillia campus, Georgian College is home to campuses in Barrie, Midland, Bracebridge, Orangeville, and Owen Sound. In addition to training students, Georgian College offers a variety of resources to support business development through its Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre (HBEC). They provide services across the Georgian College catchment that include mentorship programs, workshops and training programs, financial support, and networking. Through Georgian College's campus in Barrie, they also provide state-of-the-art tools and resources for product development and testing, academic-industry partnership, and collaborative projects to drive innovation.



Appendix C: Local Economic Development Ecosystem

In economic development, partnership is critical. The City of Orillia should intend to work with the partners across their economic development ecosystem to implement the actions identified in the strategy and work towards accomplishing the goals and objectives where there is alignment. The following section details key partners across the ecosystem.

C.1 Orillia and Area Community Development Corporation

The Orillia and Area Community Development Corporation (CDC) is one of 61 non-profit organizations dedicated to fostering economic growth and development across Ontario. The CDC supports businesses and organizations in Orillia and the surrounding region. They offer a variety of programs and services designed to support local businesses, entrepreneurs, and the broader community. These include:

➤➤ **Business Financing:**

The CDC provides access to loans and financing options for new and existing businesses. This financial support helps businesses start, expand, and innovate, contributing to local economic growth.

➤➤ **Business Consulting and Support:**

Entrepreneurs and business owners can access free consulting services, including business planning, marketing strategies, and operational guidance.

➤➤ **Training and Workshops:**

The CDC hosts various workshops and training sessions on topics such as digital marketing, financial management, and leadership.

➤➤ **Community Economic Development Initiatives:**

The CDC engages in projects and partnerships aimed at enhancing the economic vitality of the region, such as regional business retention and attraction visitation programming, and regional investment attraction initiatives.

➤➤ **Youth Employment Programs:**

The CDC developed a program to encourage and support the hiring of youth facing barriers in the community, including a wage subsidy.

» Succession Matching Program:

The CDC offers a Succession Matching Program designed to facilitate smooth transitions of ownership for local businesses. This program includes assistance with business valuation and assessment, buyer and seller matching, succession planning workshops, confidential advisory services, and access to a resource network of professionals, including lawyers, accountants, and financial advisors to support business owners through the succession process. This is a critical program to help ensure the long-term viability of Orillia's business community.

C.2 Orillia Chamber of Commerce

The Orillia Chamber of Commerce is a membership-based organization that supports a diverse array of businesses, from small, local enterprises to large corporations. It provides a range of services and programs aimed at supporting its members and enhancing the local business climate including advocacy and representation, networking opportunities, educational workshops and seminars, business resources and support, promotion and visibility, community events, and member discounts and benefits. It also manages the Port of Orillia, which includes operation of the marina and organization of waterfront focused events.

C.3 Employment Ontario Service Providers

These organizations include Agilec and Georgian College and provide employment assistance to community job seekers. This includes workshops and resources on finding a job, assistance with preparing for application and interview, and assistance accessing employment opportunities. These organizations also build relationships with employers to better understand their needs and find the right employment match. They are funded by the provincial government through a service system manager, who provides guidance on current priorities. One current priority is helping those on social assistance prepare for and access employment opportunities.

C.4 Downtown Orillia BIA

The Downtown Orillia Business Improvement Area (BIA) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the economic and cultural vitality of Orillia's downtown core. It plays a crucial role in promoting the area, supporting local businesses, and fostering a vibrant community atmosphere. It is funded primarily through a special levy on properties within its boundaries. The BIA's mission is to create a thriving downtown that attracts visitors, residents, and businesses. It undertakes marketing and promotions, events and festivals, beautification, and advocacy efforts on behalf of downtown businesses.

C.5 County of Simcoe

Orillia is a single-tier City surrounded by the County of Simcoe on all sides. It has a strong partnership with Simcoe County's economic development office and works closely with them to support major assets like the LSRA and Lakehead University. The County plays a key role in supporting the development of regional economic development initiatives, with much of their work focused on investment attraction, workforce development, key sector development, and supporting entrepreneurship and innovation program development. The County also has a 5-year economic development strategy currently under implementation. The key goals of the strategy include:

- Simcoe County will be recognized as a premier destination for investment in Ontario.
- Through an excellent quality of life, education and careers, Simcoe County attracts and retains talent to support the needs of its thriving business community.
- Businesses stay and grow in the region, supported by a strong and innovative business development environment.
- The County of Simcoe's Economic Development Office is a leader in facilitating and building effective and collaborative relationships that create a strong ecosystem for regional economic development.
- Advocate for and support the delivery of infrastructure to meet the needs of a competitive business community.

The work and strategy of the County is complementary to the City's economic development efforts and they should be considered a key partner in strategy implementation.

C.6 Orillia and Lake Country Tourism (OLC)

Orillia and Lake Country Tourism is a non-profit destination marketing organization dedicated to promoting tourism and economic development in Orillia, Severn, Oro-Medonte, Ramara, and Rama First Nation. This organization plays a crucial role in showcasing the area's natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and diverse recreational opportunities. By collaborating with local businesses, municipalities, and community groups, OLC creates strategic marketing initiatives to draw residents and tourists around the unique offerings of Orillia and its surrounding communities.



C.7 Oro-Medonte, Severn, Ramara

The City of Orillia is bordered by the Townships of Oro-Medonte, Severn, and Ramara. These are rural communities who utilize Orillia as a service centre for retail, personal and professional services, and employment. They have many assets related to tourism and there are future opportunities for partnership in that sector. Consultation emphasized the importance of collaboration and partnership with municipal and regional partners. There is a desire to work on product packaging, regional events, and transportation solutions. Additionally, there are opportunities for collaboration with Ramara, particularly regarding development along the Rama Road corridor. Overall, it was suggested that there is a need to continue educating councils and partners on the value of partnership and collaboration for regional economic development initiatives.

C.8 Rama First Nation

The Chippewas of Rama First Nation currently have 1,269 members living off-reserve and 720 living on-reserve (2020). They are Ojibwe peoples, part of the Three Fires Confederacy along with the Odawa and Pottawatomi Nations. Their economic development efforts focus on enhancing on-reserve business operations such as Casino Rama and their cannabis store. Casino Rama is a major driver of tourism in the region, hosting many high-quality performers, a casino, hotel, and food options. Consultation revealed there is potential for on-going collaboration with Rama, including exploring opportunities such as an Indigenous health hub, a bus service to Casino Rama, and promoting connections between the Rama Marina and downtown Orillia.



Appendix D: Internal Partners

Economic development efforts also require partnership within the City itself. Most City departments can or do play a role in supporting economic development from Development Services, who reviews and approves development; to Parks, Recreation, and Culture, who facilitate a high quality of life for residents in the community; to the Library, who provides meaningful community programming and learning opportunities; to the Finance department that allocates and approves community improvement plan budgets. This section will provide a brief overview of two of the most key internal departments the business development office can expect to work with, including development services and engineering and youth, recreation, and culture departments.

D.1 Development Services and Engineering

The Development Services and Engineering Department is responsible for Planning and Housing, Engineering, and Legislative, Building, Parking and Transit Services. Any development taking place in the city must be approved by this department and they are responsible for ensuring the adequate zoning and allocation of land for future employment purposes, including allocating industrial and commercial land.

In addition, the Development Services and Engineering Department is actively involved in:

- Recreational trail development
- Transportation studies/surveys
- Studies related to specific planning issues
- Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) (formerly Local Planning Appeals Tribunal (LPAT))
- Statutory public meetings
- Matters related to affordable housing and student housing
- Asset Management

Consultation with the City's Development Services Team revealed some key considerations for the economic development strategy. In the coming years, there are a number of key areas of focus for their team including:

- **Walkable, Complete, Neighbourhood-level Communities:**
Prioritize walkable communities with accessible pedestrian infrastructure that are complete and self-sufficient.
- **Upzoning:**
Encourage high-density developments to optimize land use.

» **Downtown Growth:**

Support high-rise residential projects in downtown.

» **Diversified Employment Base:**

Allocate more employment lands to attract varied industries and strengthen the job market.

» **Infrastructure Planning:**

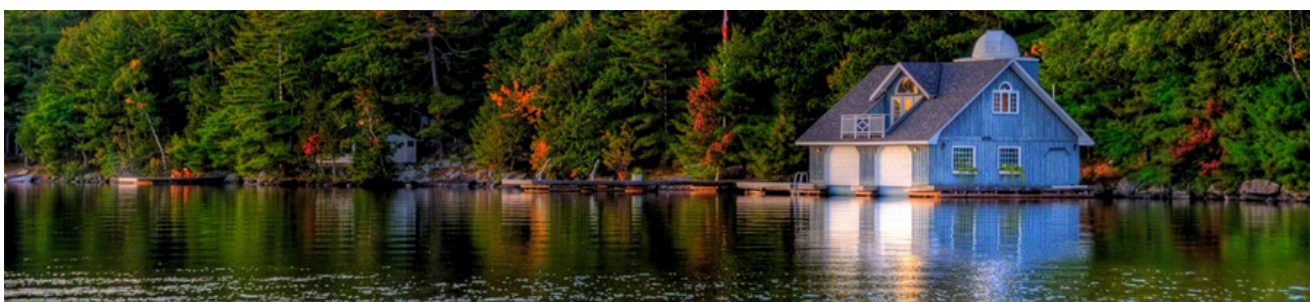
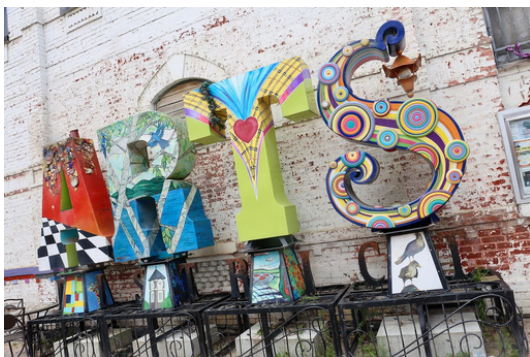
Improve transportation infrastructure, particularly around Highway 2, to alleviate congestion and support growth.

D.2 Recreation, Youth and Culture

The City of Orillia’s Recreation, Youth and Culture Division is responsible for a variety of recreation, cultural, and leisure opportunities, and is instrumental in organizing many sport tourism initiatives. These programs and services preserve and enhance the quality of life for present and future generations.

As a team, the staff work with different organizations to identify and fulfill the recreational, cultural and sports needs of the citizens of Orillia.

Culture staff are responsible for playing a leadership role in cultural planning and development for the City of Orillia. They work to support and strengthen the sector through municipal policies, programs and plans. They support communication, cooperation, and coordination amongst cultural groups and organizations; provide staff resources to the Municipal Heritage Committee and Art in Public Places Committee, and represent the City of Orillia on various community boards and committees. Engagement of culture staff in the implementation of this economic development strategy will be essential to successful placemaking and quality of life enhancement for the City.



Appendix E: Background Documents and Reports

To ensure this economic development strategy is in alignment with existing community strategies, the development process involved a review of existing strategies and reports that relate to economic development at the City level. The following section provides a summary highlights and key economic development takeaways for each document. Common themes amongst the goals and objectives of these documents included:

- Development of affordable housing.
- Support for arts and culture.
- Enhance quality of life and public space.
- Improve connectivity, accessibility, and safety in the downtown.
- Diverse employment opportunities and a strong tourism sector.

E.1 Orillia Youth Strategy

The Orillia Youth Strategy is currently under development with four main goals:

- Develop a community youth strategy with a focus on the community growth, community needs and expansion and the Orillia Youth Centre's current operations.
- Develop a detailed implementation plan, conducting a needs assessment, and engaging with the community.
- Develop a Youth Service Map outlining coverage, gaps and barriers.
- Recommendations for sustainable growth of youth services in Orillia.

Given the importance of retaining youth in the community, particularly with Orillia's aging population, this strategy will be an important document to guide the community in creating a vibrant space for youth within Orillia.

E.2 Downtown Tomorrow Plan

The Downtown Tomorrow Plan aimed to revitalize the downtown area and link it more effectively to the Lake Couchiching waterfront. It outlines a 20-year vision for the area and emphasizes the enhancement of the downtown's attractiveness as a place to live, work, and visit, which is crucial for sustainable growth and development. The Plan aimed to accomplish this in the following through the following goals:

- Increase the Residential Population and Offer a Full Range of Housing Options

- Reinforce Downtown as a Civic and Institutional Hub
- Acknowledge Orillia's Indigenous History and Reinforce Its Cultural Richness
- Enhance the Shopping and Dining Experience
- Improve Connections Downtown and Enhance Safety
- Create and Enhance Spaces for Playing, Gathering and Relaxing
- Promote Orillia as a Year-round Destination and Enhance the Visitor Experience

The Downtown Tomorrow report provides a strategic framework for revitalizing Orillia's downtown area, which is central to the city's economic development strategy. By focusing on residential growth, enhancing civic and cultural assets, improving connectivity, and offering targeted economic incentives, the plan aims to create a vibrant, sustainable, and attractive downtown that supports overall economic growth.

An update was developed in June, 2024. It acknowledges the significant changes since its initial adoption in 2012, and seeks to address contemporary global and local challenges, including climate change, housing affordability, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The updated plan contains 31 strategic initiatives and almost all of them align with economic development goals in this strategy, including:

- **Affordable Housing:**
Enhancing the availability of affordable housing to attract diverse populations and ensure community sustainability.
- **Infill Development:**
Promoting development within the existing urban area to optimize land use and maintain the small-town feel.
- **Hospital District Secondary Plan:**
Optimizing the future use of the Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital (OSMH) site for mixed-used development.
- **Enhanced Community Improvement Plan (CIP):**
Updating CIP programs to encourage brownfield redevelopment, residential conversions, and façade improvements.
- **Transforming the Farmer's Market:**
Engaging with market stakeholders to enhance the market's role in the community.
- **Indigenous Culture and History:**
Recalling and celebrating Indigenous culture and history to enrich the community's cultural fabric.

➤➤ **Support for Artists and Community Groups:**

Providing space and support for artists and community groups to foster a vibrant cultural scene.

➤➤ **Mississaga Street Upgrades:**

Upgrading key streets to enhance the public realm and improve pedestrian experiences.

➤➤ **Public Art and Engaging Public Space:**

Integrating public art into the urban environment to beautify downtown and create engaging public spaces.

➤➤ **Active Transportation Connections:**

Improving connections for walking and cycling to encourage sustainable transportation.

➤➤ **Streetscape Improvements:**

Enhancing the visual appeal and functionality of streets in key areas.

➤➤ **Downtown Intensification:**

Focusing on redevelopment and intensification efforts in the southern part of downtown.

➤➤ **Attraction of Accommodation in the Downtown:**

Attracting new and unique accommodators to aid Orillia in extending visitor stay and improving visitor experience.

The Business Development Office should expect to be involved in the implementation of many of the Plan's initiatives to maximize their economic impact and ensure economic development strategy goals, objectives, and approaches are considered.

The updated Downtown Tomorrow Plan offers a comprehensive approach to revitalizing Orillia's downtown, emphasizing sustainable growth, housing affordability, cultural enrichment, and infrastructure improvement. By addressing these key areas, the plan aims to create a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient downtown that supports economic development and enhances the quality of life for all residents.

E.3 City of Orillia Strategic Plan 2019 - 2022

The City's Strategic Plan outlines a comprehensive roadmap for the City's development and decision-making. It will be essential for the economic development strategy to align with the City's overarching vision and strategy. Within the document, a mission, vision, and several strategic goals are identified. These are highlighted below:

**Vision:**

Orillia is progressive and sustainable, offering an exceptional quality of life, vibrant culture, beautiful waterfronts and a compassionate, welcoming and inclusive community.

**Mission:**

The City of Orillia's mission is to enrich the quality of life for all members of this community by providing professional and progressive services and programs that foster health and wellness, protect the environment, embrace diversity, honour culture and actively explore opportunities for the future.

Strategic Goals:**>> Quality of Life:**

Enhance culture, arts, and recreation to engage citizens and improve well-being.

>> Healthy Environment:

Commit to waste reduction, urban greenery, and clean water initiatives.

>> Vibrant Waterfronts:

Promote the use and enjoyment of Orillia's waterfronts year-round.

>> Sustainable Growth:

Manage growth to accommodate population and employment targets, promote tourism and cultural activities, and ensure infrastructure investments align with community priorities.

>> Heritage Core:

Revitalize the core area and promote heritage initiatives.

>> Professional and Progressive City:

Leverage technology for efficient city operations, deliver client-centric services, and ensure fiscal sustainability.

Key takeaways for the economic development strategy include:

- >>** The emphasis on enhancing arts, culture, and recreation to support the development of a vibrant community that attracts residents, tourists, and businesses.
- >>** The desire to promote year-round tourism and cultural activities to mitigate the effects of seasonality and boost local businesses.
- >>** The plan's focus on sustainable growth and environmental stewardship aligns with attracting green and environmental technology businesses, which can provide economic diversification and resilience.
- >>** Strategic infrastructure investments ensure the city can support new and existing businesses.

- The commitment to a revitalized downtown and vibrant waterfronts will enhance the attractiveness of Orillia as a place to live, work, and invest.
- Leveraging technology and data to improve City operations can create a business-friendly environment, facilitating the establishment and growth of innovative companies.
- Ensuring long-term financial sustainability allows the City to invest strategically in economic development initiatives that provide the most significant impact.

