

2022 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

for the Municipality of Huron East





2022

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGIC PLAN**

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Economic Development Strategic Plan

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1. INTRODUCTION

intro

Huron East is a Municipality in Southwestern Ontario. Located in Huron County, Huron East was formed in 2001 through the amalgamation of the Town of Seaforth, Townships of Tuckersmith, McKillop, Grey, and the Village of Brussels. Huron East has two urban centres, the Town of Seaforth and the Village of Brussels, each with main street commercial areas that support the needs of local residents. Huron East also has a strong agricultural focus including farming and agri-food businesses. The Municipality has three established 'dry' industrial parks, one in each of the communities of Seaforth, Brussels and Vanastra, that are fully occupied.

From 2001 to 2016 there was a gradual population decline, but from 2016 to 2021 there was a subsequent increase, reaching a population of 9,829 in 2022. The population is expected to increase by 9.5% between 2021 and 2031 and there are new residential developments underway to accommodate some of this growth.

From the perspective of economic prosperity, the key drivers in Huron East in terms of jobs (as defined by the North American Industry Classification System) are Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; Manufacturing; Health care and social assistance; Construction; and Retail trade.

Huron East is in a period of positive transition. With a recent change in Municipal leadership and staff, there is an opportunity to put in place a new set of directives. Not to mention, the world is getting back to a new normal as the state of the COVID pandemic is waning.

Municipal leaders in Huron East require a mutual and clear understanding of economic development and what it takes for their Municipality to be investment ready. The actions outlined in this Economic Development Strategic Plan are a result of clear direction from the community through an extensive community consultation process.





2. PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Municipality of Huron East is undertaking this Economic Development Strategic Plan to produce actionable strategies with an eye toward both short-term and long-term local development.

This Economic Development Strategic Plan is a strategic road map to help the Municipality of Huron East achieve an environment conducive to attracting new and diverse businesses alongside supporting the expansion and retention of its current businesses over the next five years. The resulting actions are concise, doable, and realistic and will help to build a solid foundation with which to have a supportive business environment for existing and new businesses.

The goals of this strategy are to:

- Create employment opportunities for residents through retention, expansion/attraction of local industry, with a potential focus on small, rural entrepreneurial enterprises;
- Diversify and expand communities' current economies, to help enhance local investment and opportunity;
- Identify strategies allowing for economic competitiveness in the present and to anticipate future development needs; and
- Build and sustain collaborative partnerships with local stakeholders.





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Economic development is a long-term investment for communities. To support the Economic Development Strategic Plan, the Municipality requires ongoing, annual resources in place. To implement the Economic Development Strategic Plan, the Municipality will need to identify adequate annual resources, including human and financial resources, to properly fund and support its economic development program as well as the community and infrastructure initiatives as laid out in this plan.

Upon approval of the Economic Development Strategic Plan, the **Top 5 Strategic Actions for the Municipality of Huron East**, over the next five years, will be:

1. Begin the process to recruit an Economic Development Professional to implement the Strategic Plan.
2. Undertake an Investment Readiness Coaching and Training exercise for Municipal staff, elected officials, and other relevant stakeholders, to be better informed about what it means and what is required for Huron East to be investment-ready.
3. Continue to build relationships with, but not exclusive to, the Huron County Economic Development Office, Huron Chamber of Commerce, Seaforth BIA, Ontario's West Coast, and local businesses to develop an extensive business support network.
4. Create and continually update a database of businesses within the Municipality as well as the names/contact information of the owners and managers.
5. Develop an inventory of available properties including employment lands (serviced and unserviced) and vacant industrial and commercial buildings for lease. Coordinate this inventory with the County of Huron Economic Development to ensure that any investment inquiries made at the County level can be appropriately redirected.

The remainder of the report explains the process followed to arrive at the strategic actions outlined below, followed by the key findings in each step of the way.

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC THEMES, GOALS AND ACTIONS

Staff and stakeholder consultation, as well as in-depth data analysis, provided opportunities to conclude key priorities for economic development in Huron East. The themes that emerged during the strategic planning process are considered strategic areas of focus. The qualitative and quantitative research yielded three themes that were discussed at the Working Session.



1. **Communication, Collaboration and Coordination:** this is about building partnerships and strategic networks to drive local entrepreneurship, innovation, investment and diversification of business types.
2. **Business Retention and Supporting Local Business:** this is about continuing to develop a strong resilient economic base and ensuring that successful businesses and new businesses are compatible with the local environment.
3. **Business Attraction:** this is about retaining the local talent that supports the local economy by ensuring access for all to quality amenities, and facilities for human development, which will ultimately support the attraction of a diverse, and talented workforce in the long term.



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As a result of further consultation and discussion after the Working Session was completed, it was determined that there are three strategic goals that Huron East should focus on.



GOAL 1 : Better understand what economic development entails and collectively work towards Huron East being investment ready.



