

Perth County Economic Development & Tourism Strategy

Action Plan: 2024-2028



September 2023

urban
Metrics

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Vision & Mission	4
About Us	5
Situational Analysis.....	7
Comparative Analysis.....	12
Strategy Approach	13
What We Heard (SWOT)	14
Ec.Dev/Tourism Priority Areas	17
Ec.Dev/Tourism Goals	19
Measuring Success (KPIs)	20
5-Year Action Plan: Detailed	21



Introduction

Perth County is committed to building and sustaining a high performing economy that capitalizes on its strengths and proactively removes the barriers that impede the well-being of Perth County residents and local businesses.

This **Perth County Economic Development & Tourism Strategy: 2024-2028 & Action Plan** has been developed to help guide and direct specific municipal actions that will build capacity, strengthen partnerships, and advance the goals articulated within the County's overall Strategic Plan - a plan endorsed by Council, which among other things *prioritizes* economic prosperity as a key pillar.

This Action Plan is intended to ensure that Perth County remains laser focused on addressing the economic issues and barriers which Perth County's Economic Development and Tourism Division is well-positioned to help alleviate or remove. It also identifies areas where the Economic Development and Tourism Division can play a supporting role through advocacy, communications and dispute resolution.

Developed in consultation with elected officials, local businesses, tourism operators, regional economic development partners, County staff, and the public at large, this strategy provides **40 Action Items** for Perth County to pursue and implement over the next five years.



Prosperity will be guided by Perth County's Vision & Mission

Perth County Vision



Perth County aspires to be a self-reliant and fiscally responsible region known for exceptional service delivery and client-service focus. The County will strive to enable the region to grow responsibly, innovate successfully and experience excellent quality of life.

Perth County Strategic Plan, 2023-2026

Perth County Mission



Perth County is an innovative and entrepreneurial region. We celebrate community and enjoy an exceptional quality of life that offers everything from rural landscapes and small towns to urban centres.

Perth County Strategic Plan, 2023-2026

About Us

The Perth County Economic Development and Tourism Division is a small, high impact team of professionals that serve the needs and interests of the Perth County business community. The Division strives to build and promote a diverse, collaborative and sustainable business community. The Division acts as a connector, advocator, and initiator of programs and services that encourage a strong and diverse business sector.

The Division acts as an internal and external liaison for Perth County businesses. The Division helps businesses, large and small, tap into available resources including training, funding and support from upper levels of government, through active communication and information sharing.

The delivery of municipal economic development services remains a core function for local, county and regional governments of all shapes and sizes in all corners of Ontario. As the economy grows and diversifies, and as economic conditions change, the design and delivery of economic development programs requires periodic adjustments and service refinements to address the day-to-day challenges of business.

Local economic development teams need to be agile and ready to act at a moment's notice. Perth County needs to be ready to shift, respond, pivot or adapt to new provincial and federal government programs earmarked to support small and medium size enterprises.



About Us

Business retention and expansion programs and initiatives such as tours, visits, surveys and business profiles are a mainstay of the division as they support the existing business community. Workforce development has been a consistent element due to Perth County's historically low unemployment rate and the ongoing need to support businesses in attracting and retaining workers, including youth, to live and work in the community.

Foreign direct investment is a more recent, but critical aspect of Perth County's program through the need to replace exiting employers and industries with new businesses that create high value jobs which in turn generate economic spin-offs throughout the community. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated changes in the business environment requiring further evolution of the economic development program.

Perth County Tourism leads destination development, branding, and marketing efforts to residents, tourism partners, business owners, and prospective visitors. Perth County Tourism has been working diligently over the past several years to grow and develop a collaborative network of local businesses seeking to grow the profile of Perth County as a travel destination. The division seeks to help businesses attract visitors, expand product offerings, and compel residents to get out and experience all that Perth County has to offer.

The Division is also the operational home for PC Connect. PC Connect, established in 2020 is Perth County's public transit service. PC Connect provides affordable and accessible bus connections that alleviates transportation barriers, enabling residents of all ages to stay connected to their community. Managing the service includes overseeing day-to-day operations, providing education and customer support, creatively promoting and building ridership, conducting employer and community outreach, and implementing continuous service enhancements.



Perth County: Central to Ontario's Success

Located in Ontario's agricultural and industrial heartland, **Perth County** has been cultivating opportunities for growth and prosperity for generations.

Perth County is comprised of four member municipalities that work together to support business investment. The member municipalities include the Municipality of North Perth, the Township of Perth East, the Township of Perth South, and the Municipality of West Perth. With a regional population of 81,565, Perth County is home to a hardworking, dedicated and skilled workforce of 45,000. Over half of the employed workforce commute less than 15 mins to work.

Perth County is situated within a short drive-time (2.5-hours) of several major metropolitan markets, including:

- Greater Toronto Area (pop. 6.7 million)
- Kitchener/ Waterloo/Cambridge (pop. 586,000)
- Guelph/Wellington (pop. 407,000)
- London/Middlesex (pop. 544,000)
- Hamilton (pop. 570,000)
- St Catharines/Niagara (pop. 497,000)
- Windsor/Essex (pop. 436,000)

Perth County is one of Ontario's most productive agricultural regions. Surrounded by 200,000 hectares of prime agricultural lands, the county produces over \$1.2 billion in cash farm receipts. (source OMAFRA census of Agriculture, 2021)

Although it is predominantly a rural jurisdiction, Perth County is fully integrated within the regional fabric of Canada's largest, most diverse and populous economic regions. Perth County provides fertile conditions for business to flourish, tourists to connect, and families to make their mark in a safe, progressive and caring community.



Perth County: Poised for Growth

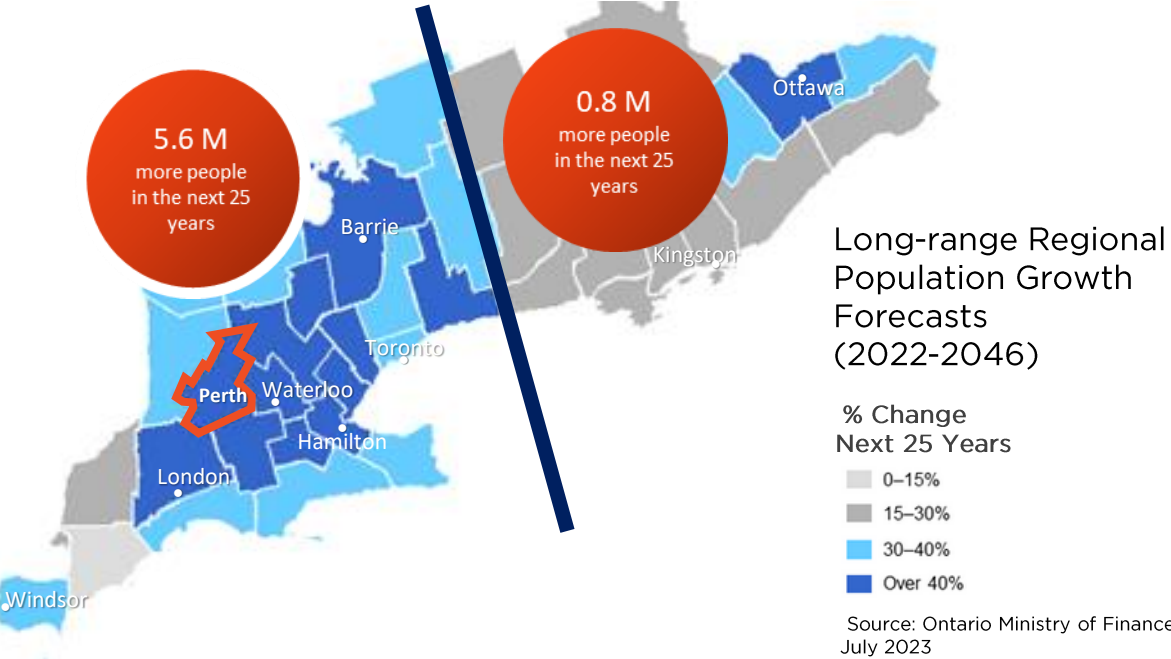


Perth County is part of a chain of municipalities in southwestern Ontario that are growing in size and popularity. Over the next 25 years (2022 to 2046), **Perth County is expected to grow by over 40%.**