E.4 Orillia Official Plan

The City of Orillia Official Plan is scheduled to be updated across four phases beginning in 2023. It will provide a comprehensive framework for the city's growth and development up to the year 2031. The Plan establishes four guiding principles:

- Manage growth responsibly and efficiently.
- Promote a complete community supporting a healthy, safe, and diverse population.
- Ensure environmental sustainability and integrity.
- Promote a strong and diverse employment base.

It details specific policies for residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational land uses, as well as policies for areas with unique attributes or significant importance, and heritage policies that aim to preserve and enhance Orillia's heritage resources. It also describes infrastructure and service priorities for the City in coming years.

There are a number of themes in the document that will be relevant for consideration in the City's economic development strategy including:

- **Responsible Growth Management:**
The Plan focuses on accommodating population and employment growth within defined boundaries and through intensification initiatives, ensuring efficient use of existing infrastructure.
- **Community Development:**
Emphasizes creating a complete community that supports diverse housing options, healthy living, and safety.
- **Environmental Sustainability:**
Policies aim to protect and enhance natural environments, promote sustainable land use practices, and ensure the city's development does not compromise ecological integrity.
- **Economic Diversification:**
Promotes a strong and varied employment base, encouraging economic activities in commercial, industrial, recreational, and tourism sectors.

» **Heritage and Cultural Preservation and Tourism Promotion:**

The Plan includes policies to maintain and enhance Orillia's heritage and cultural resources, which can be leveraged for tourism and community pride.

» **Infrastructure and Services Enhancement:**

Prioritizes improvements in transportation, public works, and municipal services to support growth and enhance quality of life.

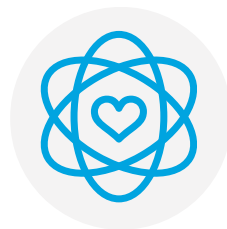
E.5 Orillia Library Strategic Plan

Orillia Public Library's Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 is designed to guide the library in creating opportunities for learning, inspiring imagination, exchanging expertise, and cultivating possibilities. While not directly linked to economic development, libraries have been evolving into much-needed community hubs, offering a suite of programming and learning opportunities to enhance community life and employability. The plan puts forth a mission statement, values, and a series goals and objectives highlighted below:



Mission Statement:

The library's mission is to create opportunities for people to engage in learning, inspire imagination, exchange expertise, and cultivate possibilities.



Values:

- **Inclusivity:** Ensuring equal access to resources and programs.
- **Learning:** Commitment to lifelong learning and staff development.
- **Effectiveness:** Efficient resource use and responsible financial decisions.
- **Community:** Providing safe spaces and working with partners to enhance service access.
- **Service:** Developing services that meet community needs through consultation and connection.



Goals and Objectives:

- **Bridge People and Resources:** Diversifying collections, promoting digital literacy, and supporting lifelong learning.
- **Enhance Services:** Optimizing use of physical and virtual spaces, removing service barriers, and collaborating with partners.
- **Demonstrate Our Value:** Marketing services consistently, seeking community input, and proving economic impact.
- **Grow Our Capacity:** Providing staff training, improving workplace well-being, and creating a safer library environment.

The strategic plan of the Orillia Public Library is closely aligned with broader economic development goals for several reasons:

➤➤ **Enhancing Workforce Skills:**

By promoting lifelong learning and digital literacy, the library supports workforce development. This is crucial for economic development as it ensures that residents have the skills needed for current and future job markets.

➤➤ **Community Engagement and Inclusivity:**

The library's focus on inclusivity and community engagement helps create a more cohesive and connected community. A strong, inclusive community is more attractive to businesses and investors looking for stable and supportive environments.

➤➤ **Economic Impact:**

Demonstrating the library's economic impact through data and anecdotes can help secure funding and support from stakeholders, further enhancing its ability to contribute to the local economy.

➤➤ **Partnerships and Collaboration:**

Collaborating with community partners to diversify services aligns with economic development strategies that emphasize the importance of partnerships in fostering economic growth. By working together, the library and local businesses can create synergies that benefit the entire community.

➤➤ **Optimizing Physical and Virtual Spaces:**

The library's efforts to optimize its physical and virtual spaces ensure that it remains a vibrant hub for community activities. This can attract more visitors to the area, supporting local businesses and boosting the economy.

➤➤ **Cultural and Social Capital:**

Libraries are essential for building cultural and social capital, which are key components of a thriving community. The library's programs and resources can enhance the quality of life in Orillia, making it a more attractive place for residents and potential investors.

Overall, the plan not only aims to improve library services but also contributes to the broader economic development goals of the city by enhancing skills, fostering community engagement, demonstrating economic impact, leveraging partnerships, and optimizing community spaces.

E.6 Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan

The Parks, Recreation, and Culture (PRC) Master Plan was developed in 2014 to help Orillia achieve its vision of a healthy, progressive community that celebrates people and promotes sustainable growth. The plan focuses on fostering healthier, more active lifestyles through the development of community parks, recreational activities, cultural programs, and trail resources. It emphasizes a number of key themes including the importance of incorporating play into community life to support physical, mental, and emotional well-being, establishing Orillia as a destination for parks, recreation, culture, and trails, creating a cohesive system that includes those elements, and recognizing the need for new facilities, such as a pool and gym.

The PRC Master plan connects to the development of this economic development strategy in several ways:

- Investing in the enhancement of quality-of-life assets attracts new residents, businesses, and tourists and makes Orillia a desirable place to live, work, and visit. A vibrant community with diverse recreational and cultural offerings is more likely to retain and attract residents, particularly families and young professionals.
- There is also a focus on creating festivals, events, and cultural showcases, waterfront parks, and developing trails which can enhance Orillia's attractiveness as a tourist destination and boost local businesses.
- Enhanced connectivity through trails encourages alternative transportation, reducing traffic congestion and promoting a greener environment.
- By improving the community's quality of life, fostering health, attracting tourism, and ensuring sustainable growth, the plan supports the city's overall economic vitality and attractiveness.

E.7 Orillia Affordable Housing Plan

The 2023 Orillia Affordable Housing Action Plan provides a strategic framework to address the housing needs of the Orillia community. The assessment's data is crucial in developing targeted actions to increase the supply of affordable housing in Orillia. Key findings included:

➤ **Population Growth:**

Orillia's population increased by 10% between 2006 and 2021, with projections indicating a rise from 33,411 in 2021 to 49,000 by 2051.

➤ **Household Growth:**

There was an 18% increase in the number of households from 2006 to 2021.

➤➤ **Income Disparities:**

The average household income for homeowners is \$88,275, while renters' average is \$42,357.

➤➤ **Housing Affordability:**

A significant portion of homeowners (8.5%) and renters (40.8%) are in core housing need, lacking affordable housing options for moderate-income groups.

➤➤ **Housing Types:**

Nearly half of the housing completions since 2007 have been single and semi-detached homes, with townhouses and apartments making up the remainder.

The plan proposed actions structured around four main pillars:

➤➤ **Grants and Incentives:**

To stimulate the creation and maintenance of affordable housing.

➤➤ **Policy, Process, and Best Practices Development:**

To ensure policies and processes are in place to support affordable housing initiatives.

➤➤ **Property and Site Development:**

To identify and develop sites suitable for affordable housing.

➤➤ **Capacity Building and Collaboration:**

To foster partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders.

Given the significant need for housing to support local workforce needs, working to ensure economic development goals are considered as this plan is implemented will be critical. There are several takeaways from to support the development of the economic development strategy including:

➤➤ **Multi-Sector Collaboration and Partnership:**

Collaboration between local governments, non-profit organizations, and private developers is crucial for successful implementation.

➤➤ **Incentives and Support:**

Providing financial incentives and policy support can significantly boost the development of affordable housing.

➤➤ **Community Engagement:**

Educating and involving the community can shift cultural preferences towards supporting affordable housing initiatives.

E.8 Trails Master Plan

The Trails Master Plan was created in July 2014 to guide the development and enhancement of the trail system in Orillia. The plan focuses on creating a connected network of trails to promote outdoor recreation, tourism, and active transportation. Key components include:

➤➤ **Trail Network Expansion:**

Identifying new trail routes and connections to improve accessibility.

➤➤ **Trail Maintenance and Improvements:**

Ensuring existing trails are well-maintained and enhanced for better user experience.

➤➤ **Community Engagement and Partnerships:**

Collaborating with community groups, stakeholders, and government entities to support trail initiatives.

➤➤ **Economic and Environmental Benefits:**

Highlighting the positive impact of trails on local economy and environment.

➤➤ **Promoting Active Transportation:**

Encouraging the use of trails as a means of active transportation, reducing reliance on cars, and promoting healthier lifestyles.

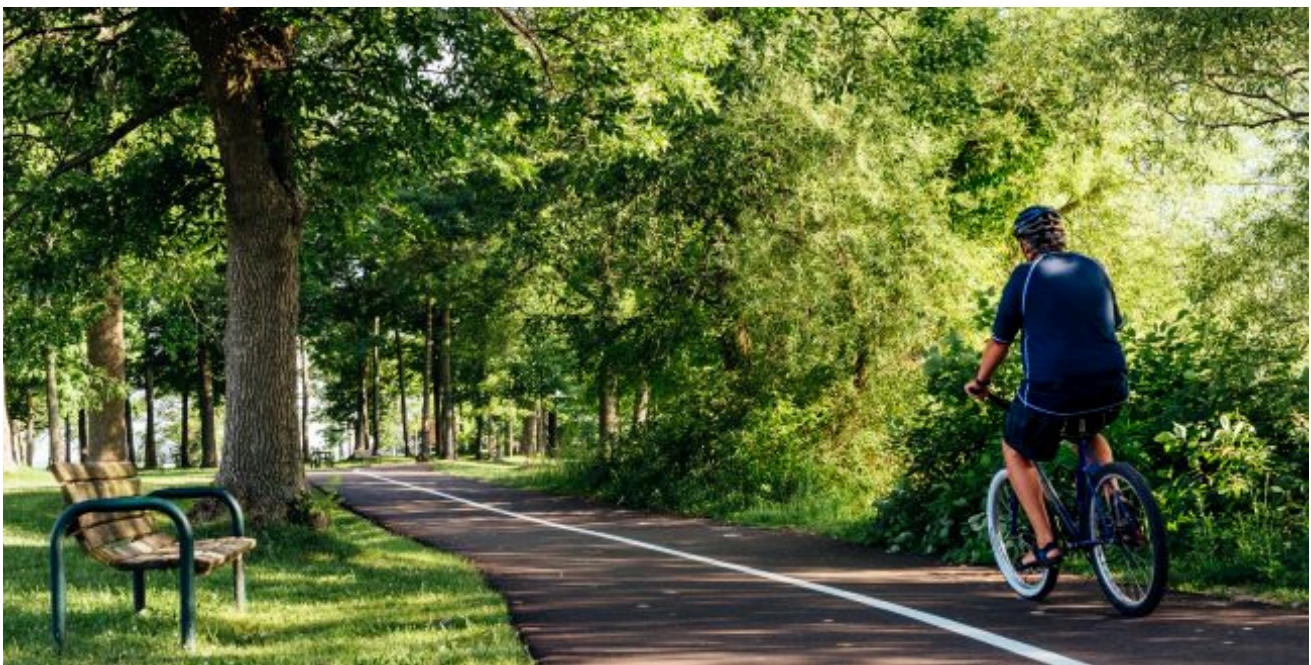
➤➤ **Enhancing Connectivity:**

Investing in completing and enhancing the trail network to ensure it is coherent, connected, and accessible, linking residential areas with parks, recreational facilities, and neighbouring municipalities.

➤➤ **Developing Infrastructure:**

Establishing trailheads and access points at strategic locations to improve accessibility and encourage more users. Integrate the trail network with public transportation options to further enhance connectivity.

By focusing on these key areas, the trail system can significantly contribute to the economic development and quality of life in Orillia.



Appendix F: Key Consultation Themes

Community consultation consisted of a survey, interviews, small group discussions, and community workshops. This robust engagement resulted in a significant amount of data representing the needs and viewpoints of residents and the business community. This data was consolidated into the key themes below to highlight challenges, opportunities, and perspectives on the community. To avoid duplication, where relevant, this data was also utilized to expand in the asset and partnership discussion above.

F.1 Housing

Both attainable and affordable housing were identified as top economic development priorities by residents and businesses alike. Stakeholders emphasized the need for more affordable and attainable housing, including consideration for complementary residential development to support hospital expansion plans. Suggestions for addressing housing needs included higher density development, potentially involving 12-14 storey buildings especially to accommodate low-wage workers. There is also a desire to make the city more attractive for business owners to reside in, rather than outlying communities that can offer larger houses and lot sizes.

F.2 Transit

Job seekers in Orillia face challenges accessing employment opportunities due to the limitations of the current transit infrastructure. Recommendations include improving transit connections to the downtown and employment areas to facilitate easier access to employment.

The County of Simcoe also runs a transit system that could facilitate the movement of workers into the community, however, ridership in Severn is notably low and there is no connection to Ramara and Rama within the current system.

F.3 Workforce

Finding labour remains a challenge for many businesses in Orillia. This led employers to suggest that more community education on available career paths would be helpful. There was a noted opportunity to help employers enhance their employment practices to create better, higher paying jobs and bring on a more diverse range of job seekers. Consultation revealed that there were still employers turning down viable candidates and trying to offer minimum wage for mid-level positions during the most competitive times to attract labour.

At the same time, other employers are adapting their practices by catering to a more diverse workforce, such as changing menus in cafeterias. Challenges, such as access to daycare, persist. Partnerships with organizations like Employment Ontario, school boards, post-secondary schools, SM Skillforce, and the County of Simcoe will be crucial to addressing regional workforce needs.

F.4 Employment

Residents of Orillia expressed concerns about job quality, noting limited opportunities that offer a living wage and benefits. Desirable jobs often require significant education and experience, making it challenging for residents to see opportunities for career progression. There's a perception that larger businesses may offer better job prospects for the community. There was a belief that Orillia is in need of more full-time career opportunities, as new graduates struggle to find positions beyond minimum wage. However, those with higher skill jobs in stable careers were generally satisfied with their employment situations. The high cost of living makes it difficult for low-income earners to sustain themselves in the community.

F.5 Youth

Youth retention and engagement are key considerations for economic and community sustainability in Orillia. Providing entertainment and commercial spaces, particularly near the post-secondaries and schools, are important to cater to youth preferences. Additionally, investing in a downtown area tailored to the needs and interests of young people can be seen as a tool for attracting and retaining the next generation of residents in the community, helping to establish long term memories and connection with the community.

F.6 Immigration

Orillia has been slower in welcoming immigration compared to its neighbouring areas in southern Simcoe County. Only 1.5% of Orillia's population is new to Canada since 2011, significantly lower than the provincial average. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of embracing diversity to reflect the full range of residents needed for living and working in the community. Concerns include access to familiar food, students feeling unwelcome, racism issues, and overall lack of diversity. Efforts to address these concerns include physician recruitment initiatives that foster community connections through social events and participation in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives by local businesses.

F.7 Physician Recruitment

Access to frontline healthcare professionals in a community is highly desirable. The physician recruitment committee is focused on attraction of local and internationally trained family physicians to the Orillia area in collaboration with Oro-Medonte and Severn. Traditional recruitment methods like career fairs are losing relevance, and today there is an emphasis on marketing and storytelling, with a preference for video content. Direct engagement opportunities, such as participation in events like Rural Ontario Medical Program week or a resident weekend are highly valued as recruitment tactic, but costly. Looking ahead, plans include establishing a Family Medicine Teaching Unit via OSMH. Immediate needs to address physician recruitment include short-term housing for students and young professionals, as well as support for doctors hesitant to establish a full practice. This could be addressed through the development of shared spaces and administration. Trailing spouse assistance is also identified as key need.

F.8 Business Support

Consultation revealed several key considerations for business support including:

- There is a lack of centralized event and information on business related events and happenings, making it difficult for businesses to stay informed.
- Helping businesses understand the regional business development ecosystem, particularly with the new RIC development, is a priority.
- There is an opportunity to utilize post-secondary partners to leverage emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, and immersive experiences to support workshops and training for businesses and potentially workforce.
- Helping businesses remain viable through the redevelopment of Mississaga Street in 2026 is important.
- Business education and support needs identified included digital and technology training, retail training, peer-to-peer support, and succession planning for retiring business owners.

F.9 Business Engagement

Business engagement with the City and with one another could be enhanced in some sectors, particularly among manufacturers, and efforts are needed to reengage them in both local and regional initiatives. There is a sense of mistrust towards the municipality from some businesses, stemming from a perception that the City is slow to respond to business or downtown issues but quick to enforce by-law issues. Respondents emphasized the need for the city to engage in more two-way conversations with businesses to address challenges effectively, such as downtown snow removal.

F.10 Retail and Service Mix

In Orillia, residents often shop or engage in activities outside the city due to a perceived lack of variety and availability of needed items available locally. Residents of Orillia and neighbouring municipalities expressed a desire for more clothing stores, a mall, additional restaurant options, diverse grocery offerings, including healthier and international food choices, as well as improved access to healthcare services such as doctors, clinics, and walk-in facilities. These insights can guide efforts to enhance the retail and service mix in Orillia, meeting the diverse needs and preferences of its residents.

F.11 Communication

Consultation indicated that economic development efforts would benefit from improved communication overall. This includes enhanced storytelling of economic development outcomes; improved communications on business resources; improved planning and marketing of events geared to tourists, residents, and the business community; centralized information relevant to the business community; and improved utilization of key partnerships to communicate critical information. Consultations suggest realtors and a centralized website could be utilized to promote events and community gatherings. Strengthening and coordinating local connections among stakeholders was also identified as a valuable opportunity to simplify access to business development resources for the community and to maximize effective effectiveness of related initiatives.