GOAL 2 : Effectively build positive relationships through productive communication and engaged collaboration with the business community and various levels of government.



GOAL 3 : Build a Huron East business retention program that supports local business.

The following are the proposed strategic actions:

Goal 1: Better understand what economic development entails and collectively work towards Huron East being investment-ready.



Business investment consists of understanding the current state of the business community as well as a targeted effort to attract new businesses to the area. Huron East needs to be ready to capitalize on potential investment opportunities with the right information, infrastructure, workforce, and lands and buildings in place.

Actions

1. Upon approval of the Economic Development Strategic Plan, begin the process to recruit an Economic Development Professional to implement the Strategic Plan.
2. Undertake an Investment Readiness Coaching and Training exercise for Municipal staff, elected officials, and other relevant stakeholders, to be better informed about what it means and what is required for Huron East to be investment ready.
3. Undertake an Investment Readiness Action Plan that should include economic development actions such as, but not exclusive to the following:
 - a. Add the 2022 Huron East Community Profile to the Municipality's website. Update the Community Profile on an annual basis.
 - b. Develop an inventory of available properties including employment lands (serviced and unserviced) and vacant industrial and commercial buildings for lease. Coordinate this inventory with the County of Huron Economic Development to ensure that any investment inquiries made at the County level can be appropriately redirected.
 - c. Undertake an Economic Development website content review and update with current and pertinent information.
 - d. Identify locations for new highway commercial lands and consider rezoning/official plan amendment to permit franchise-based commercial development.



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- e. Develop and implement a Huron East Community Improvement Plan that encompasses all of Huron East and includes all relevant legislatively permitted community improvement planning tools relevant for both the urban and rural areas. The following planning tools are examples of financial incentive programs that contribute toward improving one or more of the following areas:
- Agriculture: to increase agricultural use and increased agri-tourism (i.e., tax increment financing, building and land improvement, etc.)
 - Industrial/employment: to provide opportunities for land development, redevelopment of brownfields, etc. (i.e., tax increment financing, vacant lands tax assistance, building permit and planning application fee, etc.)
 - Downtown improvement: revitalization (façade improvements; signage and property improvements, etc.)
- f. Undertake a Target Sector Analysis to determine the strongest sectors in Huron East and to help to provide direction for investment attraction purposes.
- g. Undertake a Business Mix Analysis to understand the most appropriate business mix in Huron East and to identify gaps and opportunities.
- h. Undertake a Competitive Land Analysis to better understand the existing employment land supply and to identify potential future development area(s) that could or should be considered for employment lands for industrial development.



Goal 2: Effectively build positive relationships through productive communication and engaged collaboration with the business community and various levels of government.



A vibrant community works to nurture their business climate. Creating a community that has the necessary infrastructure and regulatory environment for businesses to succeed is critical to both attracting and retaining business while building a cohesive community through communication, collaboration and coordination resulting in a solid foundation for business to thrive.

Actions

1. Create and continually update a comprehensive database of all local businesses within the Municipality, including the names and contact information of the owners and managers.
2. Continue to build relationships with, but not exclusively to, the Huron County Economic Development Office, Huron Chamber of Commerce, Seaford BIA, Ontario's West Coast, and local businesses to develop an extensive business support network.
3. Communicate the status of the implementation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan regularly with the business community and to Huron East Council.
4. Facilitate networking and collaboration between all the businesses throughout Huron East by establishing a program that brings businesses together.
5. Develop and implement a program in Huron East to welcome new businesses into the community.
6. Market the strengths of Huron East for business investment through multiple means of media including print and electronic.

Goal 3: Build a Huron East business retention program that supports local business.



The majority of job growth and new investments come from existing businesses (70 to 80% is a generally accepted percentage). Having a supportive business environment will keep local businesses loyal to the community. Keeping businesses in Huron East and helping to ensure that they can thrive and grow will ultimately benefit the community.

Actions

1. Clearly understand the business community - who they are, what they do and what their needs are - to ensure that resources are in place to help them to succeed and grow.
 - a. Establish and implement a formal Business Visitation Program (building off the success of the Huron County Business Visitation Program) and track the results.
 - b. Ensure to respond quickly to any issues that need resolution or any opportunities that may be uncovered.
2. Communicate business successes and share with Huron East Council, staff and Huron County EDO.
3. Work with local business organizations to determine the feasibility and best approach to a 'shop local' campaign that addresses both the urban areas and rural areas in Huron East.
4. Continue to update and promote the Business Directory on the municipal website. Ensure that it truly represents local businesses and that the information is current, and that website links are valid.
5. Consider the development of a Vacant Building Bylaw to reduce the number of vacant buildings and/or manage the conditions of the buildings. If agreeable, implement a Vacant Building Bylaw.
6. Act as the conduit for Huron East businesses to direct them to the Huron County Small Business Development Centre to assist them with succession planning to help retiring business owners sell or pass on their business rather than closing.