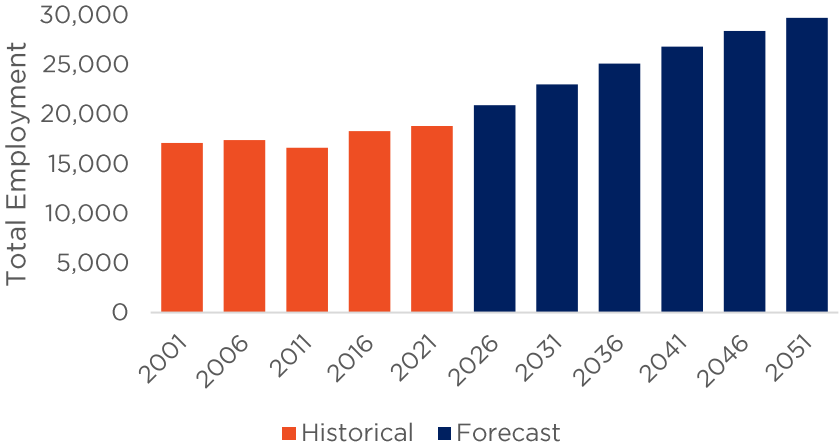
Ontario Ministry of Finance population projections suggest that the Perth County census division (including the City of Stratford and the Town of St. Mary’s) should expect to accommodate **37,000 new residents** through a combination of demographic change and net migration. While much of this growth will be directed to serviced settlement areas (i.e. communities supported by municipal water), there is a pervasive and growing demand for more rural lifestyles within ‘ex-urban’ areas such as Perth County. This is particularly true among young families and retirees seeking lower cost of living alternatives. This trend will most certainly place pressure on rural areas within parts of Perth County where farming has been and continues to be the prevailing land use.

Market growth provides Perth County’s business community with exceptionally strong economic tailwinds . It provides the backdrop for new customers, new markets, new infrastructure (roads and water) and new skills and innovation entering the workforce. Growth, however, must be managed. It requires consistent, active leadership across all levels of government to ensure that the right resources are in-place at the right time. Growth requires leaders and policymakers to pay close attention to escalating pressures for housing, healthcare, education, childcare, transportation, social services and food security.

Perth County’s Municipal Comprehensive Review has forecasted 29,700 jobs by 2051, representing an increase of 10,900 between 2021 and 2051 (363 new jobs annually). Approximately 66% of anticipated jobs will require a fixed location, while 34% is projected to be jobs with no fixed workplace location.



Perth County Historical and Forecast Employment Forecast, 2001 to 2051



Source: Perth County Comprehensive Review Land Needs Update

Perth County: Key Facts Informing the Strategy



Managing Growth

400/yr.
The historic average annual rate of population growth in Perth County (2001-2021) [1*]

1,600/yr.
The expected average annual rate of population growth in Perth County (2022-2042) [2*]

4x
Future growth expectations compared to historic rates in Perth County [3*]

<i>Perth County</i>	<i>Ontario</i>
2.9%	 -4.7%
Change in total area of farm acreage in Perth County vs. Ontario (2016-2021) [4]	

<i>2016-2021</i>	<i>2023-2027 (f)</i>
915	 1,235 est.
Number of newcomers (2016-2021) vs. projected number of newcomers over the next five years in Perth County [5*]	

Notes:

- * Figures include Stratford & St. Mary's
- [1] Statistics Canada, Census Data, 2001, 2021
- [2] Ontario Ministry of Finance, July 2023
- [3] per 1 and 2 above
- [4] OMAFRA, 2022
- [5] Statistics Canada, 2021 / Ministry of Finance



Economy

↑ 6.9%
Total labour force increase from 2016 to 2021 in Perth County.[6]

<i>Perth County</i>	<i>Ontario</i>
61%	 55%
Employment Rate in Perth County vs. Ontario in 2021[7]	

<i>Perth County</i>	<i>Ontario</i>
5%	 12%
Unemployment rate in Perth County vs. Ontario in 2021[8]	

23.6%
Largest share of jobs in Perth County are found in the manufacturing sector[9]

\$99,700
Average total income of household [10*]

- [6] Statistics Canada, 2021
- [7] Ibid
- [8] Ibid
- [9] Ibid
- [10] Ibid



Workforce Development

21%
Share of employers that have been **unable to find candidates** for hard-to-fill positions [11*]

77%
Share of employers who rate the availability of skilled workers as **'fair- to-poor'** [12*]

53%
Share of employers who cite **"lack of affordable housing"** as a barrier to finding talent [13*]

44%
Share of employers who cite **"lack of housing options"** as a barrier to finding talent [14*]

41%
Share of employers who cite **"lack of transit options"** as a barrier to finding talent [15*]

- [11] Four County Labour Market Planning Board, Perth County Local Lens Employment One Survey, 2023
- [12] Ibid
- [13] Ibid
- [14] Ibid
- [15] Ibid



Housing

5,700 (~285/yr.)
No. of new dwellings constructed in Perth County past 20 years (2001-2021) [16*]

<i>then</i>	<i>now</i>
3x	 6x
Median home prices as a multiple of median annual household income in Perth County (2001 v. 2021) [17*]	

<i>then</i>	<i>now</i>
15%	 20%
Median Rents (annualized) as a percentage of median annual household income 2002 vs 2022 in Perth County [18*]	

470 (~23/yr.)
No. of new rental dwelling units built in Perth County over the past 20 years (2002-2022) [19*]

925 (~90/yr.)
No. of new **affordable** units needed to support 10-year housing needs within four Perth County local-tier municipalities (2023-2033) [20]

- [16] Statistics Canada, Census Data, 2001, 2021
- [17] Statistics Canada, Census Data, 2001, 2021
- [18] CMHC
- [19] CMHC
- [20] Watson & Associates, Perth County Housing Needs Assessment, July 2023

Perth County: A Growing Destination

Tourism is an economic driver that is vital for vibrant communities. Pre-COVID-19, the Regional Tourism Organization 4 (RTO4) area (Huron, Perth, Waterloo, Wellington) **annually welcomed 10.4M visitors with a total visitor spending of \$1.2B** (StatsCan Visitor Data for RTO4 2019).