F.12 Safety

In Orillia, like many rural communities in Ontario, mental health, addiction, and homelessness are significant concerns. Many residents express concerns about safety in the downtown area, particularly due to a concentration of individuals facing the above noted barriers, but these concerns are largely based on perception. The BIA noted the downtown area has the lowest crime rate in the local OPP district. To address safety perceptions, especially during peak evening economy hours, it was suggested that increasing lighting in the downtown core could make residents, visitors, and employees feel safer while moving around at night.

It is important to recognize that those facing homelessness and barriers are vulnerable populations and the best way to address perceptions of safety in the downtown is to assist those individuals where possible. Affordability of housing is a significant concern, with limited resources available. There is a need for a supportive environment offering wraparound services to address basic needs and skills development. Encouraging community engagement in the development of solutions, including creating volunteer opportunities and pilot employment opportunities for vulnerable individuals, could serve as important steps towards community and economic integration. For example, the highly successful CDC Pathways to Employment program specifically targets youth facing barriers, acknowledging the prevalence of such challenges among this demographic.

F.13 Parking

Parking is a contentious issue in Orillia's downtown, with merchants expressing concerns about insufficient parking space for both employees and residents. There is a perception that people are unwilling to walk around the commercial area, particularly due to the downtown's location, on a hill. There are also concerns that creating parking at the waterfront may divert traffic flow from the downtown area. Suggestions include exploring transportation options and placemaking features to connect and encourage a flow of traffic between the downtown and the waterfront.

Orillia recently implemented increased parking fees and removed free parking hours in the downtown. Many resident and business survey respondents emphasized they felt free parking was important and were disappointed by this decision. Merchants fear that implementing 24/7 paid parking will negatively impact downtown business.

F.14 Brownfields

Orillia has largely run out of available industrial land and there is little space to develop new business. There are a number of existing brownfield properties within the City that present redevelopment opportunities for more productive uses such as housing, institutional uses, other industry, and/or public space development. Despite the recent creation of a tax incentive to encourage brownfield redevelopment, the city removed the funding allotment for this incentive just a year later. This increases the likelihood that these sites will remain vacant and look more derelict over time, detracting from Orillia's beautiful downtown rather than creating economic value. While brownfield site remediation can be challenging and finding the right partners can take time, these sites also have benefits such as existing servicing and prime locations. There are a number of successful examples of brownfield revitalization in Canada including:

- Langley, BC (pop. 28,963) created a brownfield strategy (including tax incentives), in December 2012, to address vacant and potentially contaminated sites. Since then, brownfield redevelopment generated \$199 million in construction value, as well as the increased property values of brownfield sites and surrounding properties. Redeveloped sites have made space for economic growth, retaining businesses and residents in the area, and generating 950 jobs as a direct result of the redevelopment.
- Fort Erie (pop: 32,901) created a brownfield strategy and tax incentive program in 2009 that has since resulted in an over \$1.2 million increase in property tax from redeveloped brownfield sites and 600 jobs for remediation and clean up work alone.
- In the City of St. Catharine's (pop: 144,829), investment in a Brownfield CIP since 2005 has resulted in the development of 448 homes across 6 properties.

F.15 Growth and Development

Growth is expected to intensify in coming years and stakeholders want to see the City adopt a clear vision to guide it. It was suggested the City's growth plan lacks emphasis on the economy, highlighting the need for integration.

Orillia must also prepare for anticipated growth by ensuring adequate service provision, particularly for infrastructure like roads and servicing in employment areas. While internet connectivity is strong downtown, improvements are still needed in the north end of the City. Similarly, as families grow, there will be a need to expand recreation and related services to accommodate residents across life stages and that planning should be happening now.

Development fees were discussed as a potential barrier to growth, however given Orillia's lower income levels it is unfair to shoulder taxpayers with servicing costs and with limited industrial land, Orillia must be strategic about the investment it does attract going forward.

Suggestions were also made to improve the development process including:

- Streamlining the development process because navigating the process for multiple permits from different organizations creates unnecessary red tape.
- Timely responses to follow-ups during the permitting process.

F.16 Maximizing Tourism

Orillia hosts numerous outstanding events and experiences, but there is a lack of community collaboration in promoting and coordinating these events to maximize their benefits. Those consulted emphasized the need for improved connection and promotion between events and other tourism activities in Orillia. For instance, the BIA is not involved in planning and placement of Streets Alive items in the downtown, despite the potential value in aligning these activities with downtown programming. It was suggested that stakeholders in the tourism and downtown sectors should convene more frequently to plan events and activities, to collaborate on initiatives, and undertake shared marketing efforts. There was a desire for increased city support and involvement in events, including providing coordination support, organizing, funding, and providing insurance. Enhanced marketing efforts targeting both tourists and locals, are recommended to increase overnight stays and avoid duplication. Currently, the sector consists of a number of active partners like the BIA, Orillia and Lake Country Tourism, Tourism Simcoe County, the City, and arts, culture, music, festival, and event organizations, which all operate independent of one another. Streets Alive, an engaging program that places art throughout Orillia streets, is managed by one person, raising questions about succession planning for the program's continuity. Enhanced collaboration among these stakeholders for event planning, coordination, and promotion, will benefit the community and visitors alike.

Several other key tourism opportunities and considerations were identified including:

- The waterfront, with a call for better planning akin to aspirational examples like Friday Harbour.
- Establishing a stronger direct connection with Casino Rama, whose crowds have a notable impact on the Orillia community.
- The community's potential in sport tourism was noted in several comments, which could be enhanced by investment in better infrastructure.
- Cycling tourism was suggested as an area of opportunity, capitalizing on Simcoe County's success with marketing regional cycling product, however, Orillia lacks the cycling infrastructure to support tourism in the downtown area. While there's an excellent rail trail leading to Orillia, it currently ends in a non-memorable location near downtown, lacking attractive signage or connections to draw visitors in. Improvements such as better connections, promotion, and an appealing entry point into the city will help unlock the tourism potential of cycling. Additionally, implementing bike-friendly infrastructure like lanes, racks, and repair stations for residents and tourists alike was valued by the community. Creating a cycling loop within the city and explicitly connecting it to commercial areas could further enhance cycling tourism and promote economic activity.
- There is a perception existing wayfinding signage is insufficient, leading tourists to be unaware of the various attractions available, such as the waterfront area, library, Orillia Museum of Arts and History, Opera House, and Marina. Additionally, there's a lack of information on activities outside the downtown core. Orillia boasts excellent trails and recreational opportunities within and around the community, but inadequate signage and unattractive connections are failing to draw people into the downtown core and around the community. Despite the existence of existing signage, enhancing wayfinding signage to better catch the eye, highlight attractions, and improve connections to the downtown area could enhance the visitor experience and promote tourism in Orillia.
- Orillia boasts a rich arts, culture, and music scene, complemented by several mid-sized accommodations within the city. The surrounding region offers abundant natural assets, including hiking trails, three provincial parks, agri-tourism opportunities, and various recreational sites like Hardwood Hills and Horseshoe Valley. However, there's a need to better connect tourists throughout the region via improved information, marketing, and explicit packaging of experiences. Transit accessibility was highlighted as a missing link, with challenges in moving around the region, particularly to major attractions like Casino Rama. While Orillia has some local transportation options, there's a gap in transit connectivity to key regional destinations, despite recent additions like Uber and taxi services. Improving transit connections is crucial for enhancing the overall tourism experience and promoting seamless travel within the region.

- Orillia experiences a vibrant summer with numerous events and activities, but the winter season lacks similar engagement, with fewer events and closures. Feedback suggests significant potential to extend the tourism season during winter by leveraging nearby winter attractions such as ski hills, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. There is a desire to cultivate a more vibrant apres-ski and winter atmosphere in the City to capitalize on economic spin off from participation in these winter activities and enhance the overall winter tourism experience.
- Lastly, planning for climate change's impact on tourism in the off-season, such as for when the potential time the lake does not freeze, was deemed important by stakeholders.



Appendix G: Competitive Analysis

A competitive analysis was conducted with communities that were similar in size and assets to the City of Orillia to ensure this strategy's proposed goals and objectives were leveraging and going above and beyond best practices of similar communities. The following section provides details of the competitive analysis case studies for the communities of Bradford West Gwillimbury, Collingwood, North Bay, Centre Wellington, Orangeville, and St. Thomas.

G.1 Bradford West Gwillimbury (BWG)

Team of two – Manager and Economic Development Marketing Coordinator

Why BWG?

- Population of 38,128.
- Based in Simcoe County along the Highway 400 Corridor.
- Experiencing rapid growth.
- Similar in regional significance.

Economic Development Focus

Their latest economic development strategic plan includes the following goals:

- BWG is prepared and well-positioned for complementary, sustainable, and impactful investment opportunities.
- BWG has the entrepreneurial resources, supports, and ecosystem to enable businesses to start, grow, and innovate.
- BWG offers a livable community with a high quality of life and destination amenities.

Best Practices

➤ **Community Improvement Program:**

Established in 2012 to spur investment in the downtown core, the initial uptake for the program was slow. After a review of the program identified that the application process was cumbersome, a revamped application saw an initial significant increase in applicants, and it has been going strong since. In 2018 the economic development office estimated that for every dollar the Town invested in the CIP, \$17 was invested in return.

BWG's economic development strategy also identified the need to conduct a CIP review to explore new geographies and sectors. This is meant to consider expanding eligible CIP areas to include the hamlet of Bond Head, as well as affordable housing and agricultural developments. The downtown CIP is currently paused for the 2024 year as the Town undergoes significant reconstruction on the main street. BWG also offers a downtown mural program incentive to encourage the development of beautified and creative spaces in the downtown.

➤ **Economic Development Website:**

BWG's economic development website combines a number of economic development-related marketing best practices, including sector profiles, a showcase fo investments and developments coming to community, community resources, and a 'meet the owners' page to showcase business champions who are already investing in BWG. In 2023, BWG notably attracted 3 corporate headquarters to the community, bringing in 100s of new jobs.

➤ **Bradford Catalyst Centre:**

In 2023, BWG Council voted to move forward with the business and operational plan for the development of the Catalyst Centre in Downtown BWG. The goal of the Catalyst Centre is to be a business-oriented co-working space that offers professional working, meeting and event space to local start-ups, hybrid workers and small businesses, operating under a membership model with users paying based on their use of space and amenities. Mentorship and support for entrepreneurs would be provided via a variety of programming offered by Georgian College's Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre, with more partners and programming being explored over time. A secondary goal of the Catalyst Centre is to drive traffic into the downtown.

G.2 Collingwood

Team of one - Manager of Economic Development

Why Collingwood?

- Population of 24,811.
- Based in Simcoe County.
- Often held up as an example through consultation data as a community Orillia wants to be like or is competing with.

Economic Development Focus

Collingwood created a 5-year Economic Development Action Plan in 2020 with 3 key goals which were:

- Make Collingwood a hub for sustainability innovation.
- Promote Collingwood as a great place to live and work.

- Ensure Collingwood is investment ready.

Best Practices

- **Business Development Centre:**

Collingwood has centralized their business development supports into a single building, the Business Development Centre, in Collingwood's downtown. Currently the centre includes Collingwood economic development, the Small Business Enterprise Centre, the Community Futures Office, the Chamber of Commerce, the Business Improvement Area, and the local accelerator centre. This helps facilitate connectivity and planning between organizations, as well as helping businesses navigate the business development support ecosystem with ease thanks to referrals made across the hall.

- **Patiolicious:**

Collingwood has been turning underutilized spaces into patio spaces for more residents and visitors to enjoy. This program allows restaurants to create or expand patio space into back lots, hidden gardens, main street parking spaces, and other undiscovered areas, with a goal of having the new patios also reflect the artistic creativity that exists in the region.

- **Art of the Street:**

From May to Thanksgiving weekend Collingwood's downtown transforms into an outdoor art gallery and downtown lamp posts will display banners showcasing art in a range of mediums including stained glass, jewellery, wood carvings, sculpture, photography, painting, and more. Muskoka chairs and other unique features have also been decorated as part of the event. The event is positioned as a competition and featured artists and their work are promoted on a website to try and drive additional traffic to those artists.

G.3 North Bay

Team of 6 – 1 Manager, 4 Economic Development Officers (specialized by area of focus), and 1 Administrative Assistant.

Why Collingwood?

- Population of 52,662, a small city.
- Based along Highway 11 corridor.
- Hosts similar assets to Orillia - hospital, post-secondary, proximity to waterfront.

Economic Development Focus

North Bay did not have a publicly accessible economic development strategy; however, their municipal corporate strategy articulates the City's economic development focus well.

Their vision is, “Our North Bay is open for business and creates a diverse range of employment opportunities for all residents.”

Their identified action areas include identifying and pursuing opportunities to:

- Promote and support public and private sector investment.
- Explore and implement opportunities to streamline processes, policies and practices that make it easier and more effective to do business in North Bay.
- Attract investment by better telling the North Bay story regionally and across Ontario.
- Leverage North Bay’s significant, unique assets to drive economic growth, such as the airport and deep knowledge of relevant industry sectors.
- Create an environment that supports entrepreneurship in North Bay.
- Cultivate the growth and expansion of existing businesses in North Bay and in surrounding communities.
- Engage the business community in identifying and developing economic opportunities.
- Work with key community stakeholders in defining long term work force needs and the development, attraction and retention of talent.
- Engage Canadore College and Nipissing University with local employers in developing skilled labour and development opportunities.
- Be engaged in immigration activities as a tactic to increase the size and diversity of the labour force.
- Celebrate and encourage multi-culturalism, recognizing its role in economic development.
- Build on existing sports community to drive sport tourism.
- Foster arts and culture as a key contributor to attracting talent and supporting creative businesses.
- Identify existing business sectors and explore opportunities for future growth.

Best Practices

➤ **Post-Secondary-led Economic Development:**

Nipissing University has partnered with Laurentian, Trent, and Lakehead Universities to establish a northern and rural innovation cluster that supports intellectual property education and commercialization focused on critical minerals, cleantech, and battery electric technologies. This cluster is well positioned to support the future Ring of Fire development.

➤➤ **Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot:**

North Bay via their local Chamber of Commerce was a successful applicant to this federal program. The RNIP is an economic pilot program targeted to foreign nationals who have received a recommendation from a participating community (North Bay) and obtained a job offer within the same community's boundaries; who meet minimum education, work experience, language proficiency, and settlement fund requirements; and who intend to reside in the recommending community. The funding associated with the program allows staff to assist employers with the application process. Employers found it very valuable to help them meet their labour needs, which were going unfilled, and there was a desire for the pilot to be extended.

➤➤ **Workforce Attraction and Retention Program:**

As workforce was a primary issue facing the North Bay business community, the municipality launched a two-year pilot workforce attraction and development program to provide one-on-one support to employers. This program involved the development of tools and training for employers; the deployment of HR expertise to work one-on-one with businesses; virtual job fairs and recruitment events, as well as increasing promotion to increase awareness of current resources.

➤➤ **Film Industry:**

North Bay and its partners have been successful in enhancing a growing film sector in the region over recent years. This has included the development of a guide of local service and retail businesses to support the sector, federal funding to support individual productions and the sector as a whole (via the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund), and the establishment of a post-production studio at Canadore College. Orillia is also home to a significant arts and culture community that could potentially be engaged in supporting the development of film production. The City could focus on attracting related businesses and promote opportunities to enter the marketplace for existing businesses, as well as general filming opportunities. This could also align well for Lakehead's Media, Film, and Communications program, which struggles to find placements for their students. Further detailed assessment needs to be done related to the assets that already exist in Orillia to determine the feasibility of film sector development. Locally, the Nottawasaga Futures CFDC has been heavily involved in promoting film production and would be a good contact to reach out to for more information on their experience.

G.4 Centre Wellington

Team includes 1 Manager of Economic Development and 1 Tourism and Destination Coordinator, reporting under a Manager of Community Development. Currently these positions are based in two different departments.

Why Centre Wellington?

- Population of 31,093.
- Elora and Fergus are consistently named as must visit communities in all forms of media.
- The communities have unique, creative, and heritage downtowns, and a smaller community-feel.

Economic Development Focus

Centre Wellington's most recent economic development strategy identified the following key themes:

- Creating a Competitive Climate for Business Retention and Expansion
- Becoming More Investment Ready
- Continue Planning for Sustainable Distinct Downtowns
- Strategic Communications, Connecting Partners & Conveying a Clear Message
- Building Tourism and Arts, History and Culture as main Economic Drivers
- Continue Growing Innovative Agriculture and Agri-Business

Best Practices

➤ **Tourism Marketing Fund:**

Festivals and events are responsible for attracting thousands of visitors a year to Centre Wellington, generating positive impacts on the local economy, and contributing to building close-knit and animated communities. The Tourism Marketing Fund supports marketing and promotion initiatives for festivals and events that can attract visitors from 40 km+. Funding up to \$500 is available.

➤ **Tourism Sustainability Fund:**

Eligible projects can request funding to a maximum of \$1,500 to implement sustainable tourism initiatives that contribute to the social, cultural, economic, and/or environmental sustainability of Centre Wellington as a thriving tourism destination.