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7. Direct and encourage local businesses to participate in provincially funded digital business support programs.
8. Continue to advocate for and support local businesses by developing and providing resources and information, access to grant opportunities and access to expertise.
9. Consider opportunities to support local businesses by developing, promoting or encouraging increases in the local labour force through strategies such as affordable housing, government programs, attraction and retention of residents, etc.
10. Strengthening Downtown Commercial Cores:
 - a. Develop a stronger bylaw around the conversion of downtown ground floor commercial properties into residential and enforce the bylaw.
 - b. Brussels
 - i. Work with the businesses and property owners in Brussels to consider the development of a Brussels Business Improvement Association.
 - ii. Support the implementation of the Community Improvement Plan that is in place to help to stimulate private investment.
 - iii. Work with the main street building owners to revert the residential spaces on the ground floor to commercial space to provide space to attract retail and service.
 - c. Seaforth
 - i. Continue to build relationships and support the Seaforth Business Improvement Association through deliberate and regular communications.
 - ii. Review existing downtown bylaws, repeal the bylaws that are not being enforced and enforce existing bylaws, especially concerning downtown areas.
 - iii. Update the 2009 Heritage Conservation District document to better reflect the current and future needs of Seaforth.
11. Increasing Tourism
 - a. Implement the Huron County gateway and wayfinding signage program in Huron East.
 - b. Develop an inventory of all tourism assets located in or that take place in, Huron East, in coordination with Huron County.



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- c. Promote Huron East tourism assets through electronic and print options.
- d. Work closely with local tourism organizations, specifically Ontario's West Coast, to promote Huron East and its tourism assets.
- e. Undertake a feasibility study to determine if there are opportunities for tourist accommodations in Huron East.

12. Strengthening the Agriculture Sector

- a. Continue strengthening relationships and start building a comprehensive understanding of the agricultural sector in Huron East through the Municipality's new Business Visitation Program.
- b. Include Agriculture in the Target Sector Analysis to determine those secondary or spin-off businesses that would be best suited for Huron East.
- c. Engage the farm community in discussions regarding municipal policies, bylaws and programs that may be impacting their farm business operations.





Collaborating with Huron County

Huron County has an established Economic Development Program that strongly supports economic development in the County and directly in Huron East. Huron East needs to continue to work closely with staff in Huron County to help strengthen and promote the programs that will benefit the businesses in Huron East.

The Huron County Planning Department is the lead planning agency for Huron East, with a well-established positive working relationship with the Municipality. The Huron County Planning Department has a dedicated planner to work with Huron East on planning applications.

Economic Development

1. It is paramount that the Municipality clearly understands the initiatives and focus of the Huron County Economic Development program and works closely with Huron County Economic Development staff to best connect Huron County businesses with the County on relevant programs including but not exclusive to:
 - Entrepreneurship programs i.e., Starter Company, Summer Company, small business consultations, workshops for small businesses, grant opportunities, networking opportunities, research assistance, etc.
 - Digital Service Squad
 - Home childcare development program
 - West Coast Signage Program
 - Huron County Immigration Partnership
 - Business success stories
 - BusMap
 - Business support newsletter
 - COVID-19 business support
 - New to Huron (newcomer settlement and healthcare)



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Planning

1. Continue to work closely with the dedicated staff at Huron County on all planning applications for Huron East.
2. Have a clear understanding of the Huron County application process for building permits and planning applications.
3. Work with Huron County Planning staff to establish policies around development charges for Huron East.



APPENDIX A - PROCESS FOLLOWED

The process followed to create the Municipality of Huron East Economic Development Strategic Plan was comprised of a document review, statistical analysis and comprehensive community and economic development partner consultation.

The study began with a community tour of the Municipality of Huron East and a document review to understand the physical, economic and community landscape. This was followed by a statistical analysis of the local economy and demographics which yielded a current Situational Analysis Report, after which a thorough consultation process was followed that included:

- A series of one-on-one interviews with businesses and economic development stakeholders;
- Focus group sessions;
- A working session with key stakeholders; and
- A Strategic Action Planning session with Municipality of Huron East staff.





APPENDIX B - STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

Consultation Process

Approximately 60 stakeholders were consulted throughout this process.

The consultations consisted of confidential one-on-one interviews, an online survey, focus groups based on key stakeholder groups and a working session with targeted community leaders, and economic development stakeholders with representation from the following:

- Mayor and Council
- Economic Development Committee
- Huron East senior staff
- Huron County Economic Development and Planning staff
- Regional organizations representing agriculture, community, business, and labour
- Local businesses representing manufacturing, service, retail, transportation, farms, agriculture support, downtown Brussels, downtown Seaforth and tourism

Interviews

One-on-one interviews were conducted with key stakeholders including Municipality of Huron East senior staff, Mayor and Council, Huron County staff and key businesses. Seven open-ended questions were used to guide both the interviews. These questions probed into the major strengths and challenges of doing business in Huron East and looked forward to helping define future opportunities, aspirations and results. Participants provided feedback on these questions, contributing significantly to the understanding of the business climate and potential development pathways.