Perth County is advantageously situated in an Ontario tourism hub, with the City of Stratford, home to the Stratford Festival, located in the geographic centre of Perth County. Nearly one million visitors attend the Stratford Festival annually. Stratford is one of Canada's most important live-theatre hubs, drawing in actors, artists, designers, technicians and of course *tourists* from across the country, and indeed around the world.

With an abundance of tourists coming to the area each year, Perth County is exceptionally well-situated to increase tourism in their rural region through targeted destination marketing and destination development efforts that will encourage tourists to discover beyond the city limits of Stratford. These efforts will extend stays and increase spend of visitors to the region.

Through award-winning programs like the *Discover More Flavour Farm Gate Map* and *Discover More Adventure Signature Experiences*, Perth County Tourism is being recognized as a tourism destination of choice in Ontario.

Building on this momentum and in alignment with tourism trends, agritourism, experiential tourism, and cycle tourism have emerged as prominent sectors in Perth County. Putting intention into growing these sectors while continuing to strategically market Perth County as a top tourism destination will be key elements in continuing to build and enhance the Perth County Tourism portfolio and increase visitation to the region.



Destination
Development

367,000

Total number of experiential visitors (food, shopping, outdoor activities, etc.) [1]

then | now
0 | 9,800

Total number of social media followers that are engaged in the *Discover More* destination brand for Perth County (2017 v. 2023) [2]

100

The number of new visitor experiences, including farmgate and signature experiences launched in Perth County since 2019 [3]

Notes: [1] RTO4, Stratford Tourism in Review, 2017; [2] Perth County Economic Development and Tourism Division; [3] Ibid



Perth County: Home to Ontario's "Big Three" Sectors

The Province of Ontario continues to be recognized as the top (No. 1) location to invest in Canada by *Site Selection Magazine*. A combination of a highly skilled workforce, competitive cost structures and 'open' access to markets around the world make it an ideal location choice for business investment and growth. Invest Ontario, the provincial investment agency, highlights the Automotive, Food & Beverage Manufacturing and Tourism sectors as key drivers for the future. Quite fortuitously, these align perfectly with the economic foundations of Perth County.

Automotive

- Ontario's automotive corridor stretches from Windsor to Ottawa and has witnessed \$25B+ in recent auto investments including a \$7B battery plant by Volkswagen in nearby St. Thomas
- 80% of all vehicle and parts production is exported to international markets

The case for electric vehicle production and development in Ontario:

1. Access to an abundance of critical minerals
2. Home to five major automakers, manufacturing vehicles in Ontario (Stellantis, GM, Ford, Honda and Toyota)
3. An end-to-end, ethical supply chain with over 700 auto parts suppliers
4. A culture of innovation
5. Government support (incentives)



Source: Invest Ontario

Food & Beverage Manufacturing

- 3rd largest sector in North America generating more than \$48 billion in manufacturing revenues annually, 3,000 firms and over 104,800 employed
- Access to end-to-end supply chain solutions including 3.6 million hectares of cropland growing over 230 agricultural commodities
- Access to 1.5B consumers across 51 countries through free trade agreements



Source: Invest Ontario

Tourism

World-class four-season travel destination

- Creates \$36.8 B in annual economic activity in Ontario
- Over 88k tourism related businesses and 396k jobs
- 51.1% of all international visits to Canada occur in Ontario
- Tourism spending in Canada has been trending upwards since Q1 2022.



Source: Invest Ontario

How Perth County stacks up: Comparative Analysis

To support the development of Perth County’s new Economic Development and Tourism strategy, five comparable counties were selected based on their economic structure, rural geography, and economic development delivery models. The review consisted of identifying best practices and solutions for shared rural economic challenges. It was noted that in addition to the core elements of economic development delivery, many of these comparable counties have added strategic objectives and actions surrounding attracting & retaining talent and supporting the development of affordable housing and transportation delivery into their newly created Strategic Plans.

Comparative County	Perth County	Middlesex County	Wellington County	Hastings County	Northumberland County	Huron County
County Population [1]	40,950	75,000	102,250	41,580	89,365	61,370
25-Year Population Forecast (2022-2046) [2]	43.5% ↑	53.7% ↑	57.3% ↑	28.2% ↑	24.4% ↑	27.2% ↑
Total Number of Businesses [3]	6,326	9,752	12,957	3,812	8,087	8,727
Employment Rate [4]	61.1%	54.7%	62.2%	53.7%	48.6%	57%
Economic Development & Tourism Mandates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business retention & expansion 2. Business & investment attraction support 3. Business support & training 4. Destination development 5. Marketing & promotions 6. Workforce development 7. Transportation services 8. Stakeholder engagement 9. Community development & outreach 10. Advocacy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invest in people and places via rural revitalization 2. Entice talented workforces and entrepreneurs to relocate here by leveraging the pace of rural life and nearby amenities 3. Attract investment in tech-based manufacturing, food production, and ag-tech 4. Advocated for investment readiness and implement improvements in business development services 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business attraction, retention and expansion 2. Community improvement program (CIP) 3. Talent attraction and newcomer support 4. Tourism 5. Shop local support 6. Workforce development 7. Attainable housing 8. Our food future 9. Broadband internet connectivity 10. Rural transportation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the population & new development 2. Supporting startups & existing businesses 3. Increase awareness of Hastings and visitation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Broadband/ Connectivity 2. Talent including settlement and newcomer services 3. Workforce housing 4. Transportation 5. Tourism development 6. Entrepreneurship 7. Investment attraction 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing targeted opportunities 2. Aligning municipal government efforts 3. Engaging a broader group of stakeholders 4. Workforce 5. Entrepreneurship 6. Strategic economic infrastructure 7. Immigration Partnership 8. Tourism
EcDev & Tourism FTEs	4	4	9	4	3	11
EcDev Annual Budget Per capita Per Business	\$828,794 \$20 \$131	\$944,458 \$13 \$97	\$1,591,800 \$16 \$122	\$701,262 \$17 \$184	\$1,735,612 \$19 \$215	\$2,264,695 \$37 \$260

Notes: [1] OMAFRA County Profiles, 2023; [2] Ontario Ministry of Finance Population Projections; [3] OMAFRA County Profiles, 2023; [4] Ibid

ECONOMIC DEVELOPEMENT & TOURISM STRATEGY

THE APPROACH

This strategy was developed through a collaborative and iterative process that involved:

- listening to residents and community leaders
- reviewing current and legacy strategy and policy documents
- engaging with economic and tourism development partners and
- reviewing the day-to-day work of Perth County's Economic Development & Tourism Division

The conversations contributing to this plan were framed within the context of province-wide municipal best practices for local and regional (i.e. county-wide) business support programs, workforce development, business retention and attraction, and destination development and tourism marketing.

This strategy, and the conversations that advanced it were undertaken in the Spring/Summer 2023, a period when most Ontarians were beginning to see clear signs of normalization and reengagement after a three-year period of COVID-19 restrictions.



One-on-one interviews with County leaders and regional partners (x12)

What should Perth County's Economic Development & Tourism Team prioritize? What can we learn and apply from other similar jurisdictions?



Public survey (x98)

What economic challenges and priorities would you like to see addressed by Perth County?