➤ **Destination Animation Strategic Co-Investment Project:**

First launched by the Township, Elora and Fergus Tourism, and RTO 4 in 2017 this project supported the creation of unique experiences that helped elevate Elora and Fergus as a singular, lively destination. After 6 years the project is adapting to the needs of the tourism sector and the growth the destination has experienced in recent years by creating a winter experience program to help amplify tourism opportunities beyond peak season, in line with the goal of creating a thriving destination.

➤ **Tourism and Destination Coordinator:**

A full-time role reporting to the Manager of Community Development that is responsible for marketing, brand development, and destination development, management, coordination, and support within the municipality of Centre Wellington.

G.5 Orangeville

Team – 1 Manager of Economic Development and Culture, 1 Small Business Enterprise Centre Coordinator, 1 Tourism and Culture Officer, 1 Marketing and Projects Coordinator, and 1 Administrative Assistant.

Why Orangeville?

- Population of 30,167.
- Similar industrial mix and surrounding regional make-up.
- Charming heritage downtown.
- Was often cited as an example Orillia should look to in consultation.

Economic Development Focus

Orangeville's economic development strategy identified the following key action areas:

- Economic Development Framework Issues
- Business Retention and Expansion
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Attracting New Investment
- Talent and Workforce Development
- Marketing Orangeville to Attract Investors, Tourists and Talent

It also identified the following key sectors of focus:

- Tourism
- Creative Industries
- Manufacturing
- Professional, Engineering, Information Technology, and Financial Services

Best Practices

➤ **Love, Orangeville:**

Love, Orangeville was launched in January, 2023, establishing a consistent and authentic brand foundation for all communications and promotions related to tourism in Orangeville. There is a website where visitors can find out about events, and what to see and do in the community that is complementary to the brand. Orillia has a similar page; however, it is currently unbranded. There may be benefit to linking it to a broader branded marketing campaign to drive traffic to the page.

➤➤ **Call for Artists Program:**

Started in 2016, each year Orangeville identifies a new space or place for beautification (typically utility boxes or mural spaces) and solicits local artists to paint that space. The program's objective is to enhance the community's public places through the installation of high-quality public artwork, and they now have 34 pieces. The program pays artists \$750 for their work. They have since utilized the pieces to create a self-guided art tour through the community via their website Love, Orangeville and via the app, Driftscape.

➤➤ **Annual Economic Development Reports:**

Since 2013 Orangeville has put out an annual economic development report. This report highlights growth in the community, successes, projects, and related outcomes. It provides statistics on changes in the economy. This is a great tool to communicate the good work being done by the economic development department succinctly and on an annual basis.

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➤➤ **RPN to RN Program:**

Georgian College has committed to offering a bridging program to support those with a registered practical nurse (RPN) designation to bridge into a career as a registered nurse (RN). The local hospital, Headwaters Health Care Centre, will work with the college to provide students with practical training. Advocating for and supporting the development of new programming like this, with Georgian College and Lakehead University, is important, especially with the significant expansion of the hospital in the medium term.

G.6 St. Thomas

Economic development in the City of St. Thomas is undertaken by the St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation (EDC). The mandate of the EDC includes the management of Railway City Tourism, The Horton Farmers' Market, and the Elgin/St. Thomas Small Business Enterprise Centre. There are 7 staff – a CEO, 1 Manager of Business Development and Entrepreneurship, 1 Manager of Marketing and Communications, and 1 Manager of Tourism, and 3 business advisory staff, including one that manages the market on a part time basis. Based within the municipality and primarily funded by the municipality, the EDC operates as a separate corporation from the municipality.

Why St. Thomas?

- Approximately ½ hour from a major urban centre (London, Ontario), 2 hours from Pearson Airport
- Population of 42,840 (a small city)

- Similar in regional significance and regional makeup.
- St. Thomas has been steadily investing in coordinated economic development readiness and growth for many years to help turn the tide of the once declining town. Over the last decade, St. Thomas has welcomed several new and significant investments topped by the recent Volkswagen EV Production Plant announcement.

Economic Development Focus

St. Thomas does not have a publicly available strategy, but indicates that the services they provide include, but are not limited to:

- Non-monetary assistance to business, industry and local institutions.
- Promotional programs such as advertising, trade shows and travel to target market areas to promote new investment.
- Assist local companies with expansion and modernization programs.
- Land and building site selection information.
- Sale of City and EDC owned land.
- Provision of statistical and market data.
- Product sourcing and potential market identification.
- Assistance with business start-ups.
- Liaison with provincial and federal governments regarding funding, investment, and business opportunities.
- Advice and referrals to appropriate civic officials, government offices, institutions, and local businesses.
- Consultation and networking with local businesses and industry.
- Marketing and promotion of events and attractions in the City.

Best Practices

➤ **#stthomasproud Campaign:**

Launched in 2015, the #stthomasproud hashtag is part of a highly successful social media campaign to “get people thinking, talking and excited about the great community of St. Thomas, Ontario”. Their St. Thomas Proud Facebook page has 3,700 followers and 2,900 likes, and the Instagram hashtag #stthomasproud has over 155,000 tags. The St. Thomas EDC has spun off a number of initiatives from this campaign (launched in 2015), uses this branding consistently in their communications, and has most recently used the Facebook page to launch a video series providing updates on exciting developments in the community. The EDC has successfully launched additional # brands, including a tourism brand, #explorerrailwaycity which has over 15,000 tags, and a resident/welcoming community brand, #somuchmorelife, with over 1,000 tags.

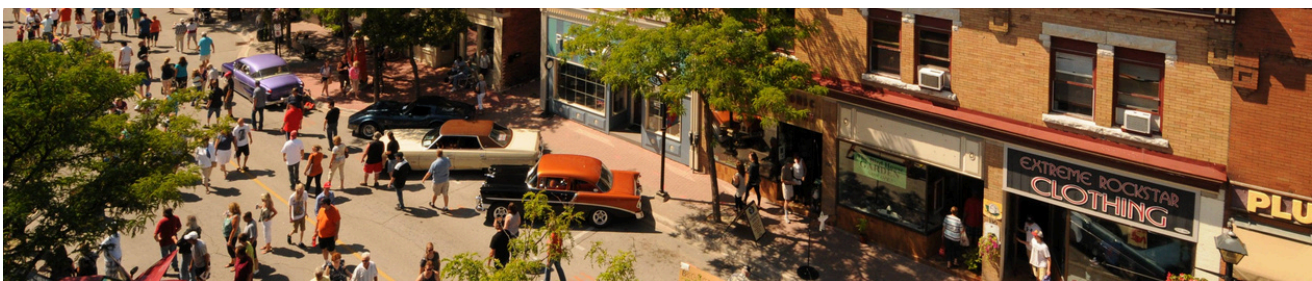
Campaigns like these could be used to showcase exciting developments around the community and build excitement for changes coming to Orillia, as well as the great businesses and assets already in the community.

➤ **Downtown Revitalization:**

In 2016, after 2 banks closed their facilities in downtown St. Thomas, the City approved a \$3.2 million investment into “the gateway” part of downtown to add new life and vibrancy into the community. While part of the work done included infrastructure replacement, the City also used the construction as an opportunity to make the downtown more pedestrian friendly, widening sidewalks, and adding beautification features like planters, paving stones, and a wider sidewalk. They also improved pedestrian crossings and safety zones. As always, large construction projects left some businesses unhappy and the downtown lost a few businesses initially, but the subsequent year (2017) Expedia named St. Thomas one of the top 10 coolest downtowns in Canada and the City saw 22 new businesses open in the downtown. Part of that designation was attributed to great shopping, their brewery, and cultural assets (like art crawls). They have since invested in a downtown mural program/festival and are currently making headlines for their murals in the downtown, one of the highest concentrations of murals in a small downtown. Embracing and investing in culture, unique shops, entrepreneurship, and pedestrianization, as St. Thomas has, can all help Orillia continue to enhance and foster a stronger and more vibrant downtown, a key asset of the City.

➤ **Provincial Partnership:**

The Volkswagen investment was no accident. The Ontario Government was looking for large parcels of land to promote to automakers to try and lure large EV investments into the province. About 700 acres of the 1,500 acre parcel of land now dedicated to the investment was originally located outside of the municipality’s boundaries. Working with the province under their “job site challenge program,” they were able to annex the land required for St. Thomas to smooth the municipal and administrative burdens for the investment that would come from being based in two different municipalities. The site was also serviced by 2 rail lines and had municipal service hook ups. By responding to the provincial government with a ready “mega-site,” the province played a key role in attracting, funding, and supporting Volkswagen’s investment into St. Thomas. Both the City and province are investing in road upgrades to better connect St. Thomas to the 401 and regional industries. Ensuring that the City of Orillia establishes and maintains a relationship with investment staff from other levels of government is important to ensure the City is considered when larger investment inquiries come along.



Appendix H: Sectors of Opportunity - Additional Insights

H.1 Advanced Manufacturing

Orillia has a strong manufacturing base and workforce to be built upon, however short term growth will be constrained by available space. Current manufacturing sector trends, which can be used to guide Orillia's investment attraction and business development efforts in the sector, include:

➤ **Automation and Robotics:**

Implementing advanced automation and robotics to enhance production efficiency and reduce costs.

➤ **IoT and Smart Manufacturing:**

Leveraging the Internet of Things (IoT) for real-time monitoring and smart manufacturing processes.

➤ **Collaborative Innovation Hubs:**

Establishing innovation hubs that facilitate collaboration between manufacturers, universities, and tech startups.

➤ **Green Manufacturing:**

Investing in sustainable manufacturing practices and green technologies to reduce environmental impact.

➤ **Circular Economy Models:**

Adopting circular economy models to minimize waste and enhance resource efficiency.

EV manufacturing sector trends include:

➤ **Battery Technology:**

Growing demand for advanced battery technologies, including lithium-ion batteries, solid-state batteries, and next-generation chemistries. Opportunities exist in battery materials sourcing, cell manufacturing, and battery management systems.

➤ **Component Manufacturing:**

Developing specialized components such as electric motors, power electronics, thermal management systems, and charging infrastructure. Suppliers can capitalize on this demand by providing high-quality, cost-effective components tailored to EV specifications.

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➤➤ **Lightweight Materials:**

Lightweighting is crucial for improving EV efficiency and range. Suppliers of lightweight materials such as aluminum, carbon fiber, and advanced composites can benefit from increased demand for lightweight vehicle structures and components.

➤➤ **Charging Infrastructure:**

Expanding EV charging infrastructure presents opportunities for companies involved in the design, manufacturing, installation, and maintenance of charging stations, as well as related software and services.

➤➤ **Recycling and Sustainability:**

Increasing sustainable practices, including battery recycling and material reuse. Companies offering innovative recycling technologies and sustainable manufacturing processes can find opportunities in the EV supply chain.

➤➤ **Advanced Manufacturing Technologies:**

Adopting advanced production technologies such as additive manufacturing, automation, and digitalization will be required to support EVs. Suppliers of these technologies can support EV manufacturers in improving efficiency, quality, and scalability.

Aerospace manufacturing sector trends include:

➤➤ **Lightweight Materials:**

Developing and using advanced lightweight materials like carbon fiber composites to improve fuel efficiency and performance.

➤➤ **Additive Manufacturing (3D Printing):**

Utilizing additive manufacturing techniques for producing complex parts with reduced waste and lead time.

➤➤ **Drone Manufacturing:**

Investing in the production and development of drones for various applications, including agriculture, surveillance, and delivery services.

➤➤ **Research and Development:**

Establishing R&D centres for advancements in UAV technology and integration with AI for autonomous systems.

➤➤ **Electric and Hybrid Aircraft:**

Investing in the development and manufacturing of electric and hybrid aircraft to reduce carbon emissions.

➤➤ **Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAFs):**

Researching and producing SAFs to provide cleaner alternatives to traditional jet fuels.

H.2 Tourism

While the strategy provides recommendations on how to enhance the existing tourism sector, there are many opportunities for investment attraction through the tourism sector. Potential opportunities for Orillia include:

➤➤ **Waterfront Development:**

Investing in mixed-use properties that combine residential, retail, and recreational spaces can create a vibrant waterfront community. Enhancing marina facilities and offering water-based activities such as boat rentals, fishing tours, and water sports can attract tourists.

➤➤ **Cultural and Historical Tourism:**

Developing museums or enhancing existing historical sites, such as the Stephen Leacock Museum, can draw cultural tourists, who typically spend more and stay longer. Supporting or creating new festivals like the Mariposa Folk Festival can boost tourism and create annual attractions.

➤➤ **Eco-Tourism and Outdoor Adventures:**

Investing in the development and maintenance of nature trails, parks, and eco-tourism activities can attract nature enthusiasts. There are opportunities for mountain biking and other adventure sports in Orillia's natural settings.

➤➤ **Accommodation and Hospitality:**

Unique and charming accommodation options can attract visitors looking for a personalized experience.

➤➤ **Culinary Tourism:**

Continuing to establish restaurants that offer local and sustainable food options can appeal to food tourists. Organizing food festivals and farmers' markets can highlight local restaurants, chefs, food product, and culinary traditions.

➤➤ **Sports and Recreation:**

Building and enhancing sports facilities can attract tournaments and sporting events, and in turn tourism to the community. Key venues like the Orillia Recreation Centre and Rotary Place offer ample opportunities. Sports tourism could boost spending on accommodations, dining, and entertainment while enhancing community infrastructure and pride with the right marketing and promotions.

➤➤ **Family-Friendly Attractions:**

Investing in family-friendly attractions such as arcade centres or interactive playgrounds can attract families. Creating educational programs and tours that cater to children and families can provide engaging experiences. These experiences could easily build on Orillia's strengths in arts, culture and recreation.

➤➤ **Music:**

Creating grants or funding opportunities to support local musicians and music events, helping to foster local talent and attract visiting artists. Promote Orillia as a music destination by marketing its festivals, events, and music heritage (e.g., highlighting the city's connection to Gordon Lightfoot). Encourage the development and improvement of music venues, ensuring high-quality spaces for performances. Organize collaborative events that combine music with other cultural or recreational activities, such as music and arts festivals or outdoor concerts at parks and waterfront areas.

➤➤ **Events and Entertainment:**

Developing modern venues for events and conferences can attract a variety of gatherings. Supporting performing arts venues can enhance cultural appeal, showcase local art, and provide entertainment options for visitors.

➤➤ **Health and Wellness Tourism:**

Establishing retreats focused on wellness, yoga, and mental health can cater to the growing wellness tourism market.

➤➤ **Educational Tourism:**

Offering workshops, courses, and hands-on learning experiences in arts, crafts, and local history can appeal to educational tourists.

➤➤ **Technology and Innovation in Tourism:**

Investing in technology such as mobile apps, virtual tours, and smart guides to enhance the visitor experience. Supporting initiatives that promote sustainable tourism practices can attract eco-conscious travelers.

➤➤ **Transportation and Accessibility:**

Investing in transportation infrastructure, such as shuttle services connecting key attractions, can enhance accessibility for tourists. Providing eco-friendly transportation options like bike rentals can appeal to environmentally conscious tourists.

H.2.1 Sports Tourism

Sports tourism could provide the community with a number of benefits such as:

➤➤ **Direct Spending:**

Smaller events can still attract significant direct spending on local accommodations, food, transportation, and retail. Example: A small town hosting a regional soccer tournament might see an influx of visitors leading to an estimated \$500,000-\$1 million in direct spending over a weekend.

➤➤ **Employment Opportunities:**

While the scale is smaller, local businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and retail stores can experience increased demand, leading to temporary or permanent job creation. Example: A regional sports event creating 50-100 temporary jobs and a few permanent positions in local hospitality and service industries.

➤➤ **Community Pride and Unity:**

Hosting regional or local sports events can foster a sense of pride and unity among residents, similar to larger cities. Example: A yearly high school basketball tournament that becomes a community tradition, boosting local morale and pride.

➤➤ **Promoting active lifestyles:**

Smaller events can encourage local residents to participate in sports, improving overall community health.

➤➤ **Improved Infrastructure:**

Investments in facilities and infrastructure can have lasting benefits for the community. Example: Building a new sports complex for a regional event that is later used by local schools and community groups.

➤➤ **Long-term Facilities Utilization:**

Venues built or upgraded for events can be used for future events and community activities.

Current trends in economic development for supporting sports tourism include:

Digital Platforms: Utilize apps for ticket sales and visitor information.

Data Analytics: Collect data to understand visitor preferences and improve marketing.

Multi-use Facilities: Build versatile sports venues to host various events.

Transportation: Improve local transportation for easier event access.

Eco-friendly Practices: Host eco-friendly events and implement recycling programs.

Local Sourcing: Use local suppliers for event needs to support the economy and reduce environmental impact.

Local Partnerships: Collaborate with local businesses and organizations.

Volunteer Programs: Engage community members as volunteers.

Local Branding: Develop a strong local brand for sports tourism.

Grants and Subsidies: Offer financial incentives for event organizers.

Public-Private Partnerships: Encourage collaboration between the public sector and local businesses.

H.3 Health and Wellness

To further develop the health and wellness sector, Orillia can consider:

Expanding Services: Increase the availability of specialized medical services and support for health and addiction treatment.

Collaborative Healthcare: Foster collaboration between healthcare providers, community organizations, and government agencies to improve service delivery and address community health needs.

Technology Integration: Utilize telemedicine and digital health solutions to enhance access to healthcare, especially for remote or underserved populations.

Senior Care: Focus on expanding and improving services for the growing senior population, including home care, assisted living, and recreational programs.

Facilitating Partnerships and Innovation: Establish partnerships between healthcare providers, research institutions, technology companies, and government agencies to foster innovation where startups, researchers, and established companies can collaborate on new technologies and solutions.