Online Survey

An online survey with the same seven questions was available on the Municipality's website for the month of April, with the link being sent out to 25 specific key local businesses.



Focus Groups

Four focus groups took place in the Municipality of Huron East, which entailed a guided discussion based on the same set of the seven open-ended questions used for the interviews and online survey.



Working Session

The Working Session was held on May 31, 2022. The purpose of the Working Session was to bring together economic development, community and business leaders to review the project findings, to get confirmation on the themes that were derived from the research, and to begin strategizing and crafting action items for each of those themes that emerged from the consultation process. Participants worked to identify actions that would address the challenges and opportunities under the following three different themes.

1. **Communication, Collaboration and Coordination:** this is about building partnerships and strategic networks to help to drive local investment and diversification of business types.
2. **Business Retention and Supporting Local Business:** this is about continuing to develop a strong resilient economic base and ensuring that the business environment is supportive of local business.
3. **Business Attraction:** this is about having the right infrastructure in place to be ready for investment.



Strategic Action Planning Session

Upon completion of the Working Session, a draft set of strategic economic development directions and actions were prepared and provided to the CAO for review. To ensure that the actions aligned with the aspirations and vision of Huron East, a Strategic Action Planning Session was held with Huron East CAO.

Working through the Strategic Action Planning Session, McSweeney & Associates and Huron East staff were able to reflect collaboratively on the directions and actions and derive a set of agreed-upon strategic initiatives that are doable and realistic for the Municipality of Huron East over the next five years.

Special Council Presentation

A special meeting of council was organized for Huron East Council to review and discuss the Draft Economic Development Strategic Plan and the proposed actions.

At the meeting, McSweeney & Associates presented an overview of their Formula for Economic Development Success[®] which provided a high-level review of economic development sustainability and the role of economic development for Huron East.

After the discussion on the Formula for Economic Development Success, McSweeney & Associates presented the Draft Economic Development Strategic Plan.

The response of the elected officials in attendance at the Special Council Meeting was one of agreement and understanding of the Formula for Economic Success[®] and mutual support for the need to work closely together to effectively implement Huron East's Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Formula for
Economic Development Success[®]
People * Process = Power of ED