Workshops (x2, w/43 participants)

What does Perth County and the Economic Development and Tourism Division in particular, need to do to support a high-performing economy?



Economic action planning

What actions could Economic Development and Tourism Division staff, lead, support and consider to achieve Perth County's full economic potential? What existing actions need to be continued for the foreseeable future?

Opportunities for Perth County to Pursue & Capitalize on

Stakeholder outreach in 2023 supported by current trends, federal and provincial initiatives as well as Perth County's industry base indicated that the following sectors are best aligned for growth and investment opportunities to be pursued by the Economic Development and Tourism Division.



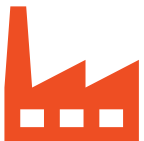
Agriculture & Food Processing

Perth County's largest sector by number of employees and firms continues to be Agriculture and Food Processing. The Province's *Grow Ontario: a provincial agri-food strategy* and the Federal government's *Sustainable Agriculture Strategy* has demonstrated their commitments to the sector and are resources Perth County can leverage for new opportunities and sector support.



Tourism

The stakeholder survey indicated over 60% of respondents rated tourism a very to extremely important economic driver for the County. This supports the need for continued development of tourism assets and promotion of attractions and experiences to attract new and repeat visitors. The federal government has also placed emphasis on rural Canada as part of their new *Tourism Growth Strategy: Canada 365: Welcoming the World. Every Day.*



Advanced Manufacturing

Reshoring of manufacturing operations has become a trend in North America following the global supply chain shortages faced during the pandemic. The Province is committed to boosting the long-term competitiveness and resilience of the sector having established an Advanced Manufacturing Council which is developing a Province wide *Advanced Manufacturing Strategy*.



Automotive

Recent electric vehicle battery plant announcements in Southwestern Ontario has created a renaissance in Ontario's automotive industry. The Province anticipates additional electric vehicle supply chain opportunities and investments, and stakeholders believe Perth County's location, manufacturing base and labour force is well positioned to capture these potential new investments.

Perth County Economic Priorities

Stakeholders indicated they want Perth County to address these “priority” economic issues that are threatening its economic growth and investment opportunities.



Housing

The lack of affordable housing is a systemic barrier that limits employment growth and hiring. Housing was broadly identified as the top issue impeding economic development in all corners of Perth County.



Talent

Labour shortages and talent retention are pervasive across all business sectors in Perth County. The County needs to work with partners in education, training, labour and federal/provincial counterparts to ensure skills gaps in the County are alleviated.



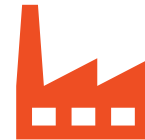
Youth Retention

Stakeholders pointed to a visible disconnect between the expectations of young adults (recent graduates) and the awareness of the types of employment and career opportunities readily available in the County.



Transportation

Transportation was identified as another barrier impeding employment growth and hiring. The need for reliable, affordable and sustainable mobility solutions are required to improve connections for residents and employers.



Business Attraction

Despite labour challenges, Perth County needs to maintain its focus on business attraction and enterprise development. Key sectors to be ‘targeted’ by Economic Development and Tourism Staff are identified on page 14.



Agile and Flexible Land Use Planning

Land use policy provides important public safeguards, but stakeholders expressed concerns that planning policy could be impeding innovation and business success. Planning and Economic Development need to coordinate to find solutions that support housing, investment, job growth, destination development and sustainability.

SWOT

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis below consolidates the background research and stakeholder input that was undertaken as part of the development of this plan and was further utilized to identify priority areas and action items that make up the plan.

Strengths

Proximity to London, Waterloo and Toronto	Rich agricultural heritage	Industrial land and building availability	Strong relationship with neighbouring regions	Quality of life
Enterprising spirit ('can-do' mindset)	Hard working people	Supportive community	Wide range of industry	Improved broadband service

Weaknesses

Lack of affordable housing	Labour shortages	No direct access to major 400-series highway	Lack of natural gas utilities	Lack of nature-based tourism attractions (lakes and beaches)
Lack of strong brand awareness (investment profile)	Slow and restrictive approval process for business	Visitor supports and signage	Seasonal tourism economy	Development opportunities not distributed evenly across all parts of County

Opportunities

Farm-based tourism and farm gate sales	Promotion of agriculture and trades as a career path	Agri-tech (food, energy, water, packaging, equipment)	Pool of skilled people who want to move back / return to Perth County	Sustainable agriculture and best-in-class food products
Integrated branding and signage	Growing interest in authentic and self guided travel experiences	Automotive and advanced manufacturing (EV, AV, IOT)	Remote Workforce Trends (WFH)	Apartments and housing to help advance workforce issues

Threats

Employees cannot afford to live and work in the community	Labour and youth retention	Restrictive land use policies that discourage investment (red tape)	Aging population (replacing retired workers)	No housing and other supports for newcomers
Loss of prime agricultural land for development	Narrow labour pool for large employers	Internet coverage gaps in certain areas	No sustainable transit solutions to support people and businesses	Minimal repeat visitation to Perth County due to lack of core attractions

Economic Development and Tourism Priority Areas

Over the next five years, the Economic Development and Tourism Division will work collaboratively with municipal and community partners to assist existing businesses and prospective investors to find innovative solutions that further strengthens Perth County's economy. The Economic Development and Tourism Division strives to eliminate barriers and forge new pathways toward a more prosperous future for everyone. The 2024-2028 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy & Action Plan is intended to formalize the ways and means that Economic Development and Tourism Division will support a growing and diversifying economy built on the strengths, foundations and assets which set Perth County apart.

The Action Plan includes five priority areas where residents and businesses expect Perth County to play a leadership role in making purposeful change. The Economic Development and Tourism Division Action Plan includes both core and non-core economic development program mandates. The Economic Development and Tourism Division needs to be at the leadership table to address specific "local economic challenges" that impede business and destination growth and prosperity. The Economic Development and Tourism Division will bring core competencies as conveners and capacity builders to bring the right resources to bear on matters related to **BR&E and Attraction, Tourism, Workforce, Housing, and Mobility**.



Economic Development and Tourism Priority Areas

1

Business Expansion, Retention & Attraction



Winning & supporting investments

Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction initiatives are the cornerstones of any economic development program. Developing a strong relationship with business from across the County, prospective investors and providing best-in-class service will ensure positive outcomes supported by trust, collaboration and innovative partnerships that enable the entire community to prosper.

Winning investment involves being proactive, networking, staying informed, sharing information, leading partnerships and standing out through strong brand awareness.

11 Actions

2

Destination Development & Marketing



Amplifying Perth County

Tourism has emerged as a key sector for Perth County. While awareness is growing, the sector requires ongoing efforts to competitively position - and build - the assets and experiences that are needed to draw tourists on a regular and consistent basis.

Perth County's tourism promotion efforts rely heavily on advertising, digital media and content creation. This is a fast-moving and dynamic process that requires dedicated resources and know-how to expertly connect and develop relationships with media, tourism influencers, and niche visitor segments. The development of content that not only connects with, but 'resonates' with audiences requires dedicated resources with expertise in both.

Targeted Destination Development and Destination Marketing efforts will position Perth County to grow as an Ontario tourism destination of choice.

12 Actions

3

People & Workforce Development



Connecting workers & employers

The growth of Perth County and the evolving needs of its diverse business community require both the attraction and retention of people looking to earn a good living.

The County's talent and labour-pool will predominantly be driven by retaining the County's youth and attracting newcomers to the County.

Economic Development and Tourism Division is being called upon increasingly to play a more impactful role in balancing local workforce issues. This includes building awareness of career opportunities for young people and newcomers, facilitating skills development opportunities that meets the needs of businesses, and promoting Perth County as an ideal place to thrive and prosper.

7 Actions

4

Affordable & Alternative Forms of Housing



Ensuring EVERYONE has a roof over head

The lack of affordable housing across Ontario, including rural communities, contributes to workforce challenges which can ultimately stifle economic growth and prosperity.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) has developed A *Blueprint for Action: An Integrated Approach to Address The Ontario Housing Crisis* which identifies actions Perth County as whole should adopt to help alleviate the housing crisis. Economic Development has a role to play in alleviating the affordable housing supply issue by leveraging its core strengths in networking, business development and innovation, and applying it to opportunities that support increasing the availability of affordable and innovative housing.

4 Actions

5

Mobility 2.0








Leaving NOBODY behind

The ability to travel across the County and surrounding areas seamlessly and affordably is an important element in the socio-economic strength of the County.

PC Connect has established a baseline for rural transit service in the County, however the future of the program remains in flux with funding expiring in 2025. Economic Development and Tourism Division can play a vital role in ensuring that residents and business don't lose transit service. Economic Development and Tourism Division will continue to be the lead catalyst for sustainable mobility partnerships and options that are appropriately aligned with the local and regional commuter market and needs of the community.

6 Actions

Economic Development and Tourism Priority Areas Goals & Roles to Support a High Performing Economy

 <p>11 Actions</p>	1	<p>Provide active leadership and best-in-class support programs to facilitate economic growth and prosperity focused on the needs of the business community.</p>	<p>Economic Development and Tourism Division will execute best-in-class business retention & expansion (BR+E) programs which deliver consistent and productive outreach measures that address the expectation of local business leaders. Maintaining strong communication links with the business community will enable Economic Development and Tourism Division Staff to develop and implement programs which support the day-to-day needs of businesses as they grow. Moreover, these outreach efforts will enable Staff to proactively identify – and ideally capitalize upon – upstream and downstream opportunities for new companies and supply affiliates doing business in Perth County.</p>
 <p>12 Actions</p>	2	<p>Deliver best-in-class destination development and destination marketing programming to increase and elevate tourism in the region.</p>	<p>Economic Development and Tourism Division Staff will lead strategic initiatives to support and promote the local tourism sector while enhancing Perth County’s positioning as an appealing rural tourism destination. Marketing (digital & print), tourism operator support, product development, storytelling, public engagement, and program delivery will be key elements in attracting visitors to Perth County.</p>
 <p>7 Actions</p>	3	<p>Attract, retain and support workforce growth and development.</p>	<p>Economic Development and Tourism Division will work proactively to attract, retain, and support prospective workers considering a move to Perth County. Economic Development and Tourism Division will help advance programs and funding efforts designed to support and accelerate newcomer growth, as well as youth-focused retention and skills development programs. These programs will be developed in collaboration with local educators (high-schools), key employers, business chambers, senior government officials, and select post-secondary learning institutions that deliver programs aligned to key sectors in Perth County.</p>
 <p>4 Actions</p>	4	<p>Champion the development of new affordable housing supply.</p>	<p>Economic Development and Tourism Division is committed to closing the housing affordability gap. Economic Development and Tourism Division will leverage its core skillsets, local knowledge, and professional networks to engage with developers, businesses, lenders and housing specialists to identify and pursue real housing supply options. These efforts will be supported by political leadership and as appropriate, <i>fast-tracked</i> through the municipal approval process. The Economic Development and Tourism Division will not own or manage housing. It will simply act as a primary catalyst in Perth County to make it happen.</p>
 <p>6 Actions</p>	5	<p>Enable rural mobility programs to provide affordable and sustainable connectivity.</p>	<p>Economic Development and Tourism Division will leverage its pilot-project experience in the transit/mobility space to enable sustainable and innovative mobility options, focusing on opportunities to connect residents with employment, education, and healthcare. The team will look to identify flexible and viable mobility platforms that support the economic, social, and environmental well-being of Perth County and our neighbouring municipal partners.</p>

Key Performance Indicators

How we will Measure Success

For the next five years (i.e. the duration of this plan), the Economic Development and Tourism Division will produce an annual report that summarizes the impact on economic development matters generally, and on progress status vis-à-vis the five pillars of this plan. Each year the Division lead will provide an assessment of actions and performance. The following KPIs will be reported upon to help track impact, and to make resourcing decisions as appropriate.

1 Business Expansion, Retention & Attraction



Winning & supporting investments

Number of business visits conducted, and investments made across the County

Number of new leads generated and converted through Economic Development and Tourism Division business attraction efforts

Number of business success stories created

Successful ICI applications supported by Economic Development and Tourism Division team

2 Destination Development & Marketing



Amplifying Perth County

Visitor Satisfaction

Tourism Operator Satisfaction

Digital Engagement including:

Total number of social media followers
YoY audience growth rates (website, social media)
Total engagement on all social media platforms (shares, likes, comments)
Total number of strategic influencer partnerships and digital media features (blogs, social media collaborations)

Print Media tactics including:

Number of novel (or new) print marketing collaterals published and distributed
Total number of destinations featuring and distributing Perth County Tourism printed materials

Media:

Total number of earned media stories
Total number of paid media and advertising (print, radio, broadcast and social impressions)

Visitation drivers:

Total number of catalogued (active) tourism operators, destinations and experiences
YoY visitor and local spending growth rates
YoY visitor length of stay growth rates

Perth County Tourism Brand:

Total number of public facing brand touch-points (signage, website)

3 People & Workforce Development



Connecting workers & employers

Total number of businesses registered for the Workforce Attraction and Retention Employer Toolkit (WARET)

Total number of youth (under 25) engagements in Economic Development and Tourism Division supported initiatives

Annual youth unemployment rate

Total number of newcomer engagements in Economic Development and Tourism Division supported initiatives

Total number of job openings as of July 1st

4 Affordable & Alternative Forms of Housing



Ensuring everyone has a roof over-head

Total number of residential building permits

Total number of non-single family detached unit building permits

Total number of lot severances

Total number of building permits issued for secondary suites

5 Mobility 2.0



Ensuring nobody gets left behind

Total number of annual rides delivered on PC Connect

Environmental impact

Customer satisfaction



1. Business Retention Expansion and Attraction

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(1.) Continue to execute a best-in-class business visitation & outreach program		• S	G1 - P1 & P2	Operationalize the County's Business Retention and Expansion program to expand the annual number of business visits over the course of the strategy period. Continue to regularly meet, communicate, network with businesses in each of the four member municipalities. Help businesses connect to resources that are available to them.	Increased engagement with the business community will provide an on-going pulse and insights to continue supporting business needs and respond with appropriate programs and initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local municipalities MEDJCT FedDev EDC BDC OMAFRA 	\$	Port Colborne's Business Visitation Program Wellington County's BR&E program
(2.) Marketing and Promotion - Showcase Perth County businesses		• S	G1 -P2	Continue to develop and promote Perth County businesses by developing videos and other marketing materials that promote industry leadership, innovation, success and other stories.	Greater awareness for business activities happening in Perth County. Promotion will support attracting new investment, talent attraction and youth retention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies Students Educators 	\$	Making it in Middlesex: Stories of Business Success County of Brant's Salute to Brant Business Awards