Current trends in the sector are focused on:

➤➤ **Digital and Health Telemedicine:**

The digital health market, including telemedicine, telehealth services, and mobile health apps, has experienced rapid growth, especially accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

➤➤ **Personalized Medicine:**

Advances in genomics and biotechnology are driving the personalized medicine market, tailoring treatments to individual genetic profiles.

➤➤ **Mental Health and Wellness:**

Rising awareness and destigmatization of mental health issues have led to increased demand for mental health services and wellness programs.

➤➤ **Home Health Care:**

The aging population and preference for home-based care are driving the home health care market.

➤➤ **Health and Wellness Tourism:**

Health and wellness tourism is growing as more people seek destinations for medical treatments and wellness retreats.

➤➤ **Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals:**

The market for functional foods and nutraceuticals is expanding as consumers seek products with health benefits.

➤➤ **Wearable Health Devices:**

The wearable health device market is growing as consumers adopt technology for health monitoring and fitness tracking.

➤➤ **Integrative and Alternative Medicine:**

There is a growing interest in integrative and alternative medicine practices.

➤➤ **Aging Population and Geriatric Care:**

The aging population is driving demand for geriatric care and age-related health services.

H.4 Green, Sustainable, and Environmentally Focused Businesses

As a result of the City's commitment to sustainable growth and development, climate change action, and environmental protection, a number of background strategies and documents identified that the community is well positioned to attract businesses with a green, environmental, or sustainable lens to their business. This is further supported by Lakehead's commitment to sustainability programming and supporting industry adoption of sustainable practices.

These types of businesses can be found across sectors including but not limited to manufacturing, retail, transportation and warehousing, and even tourism, and require a range of different space and resource requirements to establish in a community depending on the sector. Current trends within the sector include:

➤➤ **Renewable Energy:**

The renewable energy sector, including solar, wind, and hydroelectric power, is expanding rapidly with increased adoption of solar energy and advances in battery technology and energy storage solutions to enhance grid reliability.

➤➤ **Circular Economy:**

Businesses are increasingly adopting circular economy principles to minimize waste and maximize resource efficiency. These include enhanced recycling programs and upcycling initiatives to repurpose waste materials, designing products for durability, repairability, and extended use, and implementing closed-loop systems in manufacturing to reclaim and reuse materials.

➤➤ **Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems:**

Sustainable practices in agriculture and food production are gaining traction.

➤➤ **Green Building and Construction:**

The green building sector is growing as more buildings are designed to be energy-efficient and environmentally friendly.

➤➤ **Electric Vehicles (EVs) and Sustainable Transportation:**

The electric vehicle market is expanding, driven by advancements in technology and environmental regulations. Honda is making a significant investment in an EV battery plant in Alliston, Ontario, an hour drive from Orillia, which presents a potential supply and workforce opportunity for Orillia.

➤➤ **Waste Reduction and Management:**

Businesses are focusing on waste reduction and innovative waste management solutions, including exploring the circular economy.

➤➤ **Waste-to-Energy:**

Converting waste into energy through processes like anaerobic digestion.

➤➤ **Sustainable Fashion:**

The fashion industry is increasingly embracing sustainability.

➤➤ **Carbon Neutrality and Climate Action:**

Companies are committing to carbon neutrality and taking active steps to reduce their carbon footprint.

➤➤ **Green Finance and Investment:**

Green finance is growing, with increased investment in sustainable and environmentally friendly projects.

The green, sustainable, and environmentally focused business space is characterized by rapid growth and innovation across multiple sectors. Embracing these trends can lead to significant environmental benefits, innovation and economic opportunities. Based on Orillia's existing strengths and assets they are positioned to have the most success with electric vehicles and sustainable transportation, leveraging Honda's recent EV investment into the region, renewable energy, leveraging Hydro One's renewable energy expansion, sustainable agriculture and food production, given the regional strength in agriculture, and circular economy, given the community's commitment to green and sustainable practices.

H.5 Film

Digging deeper into the film sector, there are a number of best practices and trends that Orillia could consider to support sector development, including:

➤➤ **Incentives:**

Offering tax breaks, grants, and other financial incentives to attract filmmakers.

➤➤ **Location Scouting Support:**

Promoting unique local features and providing assistance with location scouting.

➤➤ **Training Programs:**

Enhancing existing programming to train local residents in film production skills.

➤➤ **Collaborations:**

Partnering with local schools, colleges, and university for film education and internships.

➤➤ **Film Offices:**

Creating a local film office to coordinate logistics and support filmmakers.

➤➤ **Facilities:**

Developing or repurposing facilities for film production, such as sound stages and editing suites.

➤➤ **Natural Landscapes:**

Utilizing unique local landscapes and historical sites for filming.

➤➤ **Community Engagement:**

Encouraging local businesses and residents to participate and support film projects.

Current trends to consider in film production include:

➤➤ **Remote and Small-town Filming:**

There is increasing interest in filming in small towns and rural areas due to their unique locations and lower costs. This provides opportunities to showcase a community's distinct features and accessibility.

➤➤ **Sustainability in Filmmaking:**

There is growing emphasis on sustainable and eco-friendly production practices. Orillia could be positioned as an eco-friendly filming destination by offering sustainable facilities and services. There would be opportunities to explore linking to Lakehead University's research assistance capabilities.

➤➤ **Digital and Streaming Content:**

The rise of digital streaming platforms is creating more demand for diverse filming locations which can attract a variety of content creators, from independent filmmakers to major streaming services.

➤➤ **Film Tourism:**

There is increasing popularity in film tourism, where fans visit filming locations. Tours and experiences can be developed around notable filming sites to boost tourism.



Appendix I: Labour Market Data - In-Depth

The following table displays employment trends by 2-digit NAICS industry codes for all sectors in Orillia. Trends include the number of jobs in 2018, the number of jobs in 2023, the change between the two as a number and as a percentage, the 2022 location quotient for the sector, displaying the concentration of employment in that sector versus the concentration of employment within that sector in Ontario, and average wage in the industry sector. Overall, the data points to a successful, and diversified economy, one that grew 21% in employment over the last 5-year period, in spite of a major global pandemic. The table also displays wage rates by sector, and of note some of the lowest wage sectors make up the largest share of employment in Orillia, including the retail trade sector and accommodation and food service sector. The most promising sector, with high employment levels, high growth, a location quotient approaching one, and a reasonably high salary of \$72,001, is the manufacturing sector. The city should look to enhance opportunities for this sector to grow, particularly in the face of limited land availability. In the table below, sectors highlighted in green represent sectors of strength or sectors with the most growth potential based on the employment concentration of the sector and recent changes to the labour market within the sector in Orillia, whereas the sector highlighted in red, represents a sector of concern. While the sector was not considered strong by location quotient, it lost 101 jobs, 43% of the employment base, over the 5-year period between 2018 and 2023, notable in a diversified economy like Orillia's.

Table 4: NAICS 2-Digit⁶

NAICS	Description	2018 Jobs	2024 Jobs	2018 - 2024 Change	2018 - 2024 % Change	Ind. Mix Effect	Nat'l Growth Effect	Expected Change	Competitive Effect	2022 Employment Concentration	Average Wages Per Job
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	20	17	(2)	(12%)	(3)	1	(1)	(1)	0.05	
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	20	38	18	87%	(1)	1	0	17	0.16	\$86,916
22	Utilities	67	78	12	18%	(1)	4	3	8	0.62	\$99,262
23	Construction	828	1,071	243	29%	12	51	64	179	0.70	\$68,299
31-33	Manufacturing	882	1,495	613	70%	(41)	55	14	599	0.85	\$72,001
41	Wholesale Trade	633	869	236	37%	(33)	39	6	230	0.95	\$68,597
44-45	Retail Trade	3,175	3,354	179	6%	(173)	197	25	154	1.55	\$33,352
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	373	582	209	56%	17	23	40	169	0.55	\$53,143
51	Information and cultural industries	235	134	(101)	(43%)	9	15	23	(124)	0.36	\$76,372
52	Finance and insurance	368	628	260	71%	18	23	41	219	0.67	\$71,758
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	215	249	34	16%	(16)	13	(2)	36	0.62	\$53,552
54	Professional, scientific and technical services	626	733	108	17%	89	39	128	(2)	0.45	\$77,786
55	Management of companies and enterprises	21	38	17	78%	4	1	5	11	0.29	\$59,231

[6] Lightcast, 2024

56	Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	905	891	(14)	(2%)	(54)	56	2	(16)	0.89	\$47,944
61	Educational Services	916	1,174	258	28%	22	57	79	179	0.78	\$63,407
62	Health care and social assistance	3,472	4,121	649	19%	258	216	474	175	1.61	\$52,984
71	Arts, entertainment and recreation	198	292	94	47%	(21)	12	(8)	102	0.75	\$33,534
72	Accommodation and food services	1,712	2,364	652	38%	(92)	106	14	638	1.61	\$23,456
81	Other services (except public administration)	642	696	54	8%	(53)	40	(13)	68	0.83	\$47,217
91	Public administration	1,825	1,849	24	1%	64	113	178	(154)	1.47	\$87,517
X0	Unclassified	17,425	21,023	3,599	21%	8	1,083	1,091	2,508		

The table below display similar information as above, however the information is by 3-digit NAICS codes, allowing for a deeper dive into which sub sectors present the most opportunity based on growth and location quotient. In the table below, sectors highlighted in light green are indicative of sectors of strength or growth potential sectors with one factor of interest (high rate of growth or high location quotient), sectors highlighted in dark green represent sectors of strength or growth potential sectors with two factors of interest (high location quotient and growth rate). Sectors highlighted in red, represent sectors of concerns. The sector with the highest growth overall was the food services and drinking places sector, which created 540 jobs over the last 5-year period, despite COVID-19. There were a number of additional sectors that stood out for their growth. These include couriers and messengers, primary metal manufacturing, plastics and rubber products manufacturing, miscellaneous manufacturing, credit intermediation and related activities, accommodation services, and amusement, gambling, and recreation industries. A sector of concern included the transportation equipment manufacturing sector, which at one point would have been considered a sector of strength, however over the past five years lost 108 jobs accounting for a loss of 148% of the workforce.

Table 4: NAICS 3-Digit ⁷

NAICS	Description	2018 Jobs	2024 Jobs	2018 - 2024 Change	2018 - 2024 % Change	Ind. Mix Effect	Nat'l Growth Effect	Expected Change	Competitive Effect	2022 Employment Concentration
111-112	Farms	20	17	(2)	(12%)	(3)	1	(2)	(1)	0.06
113	Forestry and logging	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
114	Fishing, hunting and trapping	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
115	Support activities for agriculture and forestry	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
211	Oil and gas	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
212	Mining and quarrying (except oil and gas)	14	22	9	64%	1	1	2	7	0.28
213	Support activities for mining, and oil and gas extract	<10	16	Insf. Data	Insf. Data	(1)	0	(0)	9	0.16
221	Utilities	67	78	12	18%	(1)	4	3	8	0.62
236	Construction of buildings	290	359	69	24%	15	18	33	37	0.84
237	Heavy and civil engineering construction	22	30	8	37%	1	1	2	6	0.17

[7] Lightcast, 2024

238	Speciality trade contractors	516	681	165	32%	(3)	32	29	136	0.74
311	Food manufacturing	76	180	104	136%	(1)	5	4	100	0.65
312	Beverage and tobacco product manufacturing	50	71	21	41%	18	3	21	(0)	1.17
313	Textile mills	<10	14	Insf. Data	Insf. Data	(2)	0	(2)	8	2.19
314	Textile product mills	<10	0	Insf. Data	Insf. Data	(1)	0	(1)	(4)	0.00
315	Clothing manufacturing	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
316	Leather and allied product manufacturing	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
321	Wood product manufacturing	45	30	(15)	(33%)	(3)	3	(1)	(14)	0.33
322	Paper manufacturing	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
323	Printing and related support activities	19	33	14	74%	(4)	1	(3)	17	0.62
324	Petroleum and coal product manufacturing	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
325	Chemical manufacturing	<10	<10	Insf. Data	Insf. Data	(0)	1	0	(2)	0.07
326	Plastics and rubber products manufacturing	158	273	114	72%	2	10	12	102	2.33
327	Non-metallic mineral product manufacturing	15	30	16	107%	(1)	1	(1)	16	0.49
331	Primary metal manufacturing	191	337	146	77%	(9)	12	3	143	5.38
332	Fabricated metal product manufacturing	45	82	37	81%	(2)	3	1	36	0.45
333	Machinery manufacturing	103	128	25	24%	(1)	6	5	19	0.90
334	Computer and electronic product manufacturing	<10	<10	Insf. Data	Insf. Data	(0)	0	(0)	3	0.06
335	Electrical equipment, appliance and component manufacturing	<10	<10	Insf. Data	Insf. Data	0	0	0	7	0.18
336	Transportation equipment manufacturing	71	175	104	148%	(5)	4	(0)	105	0.77
337	Furniture and related product manufacturing	37	33	(4)	(11%)	(4)	2	(1)	(3)	0.48
339	Miscellaneous manufacturing	46	89	43	94%	(2)	3	1	43	1.17
411	Farm product merchant wholesalers	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
412	Petroleum and petroleum products merchant wholesalers	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
413	Food, beverage and tobacco merchant wholesalers	45	50	5	11%	1	3	4	1	0.24
414	Personal and household goods merchant wholesalers	35	59	24	67%	(4)	2	(2)	25	0.47
415	Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and accessories merchant wholesalers	96	147	51	54%	(10)	6	(4)	55	2.19
416	Building material and supplies merchant wholesalers	117	195	78	66%	(0)	7	7	71	1.28
417	Machinery, equipment and supplies merchant wholesalers	176	234	57	33%	(6)	11	5	53	0.94
418	Miscellaneous merchant wholesalers	148	146	(3)	(3%)	(13)	9	(4)	1	1.31
419	Business-to-business electronic markets, and agents and brokers	15	39	24	159%	(3)	1	(2)	26	1.07

441	Motor vehicle and parts dealers	371	269	(103)	(28%)	(47)	23	(24)	(79)	1.27
442	Furniture and home furnishings stores	55	97	43	78%	(10)	3	(7)	49	1.20
443	Electronics and appliance stores	53	11	(42)	(79%)	(15)	3	(12)	(30)	0.40
444	Building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers	292	382	90	31%	(18)	18	1	90	2.39
445	Food and beverage stores	608	568	(39)	(6%)	(9)	38	29	(68)	1.07
446	Health and personal care stores	244	380	136	56%	(11)	15	5	132	1.67
447	Gasoline stations	90	91	1	1%	(14)	6	(9)	10	1.09
448	Clothing and clothing accessories stores	245	138	(107)	(44%)	(58)	15	(43)	(64)	0.69
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book and music stores	201	205	4	2%	(35)	12	(23)	27	2.34
452	General merchandise stores	732	880	147	20%	62	45	107	40	3.22
453	Miscellaneous store retailers	244	274	30	12%	29	15	44	(14)	1.72
454	Non-store retailers	41	59	18	43%	16	3	19	(1)	0.65
481	Air Transportation	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
482	Retail Transportation	<10	26	Insf. Data	Insf. Data	1	0	1	18	0.49
483	Water Transportation	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
484	Truck Transportation	48	87	38	80%	(1)	3	2	36	0.26
485	Transit and ground passenger transportation	142	135	(6)	(4%)	(21)	9	(13)	6	0.80
486	Pipeline Transportation	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
487	Scenic and sightseeing transportation	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
488	Support activities for transportation	28	31	4	14%	1	2	3	1	0.21
491	Postal services	59	67	8	13%	5	4	9	(1)	0.84
492	Couriers and messengers	82	221	139	171%	63	5	69	71	1.80
493	Warehousing and storage	<10	4	Insf. Data	Insf. Data	2	0	2	4	0.19
511	Publishing industries	42	27	(16)	(37%)	3	3	6	(21)	0.31
512	Motion picture and sound recording industries	34	31	(4)	(11%)	10	2	12	(16)	0.30
515	Broadcasting (except internet)	18	<10	Insf. Data	Insf. Data	(3)	1	(2)	(9)	0.28
517	Telecommunications	65	45	(20)	(31%)	(10)	4	(6)	(14)	0.40
518	Data processing, hosting, and related services	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
519	Other information services	75	24	(51)	(68%)	(2)	5	2	(54)	0.96
521	Monetary authorities - central bank	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
522	Credit information and related activities	189	375	186	99%	14	12	26	160	0.83
523	Securities, commodity contracts, and other financial investment and related activities	73	86	13	18%	(1)	5	3	10	0.49
524	Insurance carriers and related activities	106	167	61	58%	6	7	12	49	0.59
526	Funds and other financial vehicles	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
531	Real estate	186	234	49	26%	(10)	12	1	47	0.71