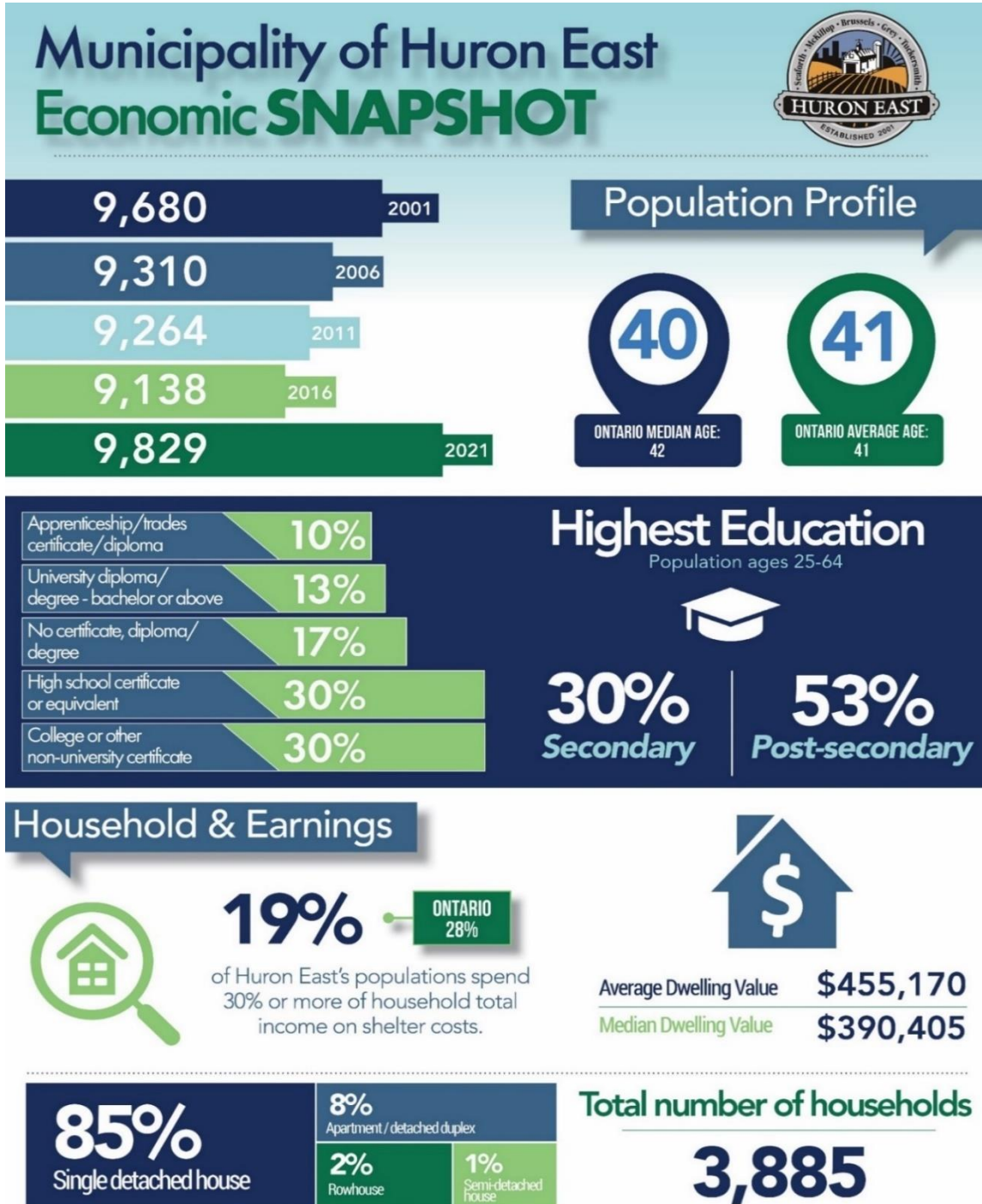


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APPENDIX C - A STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF HURON EAST

For a more detailed analysis of Huron East's stats and data please refer to the Situational Analysis.



All data sourced from Manifold SuperDemographics 2021, unless otherwise specified.



Municipality of Huron East Economic **SNAPSHOT**



Labour Force & Local Economy

Median Employment Income | Average Employment Income

\$36,685 | **\$45,361**

ONTARIO MEDIAN | ONTARIO AVERAGE
\$37,648 | **\$54,082**

PARTICIPATION RATE

ONTARIO 65.0% | **69.0%**

EMPLOYMENT RATE

ONTARIO 59.0% | **65.5%**

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

ONTARIO 9.1% | **5.0%**

Top 5 Sectors by Industry**



Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting



Manufacturing



Health Care & Social Assistance



Construction



Retail Trade

Top 5 Sectors by Occupation**



Trades, Transport & Equipment Operators



Sales & Service



Management



Business, Finance & Administration



Natural Resources, Agriculture and related production occupations

** by labour force employment

All data sourced from Manifold SuperDemographics 2021, unless otherwise specified.

APPENDIX D - STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, ASPIRATIONS AND RESULTS (SCOAR®)



The SCOAR® (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) is a detailed analysis of the current situation involving statistical analysis of the local economy, regional competitive outlook, trends and forecasts, investment readiness assessment, strengths/weaknesses/opportunities review using the McSweeney exclusive SCOAR® analysis.



Place

- Located between Stratford and Goderich (on Lake Huron), and one hour drive to London and Kitchener/Waterloo
- On the way to cottage country (Lake Huron)
- Two commercial centres (Town of Seaford, Village of Brussels) each with their own distinct identity, as well as 30 small hamlets each with their own unique histories
- Excellent agricultural land, with successful agricultural operations
- Safe community with strong community support
- Access/proximity to good health care
- Historic locations throughout Huron East with poignant stories in Canada’s history

People

- Open, friendly, welcoming, like to celebrate and are proud of Huron East
- Growing population and large enough to support business



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- New residents bringing in new attitudes and expectations

Municipal Services

- Municipal staff are accessible, offer good customer service and can easily navigate through the development process
- Infrastructure (i.e., roads, sidewalks) is well maintained

Business

- Seaforth, the main urban centre, is historic, clean and inviting with unique shops and a well-run Business Improvement Association
- Core of small, supportive businesses with excellent customer service provide sufficient degree of amenities
- Diversity in the economy and work opportunities
- Entrepreneurial spirit with unique niche businesses



People

- New residents do not engage in the community
- Lack of population growth in the 20 to 40-year-old age bracket

Place

- Lack of Highway Commercial zoned lands in Seaforth
- Amalgamation of the former Townships of Grey, McKillop and Tuckersmith, and the Town of Seaforth and Village of Brussels
- Distance (approximately 90 km) to the 400 series highways with no easy access to get to Huron East
- Expensive, inconsistent or unavailable high-speed internet depending on location
- Lack of signage makes wayfinding difficult, especially for new residents and visitors

Community

- Shortage of new housing and the current inventory is aging and expensive
- Loss of public schools and seniors' residence



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- Does not present to new residents as a welcoming place due to some of the local attitudes (i.e., apprehensive of change)
- Lack of amenities for young families including recreation programs/facilities
- Low interest in volunteerism
- A large number of residents commute outside of Huron East for work
- Lack of a public transportation system
- Lack of local accommodations for overnight visitors
- Limited serviced land available for industrial or commercial development
- Tendency for the rural and urban communities to work independently, creating a lack of cohesion
- Lack of regional identity
- Lacking something specific to create a tourist destination

Business

- Little succession planning being done in local businesses, including farms
- Retail/service leakage outside of Huron East
- Lack of cohesion and collaboration among businesses (businesses generally keep to themselves)
- Lack of 'name brand' businesses
- Retail business hours are inconsistent and not geared to the current customer base
- Businesses struggling as a result of the pandemic
- Difficult to hire staff due to labour shortages (unemployment was at 4% at the height of the pandemic)
- Designated heritage area in Seaforth limits what businesses can do aesthetically
- Brussels is tired looking with vacant storefronts and/or residential on the ground floor



- Absentee landlords with vacant commercial spaces that are not improving their buildings or actively leasing their spaces
- Lack of initiative by some business owners to invest in improving the appearance of their properties



Tourism

- Create a destination to encourage visitors to stop in East Huron
- Tourism promotion of existing assets
- Expand on the G2G (Guelph to Goderich) trail that goes through Huron East
- Farm tours and agri-tourism
- Attract more accommodations
- Further develop the equine sector
- Develop a “cultural village” with arts
- Culinary tourism

Industrial/commercial

- Create serviced industrial and/or commercial land available in Vanastra, Brussels and Seaforth
- Attract small manufacturing businesses
- Establish highway commercial zoned lands

Agriculture

- Value-added industry (i.e., food processing, breweries, wineries, etc.)
- Encourage agricultural innovation and technology
- Tertiary niche agriculture production (i.e., attracting a food production facility that uses local agricultural products)
- Abattoir or large meat processing facility adjacent to the stockyards in Brussels



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Municipality

- Build networks in the business community to fully understand the businesses located in Huron County
- Work with existing businesses to help them grow and stay in Huron East
- Welcome system/package for new businesses
- Improve communication with businesses
- Community Improvement Plan for the entire community
- Update the heritage conservation district plan
- Vacancy by-law to address vacant properties
- Stronger marketing of Huron East's assets
- Help immigrants feel they belong to and want to stay in the community
- Educate councillors as to "what economic development is in Huron East"

Community

- Assist/attract long-term care facility to a new location nearer to the hospital
- More daycare/childcare services

Business Development

- Farmers market development
- Maintain building storefronts to keep an attractive standard
- Business Improvement Area in Brussels
- Attracting a name-brand restaurant
- Grow and support entrepreneurship and local entrepreneurs

Infrastructure

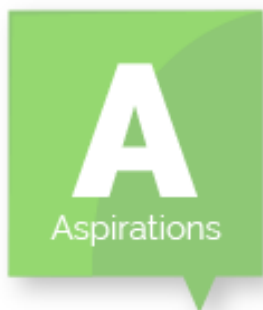
- Improved high-speed internet to allow for a digital economy /remote work
- Natural gas investment
- Expanded public transit routes



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- Diversity and growth of housing



- To have available serviced industrial lands in Brussels, Seaforth and Vanastra.
- To have vibrant improved downtown main streets in both Brussels and Seaforth.
- To have a united front with businesses supporting each other and residents supporting local businesses.
- To have an improved tourism sector with signature events and attractions that keep visitors in Huron East for longer periods of time and all four seasons.
- To have a more diverse economy with a greater number of businesses including small manufacturing, independent retailers, restaurants, services and name brand franchises.
- There will be better wayfinding/signage to help people navigate around Huron East.
- Trails and cycling paths will be connecting communities in Huron East and to other communities outside of Huron East.
- There will be an increased population of 20 to 40-year-olds to provide a workforce for the local businesses.
- There will be some form of public and/or private transportation in place to help residents get around.
- There will be more seniors-oriented businesses, health assistance i.e., scooters, walkers, long-term care facilities, improved home care, holistic health services, etc.
- There will be a positive environment to support and celebrate entrepreneurs.
- There will be an expansion of educational institutes (new schools) along with health care and related services.



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Huron East will have...

- An increased and diverse population.
- Vibrant and animated commercial centres (Seaford and Brussels) that are pedestrian-friendly, attractive and offer a diversity of businesses to support residents and visitors.
- A fulsome tourism program that attracts visitors for longer lengths of stay and throughout all four seasons.
- A small-town lifestyle that is safe, friendly, and that all needs are met - social, retail, religious, and health care.
- An excellent agricultural sector with innovative, value-added agricultural businesses.
- An entrepreneurial community that grows and supports entrepreneurship.





APPENDIX E - INFORMAL INVESTMENT READINESS ASSESSMENT

As Canada’s recognized leading expert on investment readiness assessment, McSweeney & Associates undertook an informal investment readiness assessment to determine investment barriers and identify Huron East’s current state of investment readiness. This informal assessment examines the adequacy of the Municipality’s tools.

TOOLS AND ASSETS	COMMENTS
Web presence – Economic Development site	<p>Huron East requires a comprehensive economic development section with all the essential information required by a site selector/investor (regional and local maps, community profile, workforce).</p> <p>There should be a single point of contact for economic development with the name and contact information easily visible on the website.</p>
Community Profile	<p>The new Community Profile has just been completed and should be located on the Huron East economic development webpage. It should be kept updated on an annual basis.</p>
Industrial and commercial land and building inventories	<p>The land inventory is currently found on the Huron County website. Available lands and buildings should be accessible on the Huron East website and there should not be a need to subscribe for access.</p>
Investment Marketing Tools	<p>There are no investment marketing tools available.</p> <p>A full toolbox of marketing collateral should be readily available for investors interested in Huron East.</p>
Adequacy and Readiness of Employment Lands	<p>Currently, there are an inadequate supply of ready-to-be-serviced employment land and very little shovel-ready employment lands.</p> <p>Having serviced employment land available will help Huron East to be ready for business to locate in Huron East.</p>



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How site selection requests are handled

Site selection requests are handled by the Huron East planner in the Huron County Planning Department. There is an opportunity for Huron East staff to work closely with Huron County on the site selection requests, to better understand how the process works.

OVERALL COMMENTS

Huron East has an opportunity to start from scratch and develop a comprehensive economic development website and collateral marketing pieces that are comprehensive with current information, data and branding.

Huron East should undertake a formal investment readiness assessment to fully understand what is required to be investment-ready.



APPENDIX F - CLIMATE CHANGE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

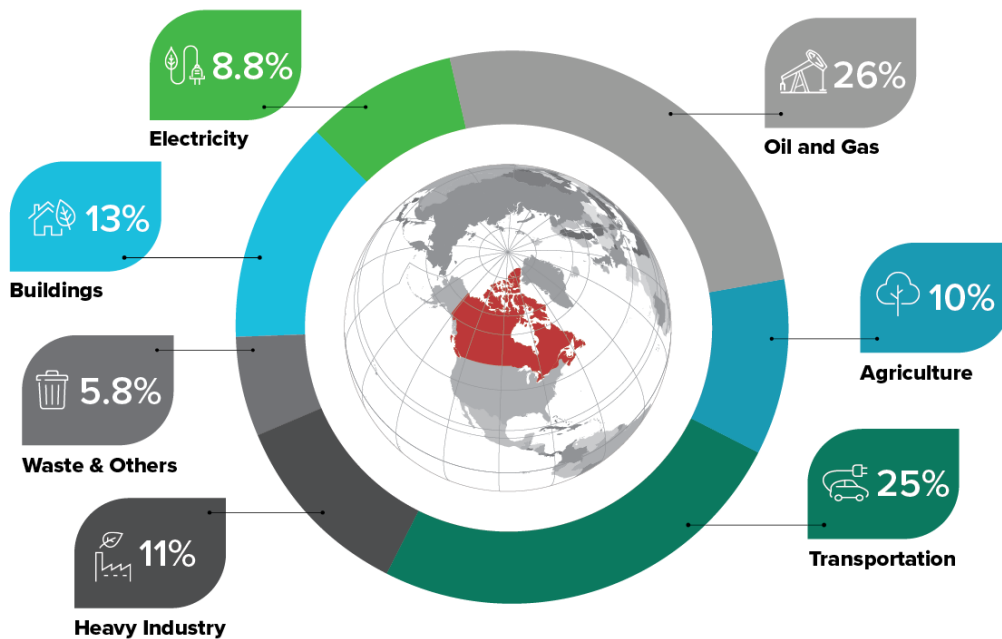
Climate change affects everything from geopolitics to economies to migration. It shapes urban areas, life expectancies and wine lists.

When referring to climate change, it is referred to as the phenomenon of human-accelerated global warming: an average global temperature rise without precedent in our planet’s normal climatic cycle. Climate change has also come to serve as a proxy for referring to changes in other global systems as a result of human activities.

Human activities, such as agriculture, deforestation, energy production and use, pollution, and more all have impacts affecting these boundaries. Crossing these scientifically established thresholds will result in largely unpredictable short-, medium-, and long-term impacts which themselves will contribute to accelerated and irreversible changes.

Climate Change in Canada

In Canada, oil and gas, transportation, and buildings are the top three sources of emissions. Domestic and international experts have increased scrutiny on Canada’s lack of climate action, highlighting that we have the worst record of all G7 countries.



Source: [National Inventory Report 1990-2017: Greenhouse Gas Sources and Sinks in Canada](#)



The current federal government and provincial governments have made commitments to reducing emissions and single-use plastics, increasing the number of electric vehicles, encouraging home retrofits, and adopting nature-based and technological solutions to clean up the environment and the economy. However, municipalities are on the front lines of climate change, and it will ultimately fall on communities to mitigate and adapt to changing climates, with changeable levels of support.

Opportunities for Huron East

Towns and cities are on the front lines of the effort to mitigate and adapt to climate change and residents, businesses, and infrastructure are all vulnerable to the impacts of this global phenomenon.

Huron County and Huron East have already begun taking steps to prepare for the coming changes to local weather patterns. Going a step further, embedding paradigms of sustainability into economic development strategies will not only ensure the region is resilient to increasingly frequent and severe weather events but will situate it as a leader in building sustainable economic prosperity which enhances the well-being of residents and the local environment.

There are no universally agreed-upon templates for this, but working together with planners, developers, and climate change specialists in the region to build resilience and adaptive capacity will ensure businesses and residents are prepared.

For this economic development strategy, Huron East is encouraged to support its agricultural businesses by facilitating access to information and resources that will support them to ensure the resilience of farmland and dependent activities. To make a case for such action, a brief summary of scholarly research is presented below:

- Tan and Reynolds (2003) predicted that the impacts of climate change on Ontario's agricultural capacity will be severe, given the increasing land-use intensity and a general decrease in the stability and number of wetlands and an increase in water demand¹.

¹ Tan, C. S., & Reynolds, W. D. (2003). Impacts of recent climate trends on agriculture in Southwestern Ontario. <https://doi.org/10.4296/cwrj2801087>



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- Farmers are historically resilient and have learned to adapt to changes, but the intensity of the predicted changes in climate may exceed historical and current adaptive capacity².
- Controlled drainage and sub-irrigation are highly encouraged for Ontario's farmers to increase the resilience of their land and yields³.
- While increased temperatures may benefit some crops, such as spring wheat and canola⁴, global warming of more than 2.5°C would cause a decline in yield and warming even below that threshold may lead to water deficits⁵.
- Agriculture and food processing are at the heart of humanity's relationship with the land and has profound impacts on all of the currently understood planetary boundaries as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals⁶.

Huron East has already drafted its *Energy Conservation & Demand Management Plan, 2019-2023* and Huron County has published several other documents to support the region in building its adaptive capacity. Decision-makers in the municipality and businesses are encouraged to work together with planners and neighbouring regions to ensure the region's economic development responds to these initiatives. Doing so will ensure lasting and resilient prosperity for Huron East.

² Reid, S., Smit, B., Caldwell, W., & Belliveau, S. (2007). Vulnerability and adaptation to climate risks in Ontario agriculture. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S11027-006-9051-8>

³ Marmanilo, M. M., Kulshreshtha, S., & Madramootoo, C. (2021). Economic analysis of the controlled drainage with sub-irrigation system: A case study of grain-producing farms in Quebec and Ontario. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07011784.2021.1874537>

⁴ Brassard, J., & Singh, B. (2007). Effects of climate change and CO₂ increase on potential agricultural production in Southern Québec, Canada. <https://doi.org/10.3354/CR034105>; Qian, B., Zhang, X., Smith, W. N., Grant, B., Jing, Q., Cannon, A., Neilsen, D., McConkey, B., Li, G., Bonsal, B., Wan, H., Xue, L., & Zhao, J. (2019). Climate change impacts on Canadian yields of spring wheat, canola and maize for global warming levels of 1.5 °C, 2.0 °C, 2.5 °C and 3.0 °C. *Environmental Research Letters*. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/AB17FB>

⁵ Ahmed, S. (2013). Modeling effect of climate change on water resources in Southern Ontario. Undefined. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Modeling-Effect-of-Climate-Change-on-Water-in-Ahmed/a7fa4971bd2e6e637e88092ab13af9a0179e0a46>; Campbell, B. M., Beare, D. J., Bennett, E. M., Hall-Spencer, J. M., Ingram, J. S. I., Jaramillo, F., Ortiz, R., Ramankutty, N., Sayer, J. A., & Shindell, D. (2017). Agriculture production as a major driver of the Earth system exceeding planetary boundaries. *Ecology and Society*, 22(4). <https://doi.org/10/gct6fh>

⁶ Campbell, B. M., Beare, D. J., Bennett, E. M., Hall-Spencer, J. M., Ingram, J. S. I., Jaramillo, F., Ortiz, R., Ramankutty, N., Sayer, J. A., & Shindell, D. (2017). Agriculture production as a major driver of the Earth system exceeding planetary boundaries. *Ecology and Society*, 22(4). <https://doi.org/10/gct6fh>

For farmers and rural municipalities, there are several movements and organizations in the agricultural community gaining momentum that offer helpful guidance materials and services.

- Farmers for Climate Solutions
- Regeneration Canada
- Innovative Farmers Association of Ontario
- Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Crops (and other product-specific roundtables)
- The Do More Agriculture Foundation
- Canada's National Index on Agri-Food Performance
- Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research
- Alternative Land Use Services
- Canadian Agri-Food Sustainability Initiative