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



1. Business Retention Expansion and Attraction

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(3.) Collaborate with partner organizations to support business -		• S	G1 - P2	Perth County has a strong network of strategic partners. These partners should be leveraged to find new innovated ways to support the business community. This includes hosting events, cross promoting webinars and training opportunities.	Businesses look to Perth County as a valuable resource in fostering economic collaboration and partnership opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local municipalities CFDC SPCFB Chambers 	\$	Oxford EcDev's Rural Entrepreneur Networking Events and Networking Group
(4.) Connect local business to existing business support programs		• S	G1-P2	Provide resources and support for companies that are looking to access government funding and other business development programs including SWODF, export development and hiring.	Increase the number of Perth County businesses accessing grants and business development programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MEDJCT EDC OMAFRA 	\$	Simcoe County partnership with Trade Accelerator Program (TAP)
(5.) Leverage the Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA) for lead generation and regional cooperation in investment attraction		• S	G1 - P1 & P2	Continue to pursue and attract investment opportunities that align with the strengths of the County in collaboration with the Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA).	<p>Convert leads to wins.</p> <p>Continue to RFIs from upper levels of government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOMA OFC OMCA Invest Ontario Invest in Canada Site Selectors Guild 	\$	SOMA Partners

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



1. Business Retention Expansion and Attraction

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(6.) Perth County is recognized as a Leader in Agricultural Productivity in Ontario		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S 	G1 – P1	Attract private and public agriculture-related investment that is complementary and support workforce development, growth and innovation in the regional agricultural sector.	Realize investments that align and support the growth of the County's agriculture sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OMAFRA OFC PCFA 	\$	
(7.) Pursue investment opportunities in emerging sectors (i.e., Agri-Food EV Supply Chain, Green Economy, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ST 		G1 – P1 & P2	<p>Ensure Perth County is positioned to win investments in emerging sectors such as the EV Supply Chain, Green Economy, Plant Based foods, etc.</p> <p>Identify the needs of these emerging sectors and the assets available to them in Perth County through studies and engaging industry.</p>	Realize investments in emerging sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SOMA Invest Ontario Invest Canada OFC OMCA 	\$\$	<p>St. Thomas EDC's EV Investment</p> <p>Town of Warwick Circular Economy</p>
(8.) Marketing and promotion – Investment Attraction		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S 	G1 – P2	Develop tailored investment packages for target sectors, such as manufacturing and agriculture.	Ability to pursue and respond to leads and investment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local municipalities Industry associations 	\$	

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



1. Business Retention Expansion and Attraction

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(9.) Advocate and promote the need for, and expansion of, viable employment lands in the County		• S	G1 - P2 G4 - P1	<p>Continue to maintain and publish an inventory of available shovel-ready land. These should be positioned to prospective investors and other end-users.</p> <p>Work with public and private landowners to develop market ready properties.</p> <p>Work with Planning departments to establish a consensus position with the respect to the importance of employment land.</p>	<p>Increase number of inquiries</p> <p>Ensure a ten-year supply of employment land</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Property Owners Local Municipalities Site Selectors/ Brokers Invest Ontario 	\$	<p>Whitby Employment Land Investment Readiness GIS Tool,</p> <p>County of Elgin's Vacant Employment Land Inventory</p>
(10.) Ensure flexible and affordable internet connectivity options exist within the County.		• S	G1 - P4	<p>Undertake additional advocacy to support enhancement of high-speed internet in areas where it is still not possible to access in the County.</p>	<p>Increased access to high-speed internet in areas currently underserved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWIFT Internet providers 	\$	<p>WOWC advocacy efforts</p>

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



1. Business Retention Expansion and Attraction

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(11.) Commit to a solutions-based program / approach to Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) application intake and review	• MT		G1 - P2 G4 - P1	Collaborate with municipal planning staff to create a seamless development application process for Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) development and expansion.	Streamlined and coordinated application process for applicants Economic Development involvement in business development and expansion applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAO • Planning • Building 	\$	Town of Halton Hills Business Concierge City of Kawartha Lakes' Development Concierge Programs

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



2. Destination Development & Marketing

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(12.) Accelerate the development of experiential and immersive tourism experiences		• S	G4 - P3	Working with existing and prospective tourism operators, identify and support new and existing agritourism, culture, historic, culinary, sports, recreation and or other avenues that will further enhance the award-winning <i>Discover More Adventures</i> experiential tourism program.	New experiences to add to Perth County's tourism offerings. Increase visitor spending. Showcase Perth County best-in-class immersive experiences Diversification of activities on farms with agritourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism Operators RTO 4 Destination Stratford 	\$	SWOTC Signature Experience Program
(13.) Continue implementing Perth County's cycle tourism initiatives		• S	G4 - P3	Implement Key Directions outlined in the Perth County Cycle Tourism Strategy, including enhancing identified Signature Routes, make improvements and add to amenities, services and signage for cyclists, increase the promotion of cycle tourism in Perth County, support the long-term growth of cycle tourism through support of events, build partnerships to grow the cycle tourism product, and strengthen the cycling culture across Perth County	Increased cycle tourism Enhanced cycle tourism products and services Cycle tourist satisfaction growth Enhance Perth County Tourism brand and public perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination Stratford St. Marys 	\$	Simcoe County Durham Cycle Tours

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



2. Destination Development & Marketing

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(14.) Support development and enhancement of industry - created tourism products		• S	G4 -P3	By providing connections and project support, staff will foster industry-led tourism project development. This could include assisting businesses expanding current operations to include a tourism aspect (i.e. non-conventional accommodations), businesses interested in offering a collaborative tourism experience (i.e. Christmas trail), or assisting with enhancement of destinations (i.e. G2G Rail Trail improvements)	Increase tourism offerings in Perth County. Support business owners and entrepreneurs. New attractions for families. New, low-cost, high-impact amenities and experiences to complement existing offerings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism operators • RTO 4 	\$	
(15.) Strengthen the tourism network and collaboration among local tourism operators		• S	G4 -P3	Use the current inventory of tourism assets and businesses to facilitate networking, learning and collaboration opportunities across the sector. Help facilitate connections and sense of community amongst tourism operators and destinations.	Enhanced communication and collaboration amongst local destinations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism Operators 	\$	

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



2. Destination Development & Marketing

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(16.) Develop a consistent Perth County-wide signage program to strengthen the linkages between commercial interests and the travelling public	• LT		G4 - P3	Develop a unique Perth County wayfinding signage program that links the various tourism assets across the County.	A consistent wayfinding program that strengthens the identity of Perth County tourism.	• RTO4	\$\$\$	Prince Edward County Wayfinding Signage Program Tillsonburg's Wayfinding Signage Program
(17.) Obtain detailed visitor data to better understand the visitor profiles and economic impacts of Tourism on the local economy.	• ST		G4 - P3	Visitor data supports better decisions related to tourism marketing and product development. Establish a baseline for Perth County Tourism including information on spending, length of stay, etc.	Help paint a clear picture of the economic impact of tourism in Perth County and create a baseline to measure change over time. A strategic guide to navigate tourism impacts and further tourism sector development and management.	• RTO4 • Consultant	\$\$	

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



2. Destination Development & Marketing

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(18.) Continue to grow agritourism, promote local food, and help farmers diversify income through workshops, farm tours, retail, stays, and events.		S	G1 - P1	Leverage the award-winning Discover More Flavour Farm Gate Map program, strong agricultural sector, and local food offerings. Promote collaboration between partners to enhance current agritourism offerings (events, farm hops, etc.) Continue to elevate the profile of local food and agricultural experiences.	Support On farm Diversified Use Increase the number of visitors to Perth County Increase number of local agritourism offerings and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm Operators OMAFRA 	\$	Wellington County and Guelph Taste Real Food Experience Guide
(19.) Implement best-in-class digital tourism marketing and content creation		S	G4 - P3	Perth County's economic development and tourism team has cultivated a strong tourism destination brand. Perth County must remain at the forefront of media and digital-marketing best practices. Adopt and use best-in-class social media platform strategies that resonate with target visitor groups. Collaborate with influencers to promote local businesses and the County as a tourism destination. Seasonal campaign development, including professional videography and photography. <i>Dedicated full-time resources are required in order to generate high-quality, timely content and expand Perth County Tourism's digital audience reach.</i>	Increase the number of visitors to Perth County Increase engagement with digital assets Enhance Perth County Tourism brand and public perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism Influencers 	\$\$	Prince Edward County, 'Visit The County' City of Kingston, 'Visit Kingston' Waterloo Region 'Explore Waterloo Region'

Legend

- ST Short-term (2024-2025)
- MT Medium-term (2025-2026)
- LT Longer-term (2027-2028)
- S Sustain (pres.-2028)
- CSP Perth County Strategic Plan, 2023-2026
- \$ Within existing budget
- \$\$ Additional budget required (under \$50K)
- \$\$\$ Additional budget required (over \$50K)



2. Destination Development & Marketing

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(20.) Develop distinct “visitation focused” tourism website	• MT		G4 - P3	Undertake the development of a standalone Perth County Tourism website to showcase all that Perth County has to offer including program packaging.	Website reach is specific to Tourism audience and enable Search Engine Optimized for Tourism. Enhance Perth County Tourism brand and public perception Visitors have a dedicated website to explore all that Perth County has to offer and make informed visitor decisions.	• Web developer	\$\$\$	Bruce County's 'explore the Bruce' website Northumberland County Tourism's website
(21.) Continue to implement and grow strategic Advertising and media coverage		• S	G4 - P3	Launch Perth County Tourism advertising where it will be seen by target markets. Generate paid and organic media coverage, including strategic advertising.	Increase the number of visitors to Perth County Enhance Perth County Tourism brand and public perception	• Culinary Tourism Alliance • Stratford Festival	\$\$	

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



2. Destination Development & Marketing

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(22.) Rural tourism advocacy and government relations		• S	G 4 - P 3	<p>In a time of post-pandemic recovery, there has never been a more important time for the tourism industry to have strong links with government to ensure the industry is given the support needed to recover from the effects of COVID-19 and thrive into the future.</p> <p>Participate in Queen’s Park Engagement Days. Take every opportunity to engage with local politicians, MPPs, MPs to discuss rural issues such as business support, tourism recovery, workforce development, etc.</p>	<p>Support business owners and entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Support from all levels of government for Perth County tourism operators and destinations.</p>	• TIAO	\$	
(23.) Continue to produce, update and deliver print media including visitor guides that promote tourism experiences and attractions		• S	G 4 - P 3	<p>Continue to produce and distribute <i>Discover More</i> Tourism Brochures, <i>Discover More Flavour</i> Farm Gate Maps, across Ontario. Implement non-digital strategic tourism marketing promotional tools to reach target audiences (publications, posters, etc).</p>	<p>Continue to expand the reach and awareness for Perth County’s tourism attractions and experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Tourism Operators MTCS 	\$	<p>Prince Edward County Wine Tour Map</p> <p>Kawarthas & Northumberland Butter Tart Tour</p>

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



3. People & Workforce Development

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(24.) Promote Perth County as a place to live, work & play		• S	G1 - P2 G4 - P3	To attract and retain talent develop an awareness campaign that promotes the opportunities and advantages to live, work & play in Perth County. Promote in-demand job and careers opportunities, showcase local employers at regional job fairs	Increase awareness of the advantages of living, working and recreating in Perth County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local municipalities Employers Community organizations 	\$\$	Bruce County's "Live Here" Campaign
(25.) Establish a Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) in Perth County	• ST		G4 - P3	To support newcomers, Perth County will apply to become a host location for a Local Immigration Partnership funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. This will help attract immigrants to the community and support their integration into the community and economy.	Better engaged newcomers and integration into the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizenship and Immigration Canada Huron LIP Community Partners 	\$\$	London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



3. People & Workforce Development

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(26.) Continue to support the development of welcoming communities		• S	G4 – P3	Support employers to make their workplaces more respectful and open to diversity. In additions, this priority helps connect employers with recourse to develop strategies and awareness of necessary accommodations to help create successful newcomer integration.	Improved employee retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local municipalities Employers Community partners 	\$	
(27.) Connect Youth with job and career opportunities		• S	G4 – P3	<p>Retaining youth requires tangible and experiential learning and employment opportunities which showcase local employers as innovative businesses that support and align with rewarding career or employment pathways.</p> <p>Partner with high schools to showcase local career and job prospects with Perth County based businesses. Example 'Manufacturing Day.'</p> <p>Convene a regular session for Youth Retention and Career Development - understand the issues inside the school / and needs to businesses.</p>	<p>Perth County youth gain an understanding of the local career and skills opportunities needed in the County.</p> <p>Youth pursue post-secondary education that meets the skills and requirements for local based businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Schools Employers Community Volunteer Organizations 	\$	<p><u>Manufacturing Day</u> organized by Workforce WindsorEssex and Invest WindsorEssex showcases opportunities in manufacturing to over 700 students annually.</p>

Legend

- ST Short-term (2024-2025)
- MT Medium-term (2025-2026)
- LT Longer-term (2027-2028)
- S Sustain (pres.-2028)
- CSP Perth County Strategic Plan, 2023-2026
- \$ Within existing budget
- \$\$ Additional budget required (under \$50K)
- \$\$\$ Additional budget required (over \$50K)



3. People & Workforce Development

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Aligned	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(28.) Support workforce skills development in partnership with employers		• S	G4 - P3	<p>Work with employers to identify the skills gaps in in the County’s workforce.</p> <p>Support training opportunities that narrow the skills gap.</p> <p>Identify partners to deliver skills training locally to upskill the county’s workforce.</p>	<p>Local workforce can acquire skills and/or apprentice-based training with employers in Perth County.</p> <p>Employers see improvements in the local workforce’s skills sets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four County Labour Market Board • Employers • Post-Secondary Institutions 	\$\$	Town of Lincoln’s Youth Skills Studio funded through Ontario’s Skills Development Fund.
(29.) Create more welcoming communities’ events & opportunities.	• MT		G4 - P3	<p>Continue to host and curate inclusive barrier free events for all. Events such as these will be an ‘open call’ to all Perth County newcomers, Perth employers and other community organizations. Intended as an informal event, guests will have an opportunity to meet, network and enjoy the bounty of the County.</p>	<p>Events that connect newcomers to prospective employers and community organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council • Employers • Community Volunteer Organizations 	\$\$	

Legend

ST
Short-term (2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term (2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term (2027-2028)

S
Sustain (pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County Strategic Plan, 2023-2026

\$
Within existing budget

\$\$
Additional budget required (under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional budget required (over \$50K)



3. People & Workforce Development

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Aligned	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
<p>(30.)</p> <p>Continue to deliver the Workforce Attraction and Retention Employer Toolkit (WARET)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S 	G4 - P3	<p>Economic Development and Tourism Division will continue to deliver the WARET toolkit that helps businesses become an employer of choice by implementing best practices and access to resources. Economic Development and Tourism Division will update and create additional resources to the toolkit as they become available.</p>	<p>Employers remain informed about best practices and resources available to them to attract and retain their workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest Stratford 	\$	<p><u>WARET</u></p>

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



4. Affordable & Alternative Forms of Housing

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(31.) Promote the development of secondary units.	• S T		G1 - P2 G4 - P1	<p>Work with private homeowners to increase the rental supply of housing (as-of-right zoning to permit up to three residential units per lot) in the County by developing materials and seminars on 'how-to' guide to create legal secondary suites.</p> <p>Explore the opportunity in developing an incentive program for developing secondary units.</p>	Increase the supply of rental housing stock in Perth County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Professional Service Providers • General Contractors 	\$\$\$	<p>Oxford County's My Second Unit program</p> <p>Simcoe County's Secondary Suites Program</p>
(32.) Support and implement data and information platforms that accelerate affordable housing construction throughout Perth County.	• M T		G1 - P2 G4 - P1	<p>To address the lack of adequate data for housing development in Perth County, partner with the Rural Housing Information System spearheaded by the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) and promote the tool to builders and developers.</p>	Residential development industry will be better informed about opportunities and market conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROI • WOWC • Builders & Developers 	\$\$	<p>The Rural Housing Information System is currently being launched in Eastern Ontario and is in the process of expanding the tool into Western Ontario rural municipalities.</p>

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



4. Affordable & Alternative Forms of Housing

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Alignment	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
<p>(33.)</p> <p>Advocate for innovative housing solutions and new forms of low-cost, sustainable housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MT 		G1 - P2 G4 - P1	<p>Work with developers to encourage innovative housing while still conforming to the standards of the Ontario Building Code.</p> <p>Identify surplus and/ or underutilized buildings and explore feasibility into converting them into affordable units.</p> <p>Work with large employers in understanding workforce housing needs and find housing solutions for employees. Encourage employers to support the development of multi-unit developments in their communities and participate in the public planning process.</p>	<p>Collaboration and partnership with the development community will encourage action on alleviating the housing supply crisis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Builders & Developers Landowners Large Employers 	<p>\$\$</p>	<p><u>AMO</u> identified action. Example of innovative solution includes an employer in Norfolk County converting a former tobacco research station into multi-unit affordable housing for workers.</p>
<p>(34.)</p> <p>Undertake a public awareness campaign to promote and encourage participation in the development of affordable housing options</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S 	G1 - P2 G4 - P1	<p>The public plays a significant role to help enable more housing options. Education and public awareness on the importance of attainable workforce housing within the county and the ways that individuals can contribute to the creation.</p>	<p>Public engagement and support for innovative housing options.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Building 	<p>\$\$</p>	

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



5. Mobility 2.0

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Aligned	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(35.) Advocate for additional and long-term financial support from the Government of Ontario in order to continue operating the PC Connect service beyond the pilot project period (March 31, 2025).	• ST		G1 - P3	<p>The launch of the PC Connect program in 2020 occurred during an unprecedented period underscored by travel restrictions and shuttered activities. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, PC Connect ridership has grown at an average rate of 16% month-over-month.</p> <p>Using the support of PC Connect ridership, community feedback and its overall benefits to the community, it is recommended that the County advocates for additional long-term funding in order to make PC Connect a permanent essential service in Perth County.</p>	Continue to provide transportation services that enable residents to stay connected to their communities, access employment and social programs, attend appointments, visit friends and family, and maintain an independent and active lifestyle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial Govt Stratford Transit Mobility Bus Social Services Southwest Community Transit (SCT) Association 	\$	
(36.) Continue to collaborate with other transportation services in efforts to create a seamless public transportation network.		• S	G1 - P3	Work with other transportation services to align schedules, communications and advocacy efforts.	Enable residents to travel throughout southwestern Ontario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Stratford SCT 	\$	<u>SCT</u> Connecting Southwest Ontario initiative

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



5. Mobility 2.0

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Aligned	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(37.) Investigate the potential of attracting a “proven” transit operation, taxi or rideshare service to deliver transit and mobility services within Perth County and the neighbouring communities.	• LT		G1 - P3	With the unknown future of PC Connect post-2025, continue to pursue alternative rural mobility solutions to operate independently in Perth County, including franchised private transit operations such as Driver Seat.	Potential additional transit options in Perth County to supplement the unknown future of the PC Connect program post 2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Transit Franchises Stratford Transit Provincial Govt WOWC 	\$	URide operating in Chatham-Kent, RideON operating in Guelph and Kitchener-Waterloo, and Driveseat operating in Woodstock.
(38.) Complete a PC Connect service review to help determine how the program will operate beyond the Community Transportation Pilot Period.	• MT		G1 - P3	Complete a full-service review to help determine long-term options for transportation in Perth County. The review should include cost implications, cost-benefit analysis of different service models (fixed, on-demand, hybrid, etc.), administrative requirements, best practices and potential funding options.	<p>Identify a sustainable service model in order to continue providing Perth County residents with affordable public transportation.</p> <p>Deliver a lessons learned and best practices report.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry Expert/ Consultant Voyago TMU TransForm 	\$\$	Town of Innisfil – Annual Report on Transit Mobility

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



5. Mobility 2.0

Action Items	New	Carry over	CSP Aligned	Details	Outcomes	Partners (examples)	Cost	Best Practices
(39.) Continue to undertake strategic marketing campaigns to grow ridership.		• S	G1 - P3	Raise awareness of transportation options available and proactively reach target demographics.	Grow PC Connect ridership and fare revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Stratford SCT Media/Content Creators 	\$\$	TTC
(40.) Investigate solutions for first-mile/last-mile.	• ST		G1 - P3	Investigate creative approaches to alleviating the first-mile/last-mile barrier faced by many PC Connect riders.	Attract new ridership by creating a more convenient service model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Stratford 3rd party providers 	\$	On-demand transit pilot projects in Milton, Innisfil & Belleville

Legend

ST
Short-term
(2024-2025)

MT
Medium-term
(2025-2026)

LT
Longer-term
(2027-2028)

S
Sustain
(pres.-2028)

CSP
Perth County
Strategic Plan,
2023-2026

\$
Within existing
budget

\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(under \$50K)

\$\$\$
Additional
budget
required
(over \$50K)



Perth  County

urban
Metrics