532	Rental and leasing services	30	15	(15)	(50%)	(5)	2	(3)	(12)	0.27
533	Lessors of non-financial intangible assets (except copyrighted works)	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
541	Management of companies and enterprises	21	38	17	78%	4	1	5	11	0.29
561	Administrative and support services	848	830	(18)	(2%)	(57)	53	(5)	(13)	0.89
562	Waste management and remediation services	57	61	4	7%	4	4	8	(4)	0.94
611	Educational services	916	1,174	258	28%	22	57	79	179	0.78
621	Ambulatory health care services	887	1,174	287	32%	159	55	214	72	1.29
622	Hospitals	1,208	1,262	53	4%	9	75	84	(31)	1.88
623	Nursing and residential care facilities	863	1,099	236	27%	26	54	80	156	2.22
624	Social assistance	514	586	72	14%	21	32	53	20	1.19
711	Performing arts, spectator sports and related industries	62	80	18	28%	(12)	4	(8)	26	0.67
712	Heritage institutions	10	15	5	46%	0	1	1	4	0.50
713	Amusement, gambling and recreation industries	126	197	72	57%	(8)	8	(0)	72	0.83
721	Accommodation services	152	263	112	74%	(17)	9	(8)	119	1.24
722	Food services and drinking places	1,560	2,101	540	35%	(67)	97	30	511	1.67
811	Repair and maintenance	200	310	110	55%	(26)	12	(14)	124	1.09
812	Personal and laundry services	284	169	(115)	(40%)	(20)	18	(2)	(113)	0.71
813	Religious, grant-making, civic, and professional and similar organizations	134	195	61	45%	0	8	9	52	0.71
814	Private households	24	22	(2)	(9%)	(8)	1	(7)	5	0.67
911	Federal government public administration	79	138	58	74%	11	5	16	43	0.29
912	Provincial and territorial public administration	1,313	1,365	52	4%	11	82	93	(41)	4.36
913	Local, municipal and regional public administration	433	346	(87)	(20%)	(19)	27	7	(94)	0.80
914	Aboriginal public administration	0	0	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0.00
X00	Unclassified	292	350	58	20%	0	0	0	0	0.00

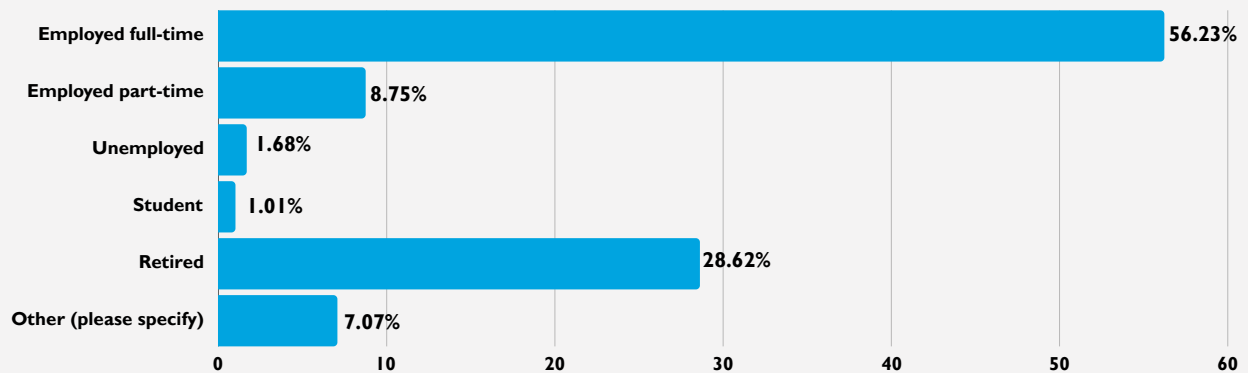
Appendix J: Survey Responses at a Glance

The community survey received 549 respondents. Respondents included 382 residents, 36 businesses, 15 local organizations, 14 youth or students, and 102 residents of neighbouring communities

J.1 Residents

What is your employment status (please select all that apply)?

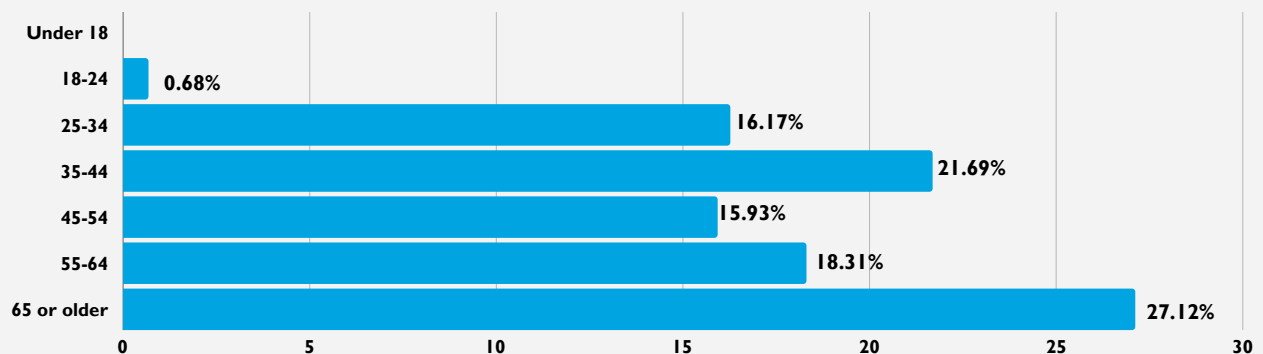
Answered: 297 Skipped: 252



➤ 56.23% of respondents were employed full-time.

How old are you?

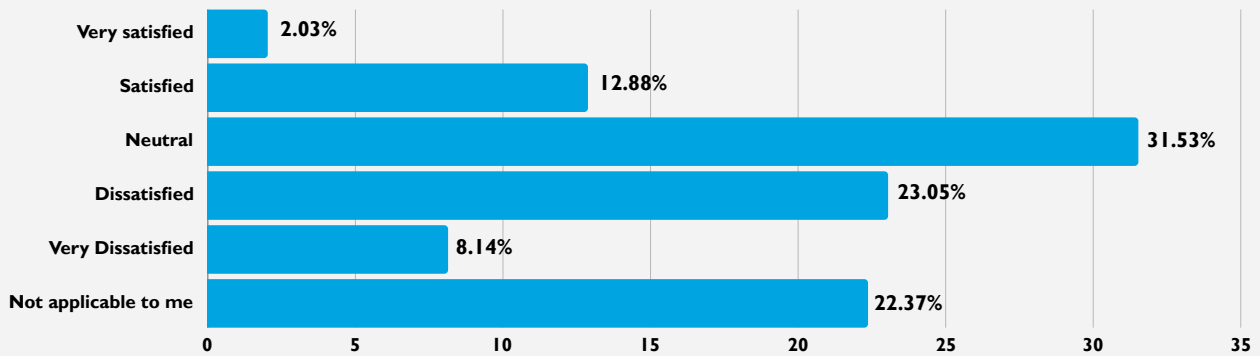
Answered: 295 Skipped: 254



➤ 27.12% of respondents were over the age of 65. Only two respondents were between the ages of 18 and 24.

How satisfied are you with the current job opportunities in Orillia?

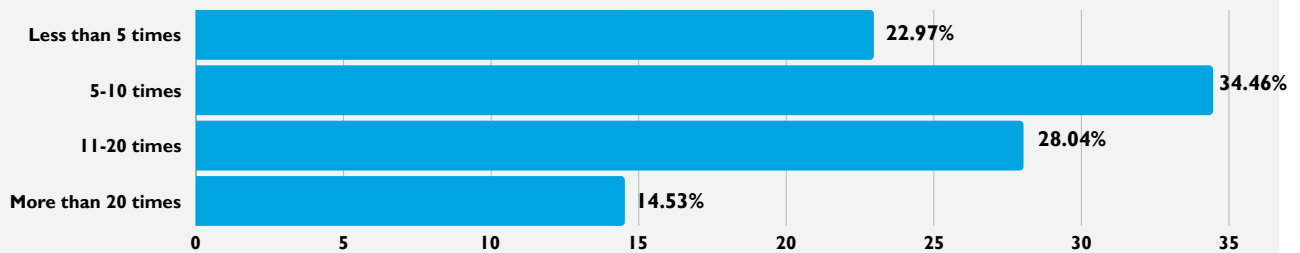
Answered: 295 Skipped: 254



➤ The majority of respondents, 31.53%, were neutral about their current job opportunities. 22.37% identified the question was not applicable to them, and 23.05% indicated that they were dissatisfied with job opportunities in Orillia.

On average, how many times do you visit recreational amenities, attractions, restaurants, or shops in Orillia per month?

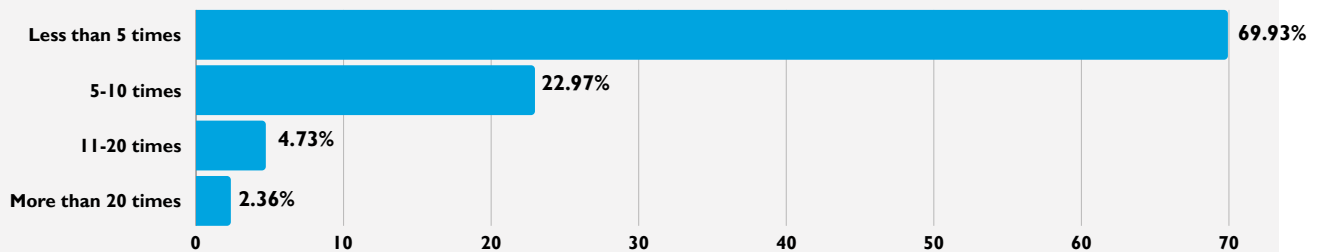
Answered: 296 Skipped: 253



➤ 34.46% of residents visit recreation, amenities, attractions, restaurants, or shops in Orillia 5-10 times a month, followed by 22.04% of respondents who visit 11 to 20 times per month.

On average, how many times do you visit recreational amenities, attractions, restaurants, or shops outside of Orillia per month?

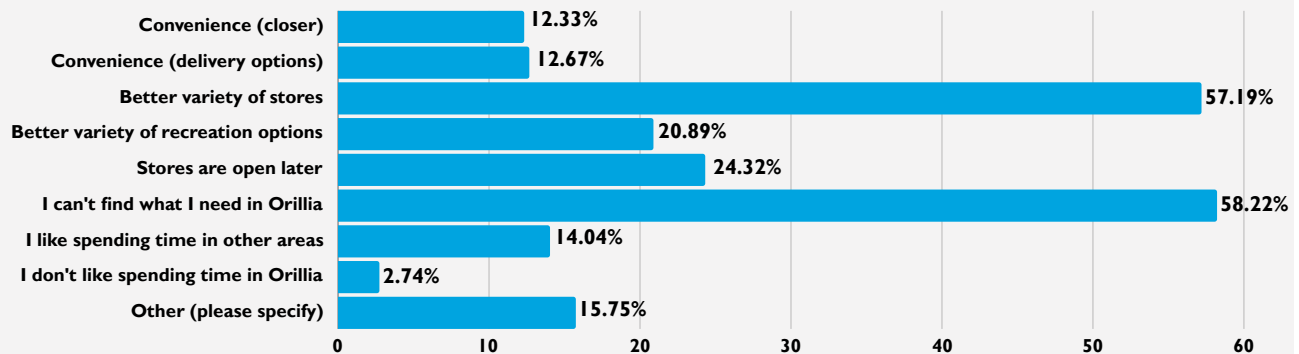
Answered: 296 Skipped: 253



➤ 69.93% of respondents indicated they visit recreational amenities, attractions, restaurants or shops outside of Orillia less than five times a month.

Why you choose to shop or do activities outside of Orillia, why (select all that apply)?

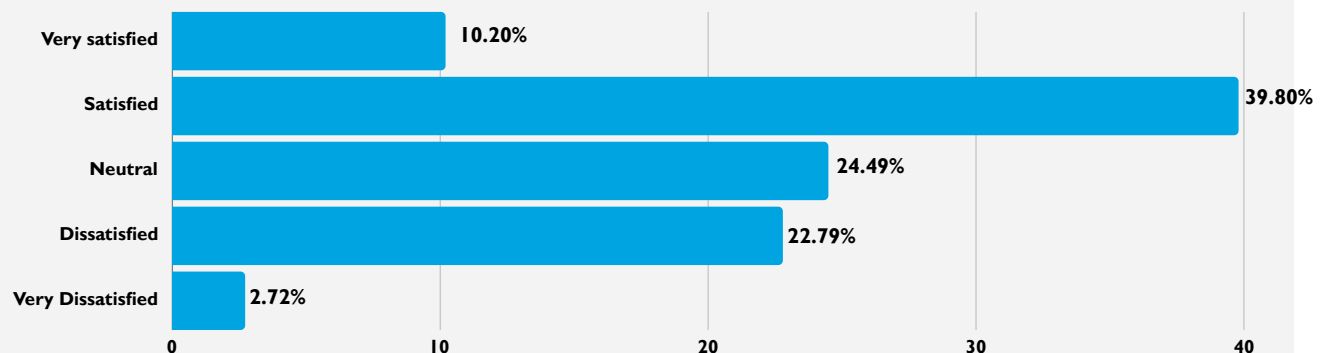
Answered: 292 Skipped: 257



➤ The top reason residents chose to shop or do activities outside of Orillia was they could not find what they needed in Orillia and for a better variety of stores.

How satisfied are you with the availability of essential services in Orillia (eg., healthcare, grocery stores, schools)?

Answered: 294 Skipped: 255



➤ 39.80% of respondents were satisfied with the availability of essential services in Orillia.

From your perspective, please rank the most important economic development needs in Orillia (Residents):

1. Attainable Housing
2. Affordable Housing **AND** Small Business Support **AND** Attracting New Service and Retail to the Community
3. Access to Health Care **AND** Infrastructure Improvements
4. Attracting or Creating New Events and Festivals
5. Attracting New Jobs **AND** Beautifying Orillia's Downtown **AND** Education and Skills Training
6. Creating More Interesting and Fun Public Spaces to Gather
7. Environmental Sustainability
8. Tourism and Cultural Development

9. Helping Businesses Stay Open Later **AND** Communicating with Residents About Businesses and Events

What specific attractions, events, or public space improvements would you like to see in Orillia to help make our community a better place to live (please list)?

- Better utilization of downtown (42) – continue/expand events and festivals, kid friendly events, more public space, safety, closing streets, beautification/landscaping, cleanliness, sidewalk accessibility, parking
- Better utilization of waterfront (31)
 - Events, enhancement, activities, don't sell to developers, access to waterfront parks is important, restaurants
 - Better accessibility of waterfront
- More events (32) and festivals (16) – downtown, waterfront, sporting, community-based, innovative/outside of the box, themed, off—season/winter/lights
- More doctors, clinics especially after hours/walk in clinic (20)
- Sidewalk improvement (18)
- Public space (14), pedestrianization (5), and patios (3)
- Sports facilities and playgrounds (13)
- Transit/transportation/bus (13) - better hours, transit hub downtown
- Things for families and teens/kids/youth/adults to do (8)
- Help the homeless (8)
- Rinks (8)
- Bike lanes (8)
- Housing (8)

Are there specific types of retail stores or services that you would like to see in Orillia that are not here today (please list)?

- Clothing stores (41)
- Mall (24)
- Restaurants (more food options) (17 restaurants, 14 food)
- More grocery options with healthier and more international food options (17)
- Doctor (13)
- Clinic (13)
- Walk-In (12)
- Variety (12)
- Family (7)

What are three things that could be done to make Orillia's downtown a better place to visit, play, live and work in (please list)?

- Parking (98) free – always or evenings/weekends, more, resident incentives
- Safety (30)
 - Drugs (25)

- Events (21)
- Clean (20) – generally + derelict storefronts and properties
- Restaurants/dining (20) - more variety/culturally diverse foods, looking over the water
- Later open (18)
- Waterfront (15) – no more condos, ensure access, more parks, more commerce, enhance connection to downtown, and enhance overall
- Accessibility (14)
- Pedestrian and cycling infrastructure (13, 7)
- Closing streets (12)
- Patios (11)
- Public space/gathering space (10)
- Lighting (8)
- Entertainment (5)/music (4) more than restaurant
- Beautification (8) art (5) + trees/landscaping (7)
- Empty/vacant/derelict properties (6) – run down/sketchy
- Snow (6)

J.2 Businesses

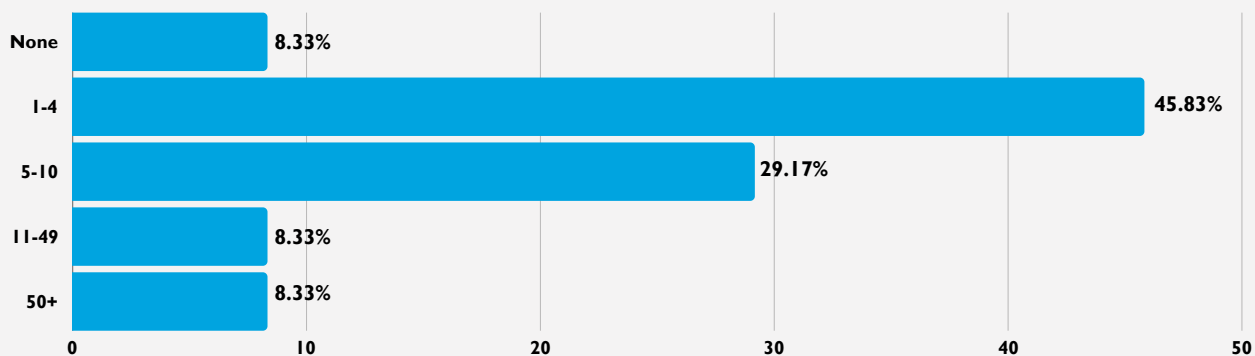
The retail sector saw the highest rate of participation in the survey from the business community with nine respondents.

Answer Choices	Responses
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0.00% 0
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.00% 0
Utilities	0.00% 0
Construction	0.00% 0
Manufacturing	4.17% 1
Wholesale trade	0.00% 0
Retail trade	37.50% 9
Transportation and warehousing	0.00% 0
Information and cultural industries	0.00% 0
Finance and insurance	0.00% 0
Real estate and rental and leasing	4.17% 1
Professional, scientific and technical services	0.00% 0
Management of companies and enterprises	0.00% 0
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	4.17% 1

Educational Services	0.00%	0
Health care and social assistance	4.17%	1
Arts, entertainment and recreation	16.67%	4
Accommodation and food services	12.50%	3
Other services (except public administration)	4.17%	1
Public administration	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	12.50%	3
TOTAL		24

How many employees do you have?

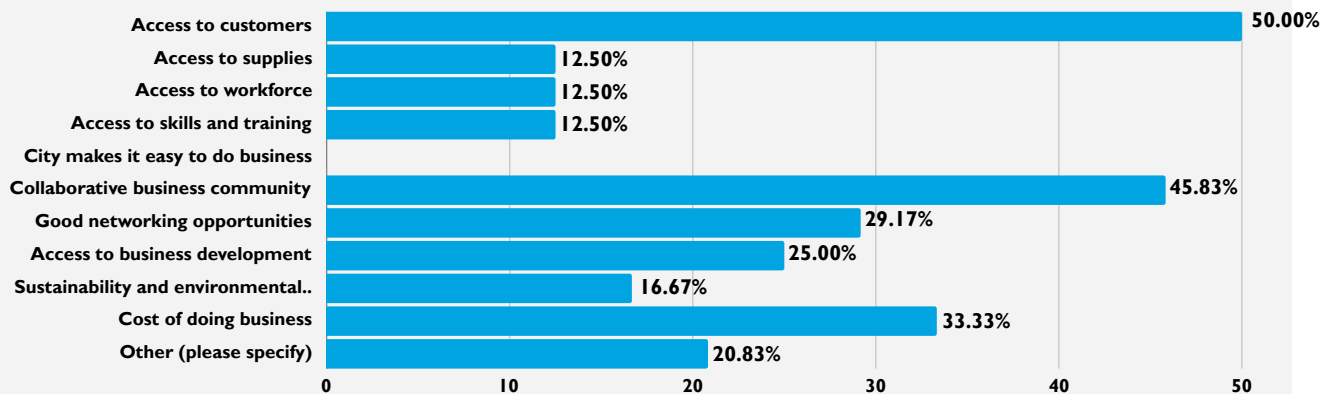
Answered: 24 Skipped: 525



➤ The majority of respondents were small, 45.83% have 1 – 4 employees.

What are the key strengths of Orillia as a place to do business (select all that apply)?

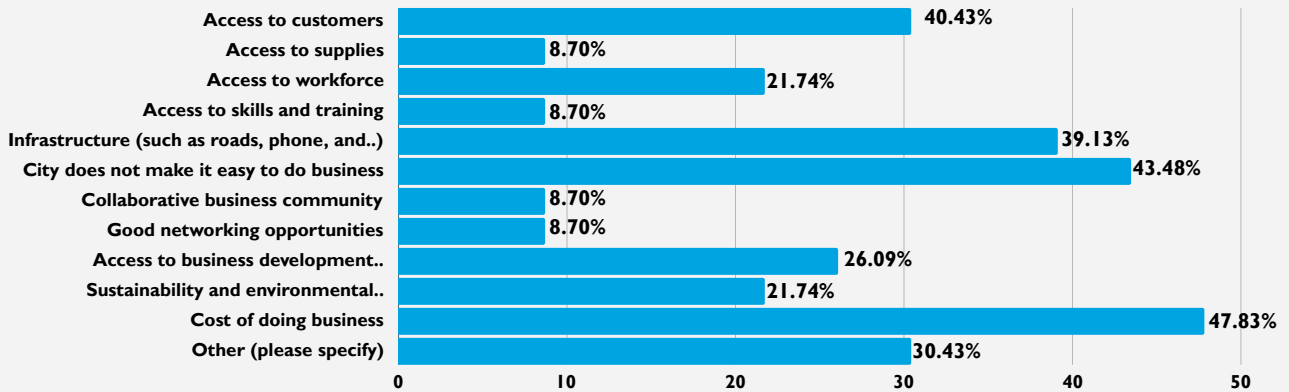
Answered: 24 Skipped: 525



➤ 50% of survey respondents identified the top strength of doing business in Orillia was access to customers, followed by 45.83% indicating a collaborative business community.

What are the key challenges you face doing business in Orillia (select all that apply)?

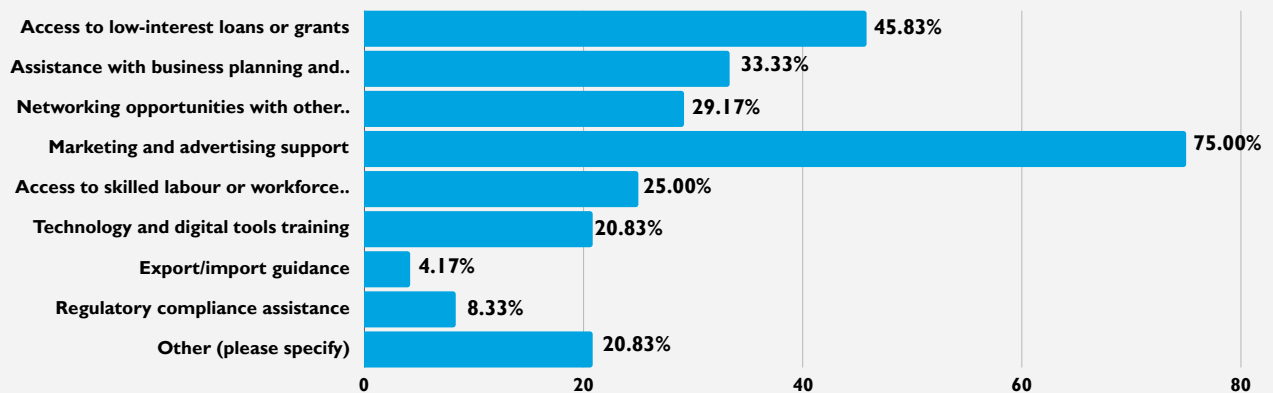
Answered: 23 Skipped: 526



➤ 47.83% of respondents indicated that the cost of doing business was the top challenge they face doing business in Orillia, followed by 43.48% indicating that the city does not make it easy to do business.

Which of the following support and resources would have the most significant positive impact on your business's sustainability and growth (select all that apply)?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 525



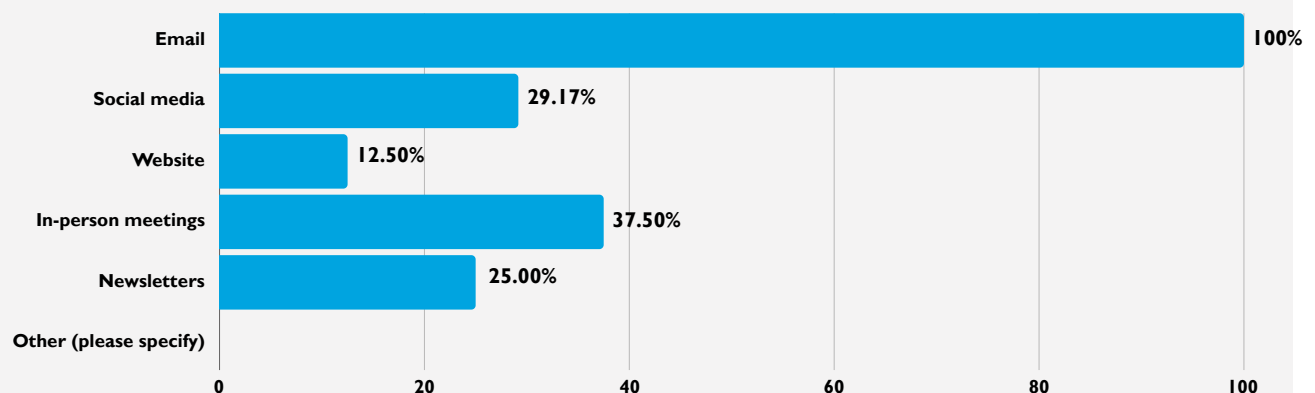
➤ 75% of respondents indicated the support and resource that would have the most significant impact on their businesses sustainability and growth would be marketing and advertising support.

Answer Choices	Responses
Networking opportunities	45.83% 11
Shared training and skills development for staff	29.17% 7
Shared marketing efforts	58.33% 14
Education on becoming an employer of choice	20.83% 5
Education on technology and automation	4.17% 1
Information on funding and loans	37.50% 9
Information on business development resources	58.33 14
Information on workforce development best practices	16.67% 4
Other (please specify)	16.67% 4
TOTAL	5

➤ 58.33% of respondents indicated that both shared marketing efforts and information on business development resources are the supports they would be most interested in accessing.

What channels or methods of communication do you prefer for receiving updates and information about economic development initiatives (select all that apply)?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 525



➤ 100% of respondents indicated they prefer e-mail for business-related communications.

From your perspective, please rank the most important economic development needs in Orillia.

1. Small business support
2. Attainable housing
3. Affordable housing
4. Attracting or creating new events/festivals
5. Attracting new retail and service business to the community

6. Beautifying Orillia's downtown
7. Creating more interesting and fun public spaces to gather
8. Access to healthcare services
9. Tourism and cultural development
10. Infrastructure improvement
11. Education and skills training
12. Communication with residents
13. Attracting new jobs to the community
14. Environmental sustainability
15. Helping businesses stay open later

Reasons (21 responses):

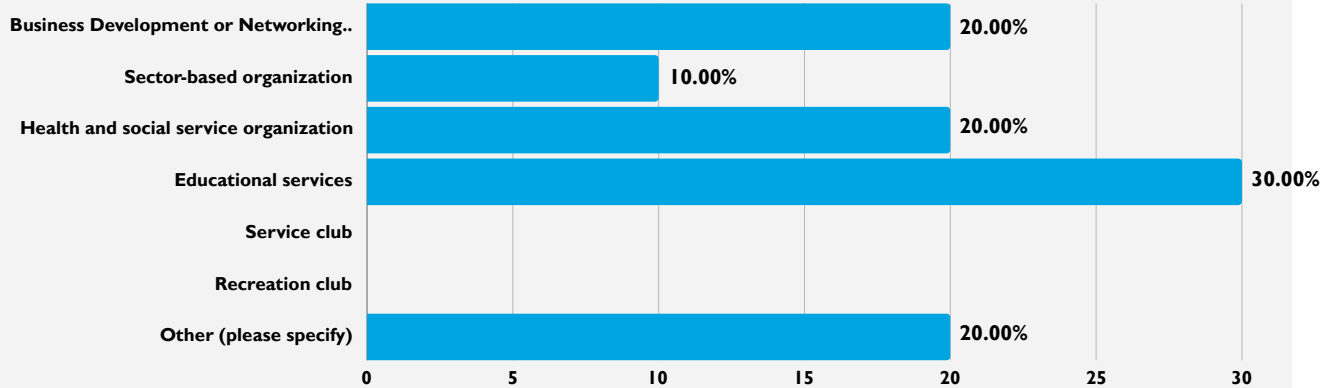
- Cost of Living
 - Rental market is out of control. Costs have almost doubled in 5 years
 - Housing is needed
- Healthcare
- Downtown
 - Major street/waterfront closures should be done in shorter chunks – very impactful to business
 - Continue to maintain charm
 - Small retain owners feel they don't get a lot of support
 - Everyone should promote each others' events/shops across the city (farmers market won't promote downtown and vice versa?)
 - Festivals and events (major boost for business)
 - Promotion
- Tourism
 - Community is a gem, on-going destination development needed
- City Hall
 - Feels like everything requires big asks
- Growth
 - New population moving up presents new opportunity
- Staff
 - Challenge to find – unaffordable for living in the city

J.3 Organizations

A range of organizations with different mandates completed the survey. Most of their feedback was providing in the format of full thoughts and sentences and has been summarized into the key themes Appendix.

What best describes your organization?

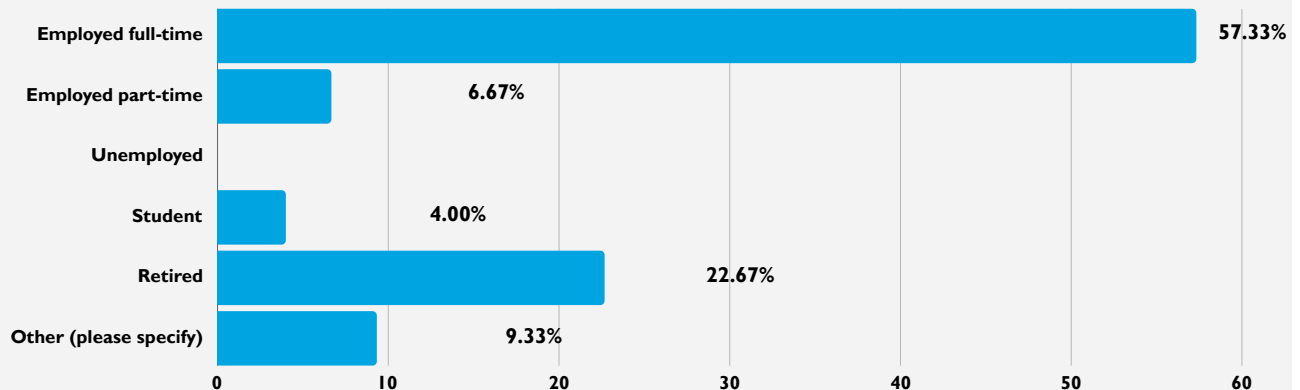
Answered: 10 Skipped: 539



J.4 Residents of Neighbouring Communities

What is your employment status (please select one)

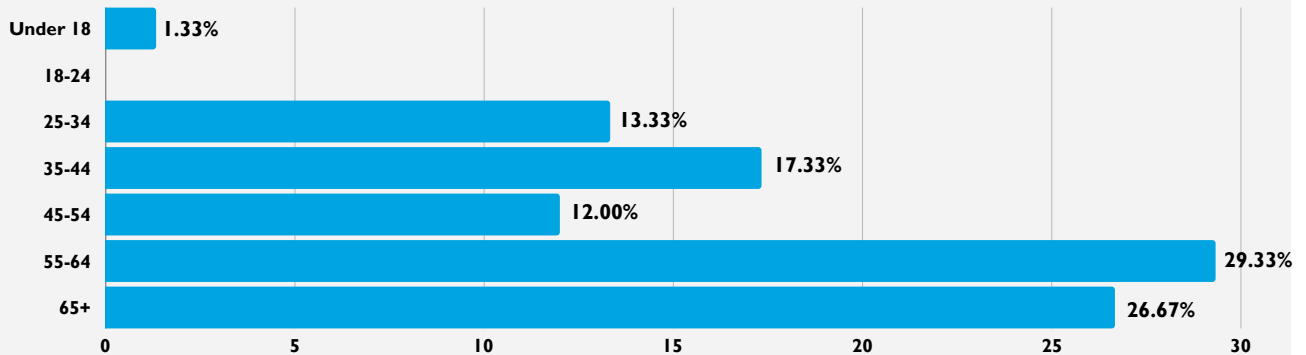
Answered: 75 Skipped: 474



➤ 57.33% of respondents were employed full-time.

How old are you?

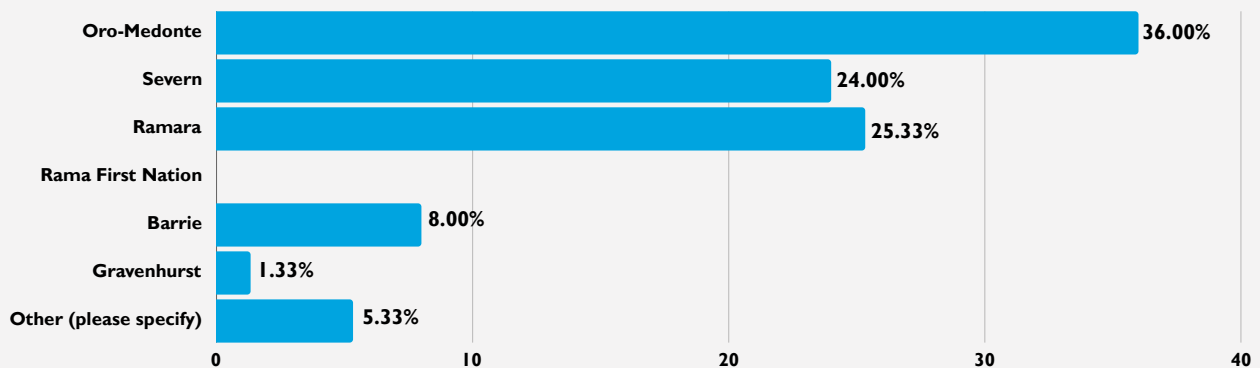
Answered: 75 Skipped: 474



➤ The majority of respondents were between 55 and 64. One respondent was under the age of 18.

In which community do you live?

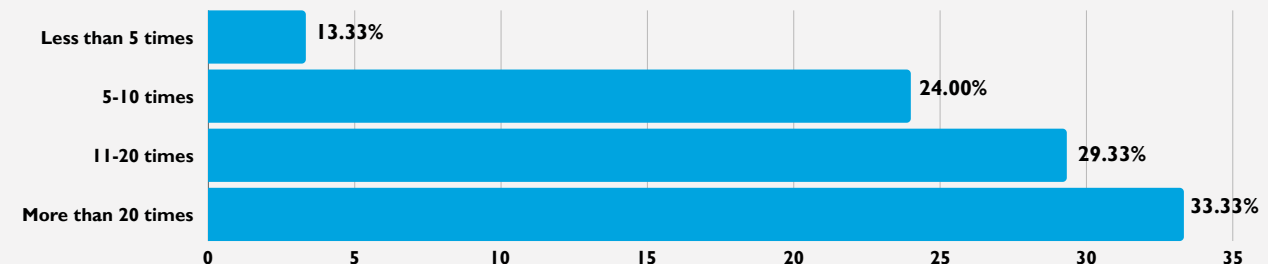
Answered: 75 Skipped: 474



➤ 36% of respondents were based in Oro-Medonte.

On average, how many times do you visit recreational amenities, attractions, restaurants, or shops in Orillia per month?

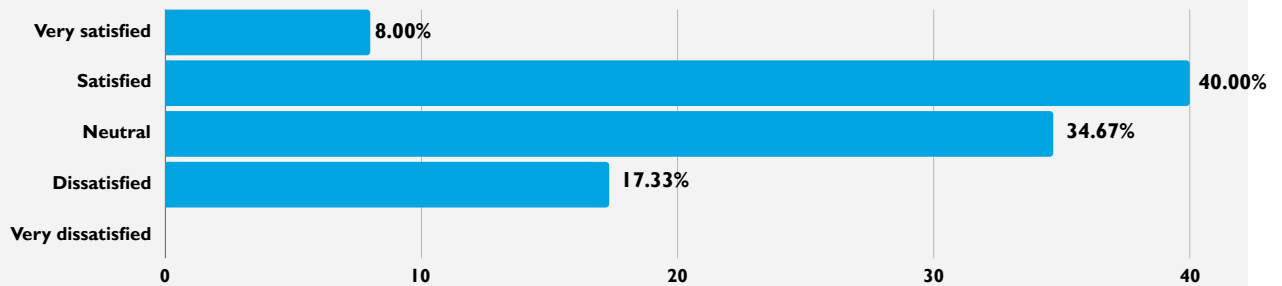
Answered: 75 Skipped: 474



➤ 33.33% of respondents indicated that they visited recreational amenities, attractions, restaurants, or shops in Orillia more than 20 times a month.

How satisfied are you with the availability of essential services in Orillia (e.g., healthcare, grocery stores, schools)?

Answered: 75 Skipped: 474

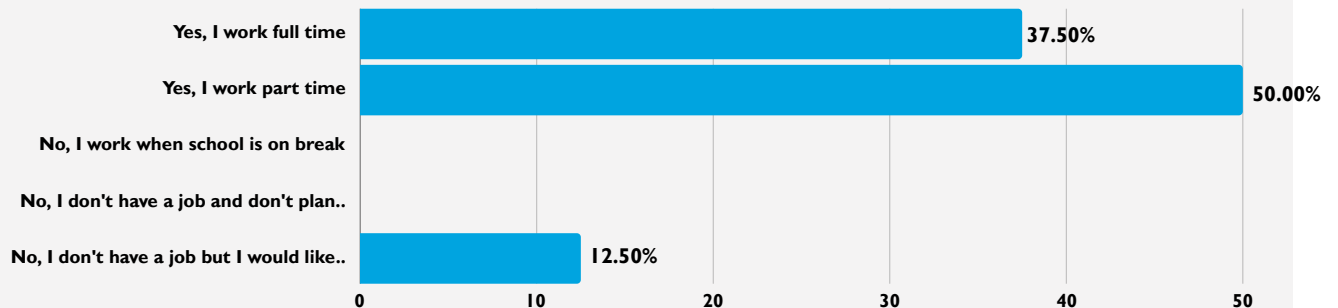


➤ 40% of respondents were satisfied with the availability of essential services in Orillia.

J.5 Students

Do you have a job?

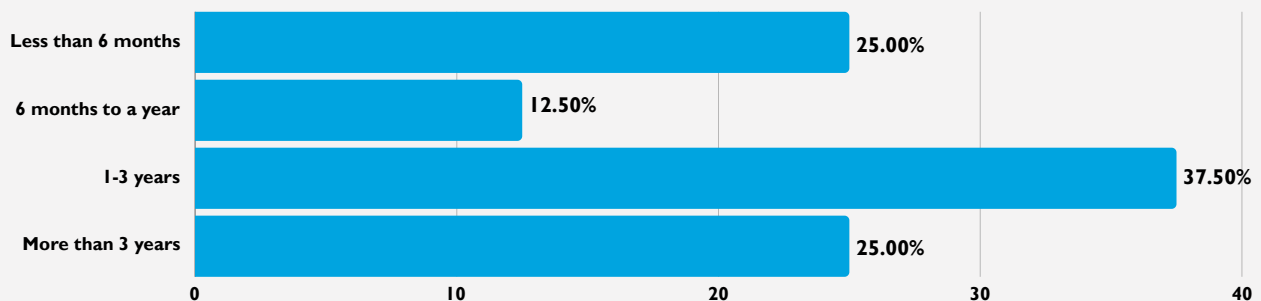
Answered: 8 Skipped: 541



➤ 87.5% of student respondents were working full or part time.

How many years have you lived in Orillia?

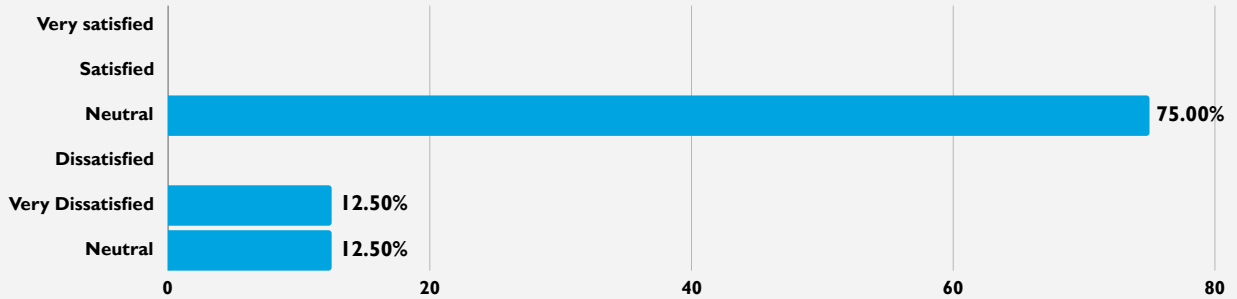
Answered: 8 Skipped: 541



➤ The majority of respondents lived in Orillia for one to three years.

How satisfied are you with the current job opportunities in Orillia?

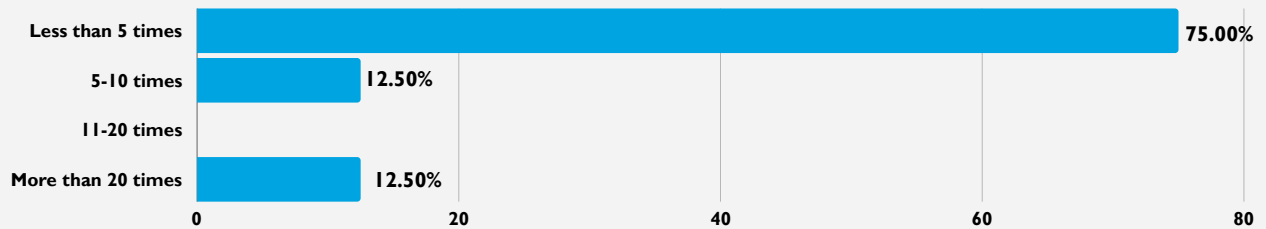
Answered: 8 Skipped: 541



➤ One student was very dissatisfied with their job opportunities in Orillia; however, the remainder of employed students were neutral.

On average, how many times do you visit recreational amenities or attractions in Orillia per month?

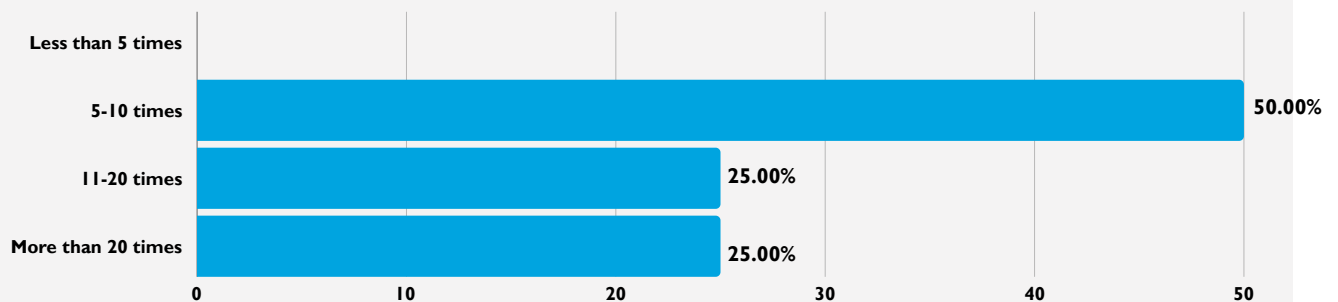
Answered: 8 Skipped: 541



➤ 75% of respondents visit recreational amenities or attractions in Orillia less than five times per month.

On average, how many times do you visit retail shops, services, or restaurants in Orillia per month?

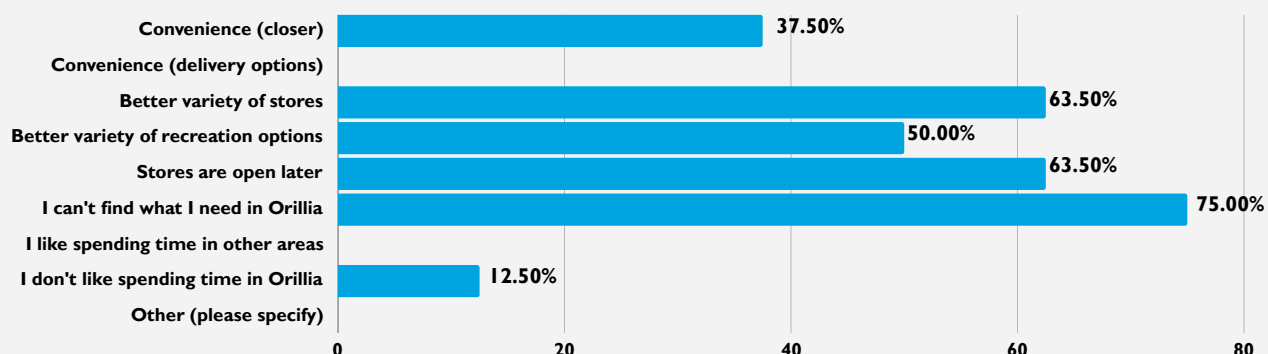
Answered: 8 Skipped: 541



➤ 50% of respondents visit retail shops, services, and restaurants in Orillia 5 - 10 times a month.

Why you choose to recreate or shop outside of Orillia, why (select all that apply)?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 541



➤ The top reason respondents chose to shop outside Orillia was that they could not find what they wanted here.

The following table displays what respondents think Orillia offers:

Answer Choices	Responses
Well-paying jobs	42.86% 3
Jobs that offer career advancement	14.29% 1
Jobs in my field	42.86% 3
Training and education opportunities	28.57% 2
Sport-based recreation opportunities (community sport leagues, indoor sport facilities like an ice rink or pool)	28.57% 2
Outdoor-based recreation opportunities (trails and beaches)	71.43% 5
Other recreation opportunities (non-sports based recreation such as cards and board games, youth centre, arts activities, etc.)	42.86% 3
Opportunities to volunteer	42.86% 3
Easy-to-use transit system	42.86% 3
Rental housing I can afford	14.29% 1
Housing for purchase I can afford	14.29% 1
Living close to my family and friends	14.29% 1
Living in a community that is welcoming	14.29% 1
Beautiful downtown	14.29% 1
Well used public space	42.86% 3
Lots of entertainment options	42.86% 3
TOTAL	7

Appendix K: Business Development Office Activity Scoring Matrix for Proposed Initiatives

The development of the Orillia Economic Development Strategy involved an extensive research, consultation, and data analysis process and the proposed goals, objectives, and actions present the department with a focused road map for future economic development activities. While a key goal of the strategy is to focus department activities on the most impactful activities, the business development office at the City of Orillia regularly gets approached with ideas for new activities and initiatives. As the local and global economy are constantly changing this is not a bad thing, however, with limited human resources and budgetary capacity this matrix is intended to provide the department and council with guidance in terms of the value of pursuing additional economic development activities not included within the existing strategy. Two scores, one measuring alignment with economic development goals, the other measuring resource capacity, are captured to determine if new initiatives being proposed are reasonable and feasible to include in the business development office's workplan.

Please see pages 118 - 119 for the evaluation form.

Qualifying Question

This question is fundamental to determining whether the city should even consider the initiative or not.



Is this a role for the City?

For this to be a role of the City, the initiative should provide a public service that is in the public's best interest and be in alignment with any regulation (i.e. Municipal Act), policy, and strategy that the City adheres to or puts forth.

Yes No

This answer must be a yes for the initiative to proceed to further review.

Economic Development Dimension Scoring

This section will provides a score to determine how well new initiatives that are proposed outside of the scope of this strategy align with the overall economic development vision, goals, objectives, and opportunities available to the City of Orillia. While the City has limited resources and capacity, the global economy is ever changing, and new opportunities and challenges may present themselves. This measure will help determine if new and unique initiatives that are not included in the existing strategy should be considered in a future work plan and if they are the role of the Business Development Office.

Does this align with Economic Development Strategy Goals?

This section will provides a score to determine how well new initiatives that are proposed outside of the scope of this strategy align with the overall economic development vision, goals, objectives, and opportunities available to the City of Orillia. While the City has limited resources and capacity, the global economy is ever changing, and new opportunities and challenges may present themselves. This measure will help determine if new and unique initiatives that are not included in the existing strategy should be considered in a future work plan. (3 points)

Does this align with Economic Development Strategy Objectives

Undertaking the activity has a clear, direct, and quantifiable impact on one or more of the objectives of the economic development strategy. (3 points)

Does it align with an identified Sector of Opportunity within the Economic Development Strategy?

The activities of this initiative will support economic development in one or more of the identified sectors of opportunity. (3 points)

Does this represent an emerging best practice in economic development?

The initiative proposed represents an emerging or innovative best practice in economic development, supported by evidence, which can be meaningfully applied to an opportunity or challenges relevant to the Orillia community.* (3 points)

Resource Dimension Scoring

This dimension assesses the resource impacts of the proposed initiative. The scoring is meant to support initiatives that are realistic, have support from the community and/or partners, and represent good value for investment. Recognizing that some of the most impactful economic development initiatives can be both costly and lengthy, this score is not meant to remove projects with large budgets, but rather ensure that investment is directed to areas that have the potential for the greatest economic development impacts.

**The strategy has already considered existing best practices within economic development which are necessary to the foundation of the strategy, thus this question should be considered not applicable to activities within the strategy.*

Value for Investment

The initiative is included in this foundational economic development strategy and/or the return on investment for undertaking the proposed initiative is realistic (supported by documentation) and the evidence clearly demonstrates there is a significant potential to attract investment that has economic returns of over \$5 for every \$1 invested or more. (3 points)

The return on investment for undertaking the proposed initiative is realistic (supported by documentation) and the evidence clearly demonstrates there is a significant potential to attract investment that has economic returns of \$3-5 for every \$1 invested or more. (2 points)

The return on investment for undertaking the proposed initiative is realistic (supported by documentation) and the evidence clearly demonstrates there is a significant potential to attract investment that has economic returns of \$1 -\$2.99 for every \$1. (1 point)

There is no, incorrect, or exaggerated return on investment provided. (0 points)

Financial/resource Partnerships

The initiative is included in this foundational economic development strategy and/or there are three or more project partners that are providing similar financial/resource contributions. (3 points)

There are two project partners that are providing similar financial/resource contributions OR three or more project partners providing lesser financial/resource contributions. (2 points)

There is one project partner that are providing similar financial/resource contributions OR two project partners providing lesser financial/resource contributions. (1 point)

There are no project partners contributing financial/resource support or financial/resource contribution is very unbalanced, not in favour of the City of Orillia. (0 points)

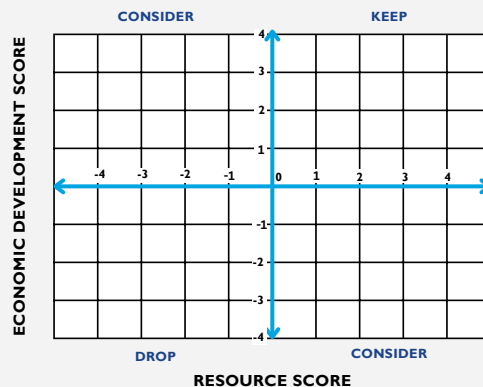
Capacity

The initiative is included in this foundational economic development strategy, and/or the City of Orillia has the financial and human resource capacity to add this initiative to their current workload and annual budget or would be appropriate to align with an existing budget reserve. (3 points)

The City of Orillia would need to provide a moderate increase to budget and/or resource allocation (represents a X% increase in budget), or the financial capacity and a strong business case exist to make a one-time significant capital investment. (2 points)

The City of Orillia would need to provide a significant increase to budget and/or resource allocation (represents a X% increase in budget). (1 point)

Business Development Office Activity Matrix

Economic Development Dimension Score:

Resource Dimension Score: