

Economic Development Strategy 2024-2031



Acknowledgments

A sincere appreciation is extended to Brantford residents, volunteers, business owners community partners, staff and elected officials for their participation and feedback throughout the consultation process. Their commitment and their willingness to collaborate and share knowledge provided an opportunity to develop a strong plan with goals and objectives that will move the City forward and grow the local economy.

Committee/Council Thank You

The Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives Advisory Committee added invaluable support and feedback throughout the entire project. This volunteer team is appreciated for their willingness to work above and beyond to ensure that the Economic Development Strategy will lead the City of Brantford with specific, measurable, actionable and visionary goals for the next seven years.





Economic Development Strategy 2024-2031

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Executive Summary

The City of Brantford is home to a population of just over 110,000 residents. It is a community with a rich history shaped by its location on the Grand River, a Canadian Heritage River, as well as its proximity to the major consumer and industrial markets throughout North America. Strategically located in southwestern Ontario along Provincial Highway 403, Brantford was acknowledged as one of Canada's "Best Locations" in 2023 according to Site Selection Magazine.

Brantford is in a period of rapid growth, rising from just over 93,500 residents in 2011 to its current population of over 105,000. Having been designated as one of 25 Urban Growth Centres in the province's "Places to Grow – Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe" report the community is poised for growth, yet conscious of the imminent challenges and opportunities that exist for the local economy within a global marketplace.

In 2023, the City of Brantford embarked on the development of a seven-year Economic Development Strategy, led by the City's Economic Development, Tourism & Cultural Initiatives Department. In doing so, the City of Brantford aims to continue building on its existing assets to ultimately become a fully integrated community of choice for business investment.



Downtown Brantford is rich in cultural heritage and economic growth opportunities.

The process for the Economic Development Strategy began with a quantitative analysis through a document review and data analysis of the City of Brantford, presenting a thorough introductory understanding of the economic and social situation in Brantford. Deliverables associated with this assessment included a Community Profile, Situational Analysis and Retail Market Analysis. Following this initial assessment, additional qualitative context was gathered through community consultations, which provided valuable local insight into the strengths, challenges, opportunities and aspirations that residents and stakeholders in Brantford see and feel exist within their community.

In concert with the work being completed on the broader Economic Development Strategy, a process was undertaken reviewing Brantford's Municipal Airport and Farmers' Market. The purpose of this work was to develop a vision, mission and goals, gain a solid understanding of the issues and opportunities that exist for both institutions, and outline what actions are needed to fulfill the long-term vision of both community assets.

Following this consultation and discovery process, building the plan commenced through the establishing of key themes that emerged from this initial work. Once those themes were identified, stakeholders were again consulted to develop actions related to those themes that were realistic, doable and supported by the community.



Brantford has an active transportation network of over 104 km with plans to expand to 250 km in centerline length.

Building from within...

During consultations, the notion that Brantford faced an incredible opportunity was voiced by many. The City is located at a prime nexus for businesses operating in Canada and the United States and offers a “small-town” quality of life alongside more urban amenities. As the City sees rapid growth, change has come, and with it many opportunities and positives.

However, alongside the rapid growth, local businesses and residents want to ensure that the City’s current strengths are not swept aside. Local stakeholders across a variety of sectors feel that there are significant untapped opportunities the City can leverage by streamlining current processes and engaging more with local legacy businesses.

As such, one of the key outcomes of this process will be ensuring that as Brantford grows its economic opportunities, it does so in a way that supports its current population and maximizes its current capabilities.



The Lorne Bridge connects downtown Brantford with West Brant and the breathtaking Lorne Park.

1. Process Followed

The process followed to develop the Economic Development Strategy was comprised of a document review and web searches, followed by a statistical analysis of Brantford's economy and demographics that yielded a current socio-economic report. A comprehensive consultation process was undertaken with various community and member municipality stakeholders to better understand and provide context from a local lens.

Step 1: Discover

Research the community.

- Document review.
- Community Profile.
- Retail Market Analysis
- Situational Analysis.

Step 2: Define

Consult with the community.

- One-on-one interviews.
- Online survey.
- Focus groups.
- Visioning Session (Airport).
- Strategic Planning Session.

Step 3: Develop

Build the plan.

- SCOAR®.
- Working Session.
- Develop the Actions.
- Draft Economic Development Strategy.
- Final Economic Development Strategy.

Step 4: Deliver

Present the results.

- Presentation to Municipal Airport Board (Airport Results).
- Review with Brantford Farmers' Market Vendors Association.
- Presentation to Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives Advisory Committee.
- Presentation to City Council.
- Implementation Plan.



Step 1: Discover

Research the Community.

To begin the strategy crafting process, a document review, Situational Analysis and Target Market Analysis, Retail Market Analysis and Community Profile Refresh were completed.

Document Review

The following documents were reviewed to provide background information on Brantford.

- Mayor's Economic Recovery Task Force: Economic Recovery Action Plan (June 2020).
- City of Brantford Economic Development and Tourism Strategy (2016).
- City of Brantford Council Priorities, 2023-2027 (2023).
- City of Brantford Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Master Servicing Plan Update – 2051 Amendment (2021).
- Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie Job Seeker and Employee Survey Results (2020).
- Discover Brantford Strategy Draft (2024).
- Brantford Downtown Priority Plan: A Community Vision for the City Centre (2021).
- Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie In-Demand Skilled Trades Report (2020).
- Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie Navigating Grand Erie Transportation Survey Report (2021).
- Arts Census 2022 Public Report.
- Advantage Brantford 2020 Facts and Stats.
- Small Business Enterprise Centre Business Plan 2022-2024 (2022).
- Small Business Enterprise Centre Business Plan and Outcomes 2022-2024.
- City of Brantford Economic Development and Tourism 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 Year in Review(s).
- Official Plan (2021).
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2018).
- Corporate Climate Change Action Plan (2022)
- Community Climate Change Action Plan (2022).
- Places to Grow – Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
- Municipal Cultural Plan and Annual Reports.

Step 2: Define

Consult with the Community.

The consultation process was extensive and had significant response from the community. The Economic Development Strategy is truly one that is community-based. Over 300 community stakeholders participated throughout this process.

Input was gathered from representatives from its many stakeholders, including City staff and elected officials, and representatives from the post-secondary institutions, health care sector, business community, arts and culture organizations, regional service providers, developers, residents and local business organizations.

The interviews, community online survey and the focus groups were based on the following ten questions, with six related to economic development, two related to the Brantford Municipal Airport and two related to the Brantford Farmers' Market:

1. What makes Brantford a great community to do business (for example, location, services, community support)?
2. What are the top opportunities for attracting and retaining business and improving Brantford's future economic growth?



Fume Restobar, specializing in Greek and Mediterranean inspired dining, has “reinvented the neighbourhood hangout.”

3. What makes it challenging to do business in Brantford?
4. If the City could resolve only one issue/challenge to encourage sustained business growth and investment in the local economy, which one would be the priority?
5. Describe your vision of Brantford's economy over the next 5–10 years. Example: types of businesses, industry, employment.
6. What, if anything, needs to be done to ensure that Brantford's economy is minimally affected by future climate change predictions?
7. What do you like about the Brantford Farmers' Market?
8. I would visit the Farmers' Market more often if...
9. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the benefit of the Brantford Airport to the community? 10 is the highest benefit.
10. What other services at the Brantford Airport would be beneficial to the community?

An explanation of the consultative and broader process related to the Brantford Municipal Airport is found in **Appendix A** and Brantford Farmers' Market is found in **Appendix B**.



Bowman Precision Tooling is a global supplier of automotive metal stamping dies with a focus on advanced manufacturing.

Online Survey, Phone Interviews and Focus Groups

An **online survey** through the **Let's Talk Brantford** platform was available to the public on the City website, for one month, from mid April to mid May.

139

responses to the online survey.

50

focus group attendees.

46

one-on-one interviews.

One-on-one phone interviews were undertaken with key staff, elected officials and City stakeholders. A total of 46 interviews were held providing significant insight into the City of Brantford.

Focus groups took place in May 2023 with participation from a total of 50 key community representatives from the following areas: arts and culture, Brantford Farmers' Market, small business, investment attraction, logistics, food processing and tourism.



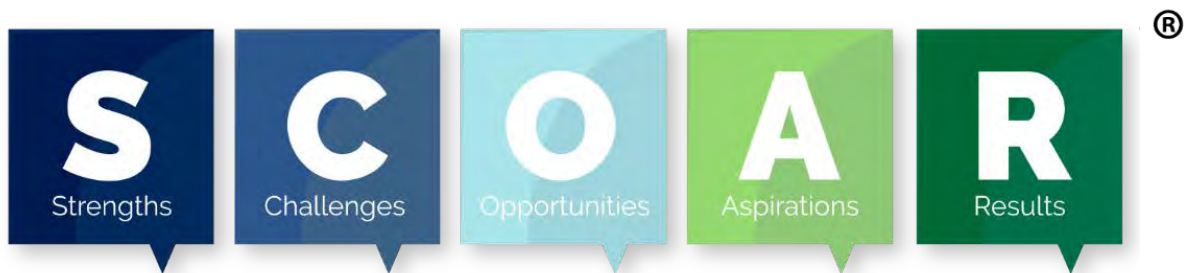
Known as the “Hub of Ontario Trails”, Brantford’s trail network is a premiere designation for cycling enthusiasts.

Step 3: Develop

Build the Plan.

SCOAR® Analysis

Once the background research and initial consultations were completed, the 'developing' process began with a summation of the findings of the initial consultations and data analysis, presented through a Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (SCOAR®) Analysis. The SCOAR® was used as the fundamental basis to determine the five themes and came directly from input from the key community stakeholders.



The SCOAR® 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.

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis has a “50%” focus on “negative” aspects of analysis. A Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) analysis emphasizes the positive, though it fails to address barriers or challenges to economic growth that every community faces. Our SCOAR® Analysis provides greater balance than either SWOT or SOAR analysis.

The results of the City of Brantford SCOAR® analysis can be found in **Appendix C**.

Strategic Working Session

On June 28, 2023, an in-person Strategic Working Session took place at the Rope Factory Event Hall. This Strategic Working Session provided an opportunity for participants to begin to develop a set of draft strategic actions that would form the base of Brantford's Seven Year Economic Development Strategy.

There were **79 key stakeholders** in attendance from all facets of the community, as well as representation from elected officials and staff.

A workbook was distributed to the Working Session participants outlining the results from the SCOAR® and key data findings, along with six themes (four related to Brantford generally and one each to the Farmers' Market and Airport) and questions that were developed for discussion purposes.

From the SCOAR® six themes emerged and were discussed at the working session. It was agreed upon that these six themes did indeed reflect the main areas the community needs to address in order to move Brantford through the next seven years.

Theme 1

Growing the Economy:

Supporting Brantford's businesses.

Theme 2

Celebrate Brantford:

Supporting Local Arts, Culture and Tourism.

Theme 3

Growing Together:

Building Partnerships and Relationships.

Theme 4

Building Brantford's Core:

Creating a Vibrant Downtown.

Theme 5

Growing Local:

Building a Better Farmers' Market.

Theme 6

Taking Flight:

Using the Airport to its Full Potential.

Strategic Directions and Action Planning Session

Upon completion of the Strategic Working Session, a draft set of strategic actions were prepared and provided for review to the Project Team, made up of key Brantford economic development staff, and the City's Senior Leadership Team. To ensure that the actions aligned with the aspirations and vision of the City of Brantford, a virtual strategic planning session was held with the Project Team. The Project Team was able to review the actions in detail and suggest any revisions. Collaboratively, McSweeney & Associates and City staff developed agreed-upon strategic actions that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) for the next seven years.



Brantwood Farms offers a pick-your-own flower experience at their agri-tourism destination.

Step 4: Deliver

Present the Results

The development of the Economic Development Strategy was overseen by the Project Team with assistance from the Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives Advisory Committee.

The purpose of the Goals and Actions in the Economic Development Strategy is not to reiterate what has already been done, but to highlight new initiatives or where the municipality could take a stronger leadership role to support the economic growth of the community overall.



The Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts is Brantford's "crown jewel", offering exceptional live events.

2. Priority Actions

Brantford has had significant successes attracting new businesses, particularly international organizations, into the community in recent years. However, geographic (a lack of available land) and labour (a lack of available workforce) limitations suggest that a transformation in economic development pursuits is needed. To that end, the goals and actions identified through this process have led to a more community-first/inward-focused exercise, transitioning away from pursuing larger-scale anchor tenants and moving more towards improving Brantford's downtown, local business engagement, regulatory processes, resident engagement and pride of place opportunities.

Goal 1: Transform downtown into a “destination” that residents are proud of.

Why is this important?

Downtowns play a vital role in economic development. Downtowns encapsulate the essence of the community. A vibrant and outstanding downtown validates the success of the community and projects its image. Historically, Brantford's downtown projected a proud city, with significant positive growth in recent years, including the ongoing implementation of the **Downtown Brantford Priority Plan (2022)**.

Significant efforts have been made by the City, in collaboration with downtown stakeholders (for example, Downtown Action Committee, Economic Recovery Task Force), to improve the safety and security, inclusion and support, and growth and vibrancy of the downtown. Continuing these efforts while adding additional support through an economic development lens can lead to greater economic benefit for downtown residents and businesses.

Currently, residents and business owners feel that vacant storefronts and safety concerns present impediments to fully realizing downtown Brantford's full potential. Injecting additional energy into the downtown area through economic development initiatives will help revitalize Brantford's core and reinstate its role as an economic driver and a benefit to local quality of life.

Priority Actions:

1. With co-leadership between the City of Brantford and the Downtown Brantford Business Improvement Association (DBBIA) Board of Directors, undertake proactive steps to assist the organization in examining its mandate and role with the clear objective to act cooperatively and avoid duplication with City-led efforts to optimize support of the downtown.
 - a. Assist the DBBIA to undertake, in partnership with the City of Brantford, a branding exercise to develop a new downtown brand that reflects its new image.
 - b. Create a memorandum of understanding between the City of Brantford and the DBBIA.
 - c. Create a coordinated Downtown Marketing Strategy to improve the marketability of the downtown to residents, visitors and potential investors.
2. Explore the feasibility of a staff position to take ownership of downtown economic development activation and placemaking initiatives at a time that is appropriate in the context of the downtown revitalization project.
3. Improve the image of downtown Brantford by:
 - a. Continuing to work with local agencies to support people experiencing homelessness and identify ways to offer enhanced social services in various areas throughout the City.
 - b. Working with local organizations to improve the image of the downtown through beautification, activation, clean up and placemaking initiatives while integrating these initiatives into the downtown revitalization project, including increased walkability.
 - c. Partnering with downtown property owners to explore the feasibility of filling vacant store fronts through non-traditional avenues (for example, pop-up retail opportunities, coworking spaces, and “win this space” competitions) to bring more activity to the downtown.
 - i. Review existing business investment incentives and identify opportunities for additional or amended incentives with the intention of revitalizing vacant or underutilized ground floor commercial spaces.
 - d. When the significant capital construction is complete (for example, traffic, transportation, servicing, capacity), undertake a Market Gap Analysis for the downtown.

4. Strategically prioritize new development approvals, permitting, et cetera, in the downtown core with the goal of having residential development as a priority.
5. Create a downtown investment toolkit to use as a marketing and promotional tool for new investment opportunities.
6. Promote downtown tenants to create a focal point for innovation and entrepreneurialism in the downtown.



Laurier Brantford has played a significant role in transforming the City's downtown core.

Goal 2: Be investment ready and business friendly by creating a business-first climate.

Why is this important?

Businesses are an important lifeblood for the City, by providing local employment, strengthening the tax base and providing community support. The local government should be seen as a partner that works closely with and supports the business community, including not-for-profits, non-governmental organizations and social enterprises/profits. “Business-first” means understanding your local business community, streamlined development processes, ease of permitting, and timely and excellent customer service that will enhance the experience to show that Brantford is ‘open for business’.

Priority Actions:

1. Further emphasize the corporate culture around what it means to be business friendly by building trust and communicating the message of “Brantford is a great place to do business” with messaging from the top down through all departments and outward to the community.
 - a. Create a ‘green light’ approach to help businesses better navigate through the municipal regulatory approval processes.
 - i. Establish a formalized concierge program to help expedite strategic developments that align with council priorities and the Economic Development Strategy.
 - b. Revisit the Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Program and revise into a new formalized Business Visitation Program to better understand how to support existing businesses within the community and to build relationships with the business community in a structured, strategic way.
 - c. Track the types of investment opportunities that are coming into Brantford to be better prepared for future workforce and industry needs.
 - i. Once monitoring is in place, realign Department portfolios, work plans and the Economic Development Strategy and associated implementation plan accordingly.

2. In collaboration with the workforce development partners, undertake a detailed Labour Force Analysis to determine non-traditional sectors worth pursuing in line with Brantford's current labour market strengths and geographic realities.
3. Review and determine the viability of the Advantage Brantford 'brand' and consider rebranding to a 'business' brand rather than an 'economic development' brand, incorporating the Brantford-Brant Business Resource Centre (BRC) and Real Estate Services into the brand to reflect recent restructuring and build efficiencies and referrals.
 - a. Update, find synergies and create new, if needed, departmental marketing pieces (for example, sector profiles, website).
 - b. Create one website for business investment with microsites for facets of the economic development responsibilities (Advantage Brantford, BRC, Real Estate Services, et cetera).
4. Continually educate City Council and staff on the economic impact of business (including tourism, arts and culture) on the community and provide Council with positive messaging around growth and expansion of existing business, both small and large.



Entrepreneur Ashley Lepre opened Finders Keepers Brantford, an artisan retail shop, in 2017.

5. Continued investment by the City of Brantford in industrial land development is a key strategy component.
 - a. Attract private sector investment in developing shovel-ready industrial land.
 - b. Continue with the positioning statements for the targeted industrial sectors.
 - c. Maintain up-to-date and ensure accessible online databases for shovel ready/marketable industrial and commercial land as well as the available City infrastructure.
 - d. Maintain inventories of the Municipality's physical and social assets to be used as part of the City's infrastructure planning and marketing efforts.
6. Build out Brantford's investment attraction story to include sector-specific value propositions that showcase Brantford and its unique advantages.
7. Continue with the City's existing investment attraction program including current marketing efforts.
8. Through the utilization of local retirees with business expertise, increase mentorship opportunities available to existing companies, especially the smaller firms, to increase their ability to survive and prosper.



Chef and entrepreneur, Tom Mercante, opened Brantford's "fast casual" restaurant, Mercasa in 2018.

Goal 3: Integrate economic development (including small business), real estate and tourism with critical City initiatives, including transit and active transportation planning.

Why is this important?

While current transportation (traditional and active) master planning guides actions related to transportation and details implementation plans for the municipality, the need for enhanced routes for both residents and visitors (vehicular, public transportation, and trail routes), signage, and linkages throughout the city was repeatedly mentioned during the Strategic Planning process. In order to drive economic growth and prosperity, Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives staff can serve as the formal link between other municipal departments and the business community for initiatives that impact workforce development/employment and economic growth in the community.

Priority Actions:

1. Ensure that the City engages the business community (including major employers, accommodations and tourism-oriented businesses) as a key player in future discussions in transportation, including active transportation planning.
2. Connect local assets for both local and visitor users for mutually beneficial wayfinding (for example, downtown and waterfront connections, signage and connections to major community attractions, et cetera).



A reimagined Brantford Transit will respond to a rapidly growing community through an enhanced transit network.

Goal 4: Recognize the Creative Industries sector as a significant economic and social pillar for the economy.

Why is this important?

Brantford has a burgeoning “Creative Industries” community, on the verge of significant growth. Moreover, as dynamics around work and life balances shift post-pandemic, “quality of life” is becoming an ever more important factor for businesses interested in moving to a new location. Growing the local arts and culture sector and elevating the value of this sector will have a positive impact on the City’s quality of life, enhancing its economic development opportunities. Focus should be placed on smaller scale, community-based arts and culture initiatives within the city to help build a grassroots community that can support larger events more consistently.

Brantford is seeing an increase in filming due to its proximity to Toronto as well as its unique film locations that cannot be found elsewhere. There is even more opportunity to become a sought-after film location.

Priority Actions:

- 1.** Update the Municipal Cultural Plan and implement recommendations to increase the creative capacity of the city and to further develop the arts and culture sector.
- 2.** Continue to tell the Brantford story by connecting significant cultural and historical events (for example, celebration of industry), people and local assets and promote and communicate to residents.
- 3.** Develop capacity building programs geared toward both new and existing not-for-profits, non-governmental organizations, social profits/enterprises, event organizers and creative industries (marketing, succession planning, audience development, bookkeeping, et cetera) and deliver the programs in partnership with the Brantford-Brant Business Resource Enterprise Centre and other community partners.
- 4.** Identify and address barriers that are limiting the capabilities of local arts and culture organizations to hold events and streamline processes, with the goal of encouraging new and enhanced special events and placemaking initiatives that are both City and community-led.

5. Review and streamline existing policies and permitting impacting public art on public and private property where appropriate.
6. Encourage continued growth of the local cultural sector by integrating economic development strategies with municipal cultural planning.
7. Continue to be a leader by doing what Brantford is already doing to increase opportunities to attract film, television, and digital media to Brantford by:
 - a. Having the support services in place that the film industry needs.
 - b. Celebrating the film, television and digital media that has taken place in Brantford.



Brantford takes pride in its multicultural diversity and prioritizes its identity as a welcoming, inclusive community.

Goal 5: Work with the local post-secondary institutions to provide more employment opportunities to support local business.

Why is this important?

Brantford's workforce needs have shifted drastically over the previous three to four decades, with a greater need for skilled labour and technically proficient employees. Within the City, three post-secondary institutions (Conestoga College, Wilfrid Laurier University, and Six Nations Polytechnic) operate campuses. However, there is disconnection between the needs of local businesses and the skills of those graduating into the workforce. Acting as bridge to this divide would allow the City to help provide more employment opportunities for new graduates and support business growth within Brantford.

Priority Actions:

1. Examine opportunities to operate as an intermediary between post-secondary institutions, local businesses, and various community groups (for example, host events such as networking evenings, social and youth entrepreneurships, Accelerator Hub, job fairs, et cetera).
2. Conduct a survey of local businesses and post-secondary institutions to identify gaps in local skills training and workforce development.
3. Implement strategies targeted at connecting business needs and post-secondary institutions to fill gaps identified in Action 2.
4. Establish a business start-up support network with local post-secondary institutions to ensure youth entrepreneurship programs are identified and cross promoted.



Post-secondary institutions in Brantford are working to develop the next generation of skilled workforce.

Goal 6: Improve partnerships to build a more cohesive business community.

Why is this important?

The Corporation of the City of Brantford does not exist within a silo. Geographically, it is adjacent to the County of Brant and the Six Nations of the Grand River as well as having direct relationships with other communities within close proximity to Brantford, such as Cambridge and Hamilton. Strong community stakeholder and intergovernmental relationships will build capacity for the City and its many potential partnerships, and effective collaboration results in significant opportunity. Undertaking the necessary work to build a comprehensive, ongoing relationship built on trust and consistent engagement will provide more sustainable long-term opportunities for collaboration.

Priority Actions:

1. Support the corporation's strategic priorities related to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action.
2. Identify projects that have cross-boundary benefits where the City and other municipal partners can collaborate and share limited public and private resources (for example, investment attraction, tourism, transportation, major events, Joint Services Committee).
3. Strengthen the relationship with the Chamber of Commerce Brantford-Brant by working with them to:
 - a. Co-host a new annual Mayor's State of the City Business Development event.
 - b. Eliminate the Industrial Awards program and fund a Chamber of Commerce award for the Chamber of Commerce annual awards ceremony.
4. Open the continued lines of communication between educators, trainers and labour force development support agencies to better coordinate efforts focused on education, skills training and labour development that are Brantford specific.

Goal 7: Build tourism for the people of Brantford first.

Why is this important?

Tourism Brantford has just completed crafting a Five-year Strategy that addresses tourism for the next five years. Tourism Brantford is responsible for destination marketing, destination management, the provision of visitor information services and management of particular cultural and sport tourism facilities.

Tourism is considered a local driver, and the Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives Department has a role to play in acting as a bridge between the tourism plan and local businesses. By focusing on attracting residents of Brantford to local tourism assets (for example, trails, Grand River, national historic sites, OLG Casino) and events and getting them excited about what Brantford has to offer will boost their pride in Brantford. This also supports the Visiting Friends and Family market that is the primary tourism market in Brantford and is strongly supported through Brantford's status as the Tournament Capital of Ontario.

The Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts, located in downtown Brantford since 1919, is a destination for performing arts and event space. It is the City of Brantford's most significant theatre asset supporting local, national, and international talent. As a key asset for the City of Brantford there is an opportunity to elevate the Sanderson Centre to Brantford residents and visitors.



Watch the big game, enjoy live entertainment and win the big jackpot at Elements Casino.

Priority Actions:

1. Implement the five-year Discover Brantford/Tourism Strategy.
2. Continue implementing the Sport Tourism Strategy and update the Strategy when applicable.
3. As tourism and cultural assets are marketed externally, similarly ensure that residents are equally aware of what is available to go to in their own backyard.
4. Survey local businesses to identify potential opportunities to align their marketing efforts with tourism events and assets.
5. Implement the new Municipal Accommodations Tax to fund additional tourism development (new and enhanced) with a focus on provincial and wider audience tourism.
6. Increase the attendance numbers for the Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts by:
 - a. Determining new and different ways to attract newcomers and residents to the programs at the theatre.
 - b. Improving and streamlining the parking situation when there is a theatre event taking place to better accommodate the theatregoers.
 - c. Working with downtown stakeholders and accommodations partners to develop packages to provide multiple offerings in the downtown when attending the theatre or attracting theatre goers back into the downtown.
7. Build on the activities and future tourism-related opportunities of the area's trails and waterways, including cycling and eco-tourism.
8. Carry out niche tourism market research and segmentation in order to better focus product development and marketing initiatives.

Brantford Municipal Airport

Vision, Mission, Goals and Actions 2024-2041



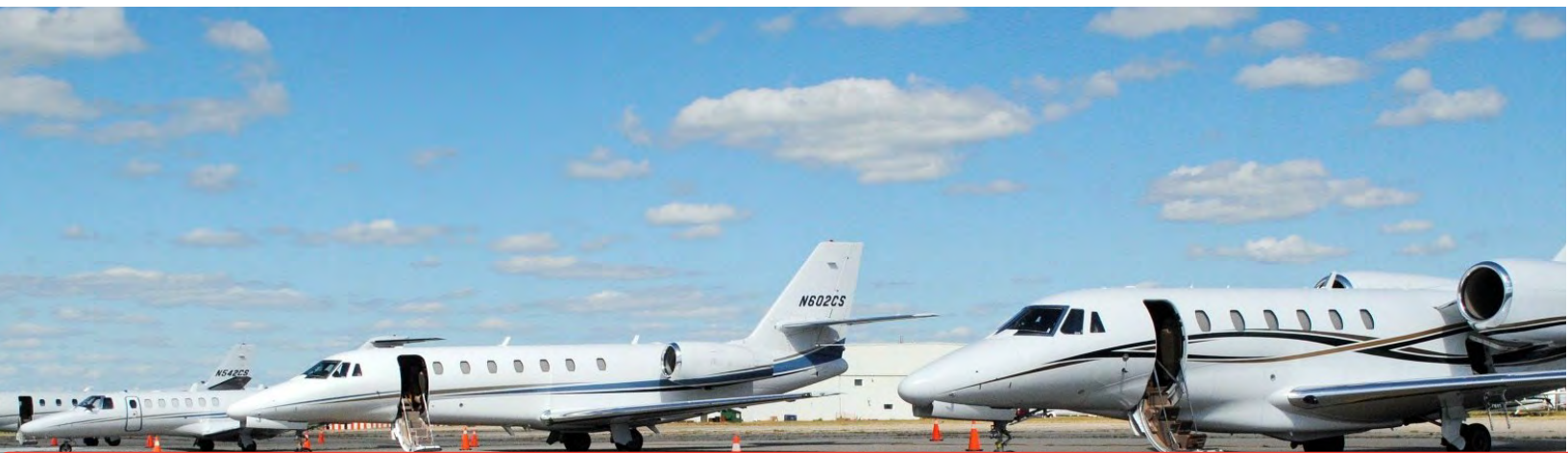
Appendix A: Brantford Municipal Airport

The Brantford Municipal Airport is a public aerodrome that commenced operations at its present location in 1940 as a flight training school and a Royal Canadian Air Force British Commonwealth Air Training Plan airfield.

The Airport is owned by the City of Brantford but is situated in the County of Brant. As owner, the City is responsible for the maintenance, servicing, and leasing of airport lands and buildings as well as airport operations. Day-to-day management of the Airport operations is undertaken by the Brantford Flying Club under contract by the City.

The Airport provides many benefits to the community including general aviation (private and corporate travel, plane storage, parts, and maintenance), flight training through the Brantford Flying Club, a charter for the W. Ross McDonald School, Hope Air medical transport, pipeline maintenance, utility inspections, animal tracking, filming and airshows. The Airport is also important to the operation of existing aviation related businesses and jobs in the County of Brant.

As part of the broader City of Brantford Economic Development Strategy, a visioning process was undertaken regarding the Airport, to assess how to best utilize and leverage this asset. Specific to the Airport, 14 one-on-one interviews were completed, a visioning session was held with the Airport Board, and the Airport theme was incorporated into the larger Working Session where 50 participants provided input. Through these consultations a picture of the current strengths, challenges, opportunities, aspirations, and expected results was derived, mission and vision statements created, and goals alongside attainable actions drafted. These assessments are presented within this document.



Opened in 1940, the Brantford Municipal Airport is a competitive aviation gateway in southern Ontario.

SCOAR®

Similar to the broader Brantford Economic Development SCOAR, a comprehensive Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (SCOAR®)¹ was compiled for the Brantford Municipal Airport. The SCOAR® reflects direct input from key community stakeholders, gained through interviews, a focus group, and working session. This input helped in the assessment and formulation of recommendations for the Airport.

Strengths

- Culture – people like using the Airport because of its welcoming culture.
- Situated close to two business parks and Highway 403.
- Good proximity to larger airports including Hamilton, Toronto, and Buffalo.
- Weather, wind and six usable runway options provide a valuable site for flight training.
- Aircraft can fly in from international locations (i.e., United States).
- Brantford Flying Club's history at Airport and strong customer service.
- Good value with reasonable fees for tie downs, fuel and maintenance costs.
- Ready access to airplane parts and maintenance.
- Lots of land that provides room for expansion.
- Uncontrolled airport provides more relaxed environment for flight training.

Challenges

- Current funding model is unsustainable with regard to future capital requirements.
- Aging infrastructure (runways, lighting, accessibility) and competing demands for budgetary funding.
- Lack of a terminal building.

¹ A SWOT analysis has a “50%” focus on “negative” aspects of analysis. While a SOAR analysis emphasizes the positive, it fails to address barriers or challenges to economic growth that every community faces. Our SCOAR® Analysis provides greater balance than either SWOT or SOAR analysis.

- Uncontrolled airport.
- Length of runway is a barrier to some types of aircraft – need a 1,000-foot extension to get to the next tier of aircraft.
- Facilities are crowded and there is a waiting list for hangars.
- Perception from the community that the airport only benefits private pilots.
- On-site services lacking including card lock fuel and customs timing.
- Lack of serviced land for future growth.
- Non-aviation use of lands such as municipal document storage.

Opportunities

- Secure partners to work together to develop a shared vision regarding the future of the Airport.
- Develop an Aviation Business Park.
- Changes occurring in general aviation at neighbouring airports may present opportunities for Brantford to offer services to a wider market.
- Develop partnerships for aviation training programs with local post-secondary institutions.
- Become a film location that provides further revenue to support the Airport.
- Create more public awareness of the Airport and its benefits.



The certified Canada Customs Airport of Entry serves domestic and international passenger and cargo aircraft.

Aspirations

The Brantford Municipal Airport will:

- Be recognized as the premier aviation hub in Ontario for small aircraft services and corporate access.
- Become a leading flight centre in Ontario for commercial flight training.
- Provide economic and social benefits to the Brantford community through the provision of aviation services and the development of an Aviation Business Park.

Results

- A Joint Venture is established between the City of Brantford and partners that facilitates the future development and operation of the Airport and surrounding employment lands.
- Higher utilization of the Airport contributing to economic growth and jobs is realized.
- Brantford Municipal Airport becomes a leading commercial flight training facility that helps address the global pilot shortage.
- Improved infrastructure including a new terminal building and expanded hangar availability is developed.
- An awareness campaign for the Airport is generating community and Council support for the long-term operation of the Airport.



The Brantford Flight Centre offers flight training programs for professionals and recreational aviation enthusiasts.

Vision and Mission

Vision:

To be recognized as the premier destination in Ontario for small private, corporate and commercial aircraft services.

Mission:

The Brantford Municipal Airport provides private, corporate and emergency service users with a one-stop hub for small aircraft aviation services, amenities and flight training.

Core Values:

We strive to ensure the safety and security of Airport users, employees and customers.

We are dedicated to responsibly overseeing the management of the Airport to promote environmental and community well-being.

We contribute to the economic growth of the region through technological innovation in aviation.

Our energy, passion and enthusiasm in all aspects of aviation sets us apart from other airports.



Portions of the Airport have been leased out for feature film and television productions, such as *Mayday*.

Recommended Goals and Actions to Fulfill Long-Term Vision

The consultative process throughout this project outlined the current status of the Brantford Municipal Airport and highlighted opportunities that exist to build upon current strengths and address perceived weaknesses. Building off this work, the aim of the four goals listed below is to outline what is needed to fulfill the long-term vision of the Airport and turn current opportunities into future successes.

Goal 1: Explore potential partnerships to develop a shared vision and business model for an Aviation Business Park.

Why is this important?

The major issue facing the Airport is its funding model. While current operations generate a surplus that contributes to capital costs, it is insufficient to address long-term needs. Because the Airport is situated in the County of Brant, taxes and development charges are paid to the County, rather than being reinvested in the Airport. Looking to the future, Brantford's challenge is to determine an appropriate business model that will provide long-term sustainability of the Airport with renewed investment in its aging infrastructure and opportunities for growth that support economic development and community benefit.

The development of an Aviation Business Park would provide a comprehensive approach to achieve full utilization of the Airport. A Joint Venture partnership would involve the development of a shared vision and business model which could open the door for new investment and employment. The Aviation Business Park could be positioned as a one-stop destination for aviation services, complementing the existing maintenance and parts suppliers with businesses such as paint, propeller and engine shops, and interiors. With the growth in larger airports such as Hamilton and Waterloo, general aviation is being pushed out, providing an opportunity for a stable base of operation for services locally. As well, the Airport and adjacent lands could be developed for corporate uses, charters, hangars and warehouse space.

The 2016 Boundary Adjustment Agreement between the Corporation of the City of Brantford and the Corporation of the County of Brant includes a Joint Venture Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the employment lands in Cainsville and the Airport, with a view to developing the lands to their fullest potential. The MOU includes an undertaking by the City and County to develop a Feasibility Study as part of its exploration of joint venture opportunities regarding the Airport area. At the time of its execution, the proposed Feasibility Study signalled an interest by the City and County to work together on the development of the Airport to achieve its full potential. The important aspect to note is partnership – the City should be exploring partnership opportunities which could be public, private or some combination.

To explore potential partnerships regarding the development of an Aviation Business Park, the following actions could be undertaken:

- Initiate discussions with potential partners regarding the development of an Aviation Business Park.
- Identify the land, the land uses and land needs that would comprise the Aviation Business Park.
- Identify the major servicing that would be required to develop the Aviation Business Park.
- Develop a business plan for the Aviation Business Park.



Enjoy breakfast or lunch along with breathtaking views of planes taking off and landing at the Skyway Café.

Goal 2: Partner with local institutions and flight training schools to deliver aviation training programs at the Brantford Municipal Airport.

Why is this important?

The Airport's roots date back to 1940 when the facility was constructed by the federal government for air force flight training. Today, flight training remains a major service provided at the Airport, through the Brantford Flying Club. With the current significant global pilot shortage anticipated to last for many years, the need for expanded flight training has become even more pronounced. Recent trends have witnessed partnerships between municipal airports and post-secondary institutions such as Seneca Polytechnic/Peterborough (Honours Bachelor of Aviation Technology) and Mount Royal University/Calgary (2-Year Aviation Diploma) where commercial programming is delivered at the respective airports. These programs complement existing private flight instruction available at the airports.

The City of Brantford has an opportunity to explore potential partnerships with community colleges which deliver commercial aviation training programs. That may include the potential for the construction of a combined flight school and terminal building at the Airport which would provide not only a training facility, but a new terminal facility that attracts corporate businesses. Other institutions have been successful in securing federal funding to develop flight training facilities at local airports.

In addition to flight training, a partnership with colleges that deliver aircraft mechanics training programs could be explored. This would provide a pipeline of qualified individuals to support the aircraft maintenance needs and help build the reputation of the Airport as a one-stop hub for general aviation needs.

Actions that could be taken to develop partnerships for aviation training include:

- Initiate discussions with Ontario colleges to explore a potential partnership with the City of Brantford for the delivery of commercial aviation training programs at the Brantford Municipal Airport.
- Research federal funding sources for aviation training facilities as well as institutional partnership models at other airports.

Goal 3: Grow existing and attract new revenue sources.

Why is this important?

The development of a business plan for an Aviation Business Park will take time to complete. In the interim, there are opportunities to increase revenue at the Airport. Some options could be considered “low hanging fruit” such as hangar leases for which there is currently a waiting list, or commercial filming given the success to date in attracting film shoots such as the TV series Mayday. Other options have a direct community benefit such as the use of the Airport site for community events. In addition to being a revenue generator, a multi-community benefit could be obtained by attracting emergency services such as Air Ambulance to locate on site.

Actions to grow existing and attract new revenue sources include:

- As part of the Business Plan for the Aviation Business Part (outlined in Goal 1), explore development opportunities to generate new and sustainable revenues.
- Assess the infrastructure required to permit 24-hour fueling at the airport with card locks and update the current fueling contract with Brantford Flying Club.
- Be proactive in seeking new commercial filming opportunities that would provide direct revenue to the Airport as well as indirect spending throughout the community.
- Market the Airport site for community events where it is feasible for buildings and lands to be used for rentals.
- Research opportunities to attract emergency service organizations to locate at the Airport.

Goal 4: Build public awareness of the Airport.

Why is this important?

A public engagement survey was undertaken to help inform the City of Brantford 2023 Budget Priorities. A significant number of respondents voiced opposition to the Airport. Unless the negative perception of the Airport is changed, it is unlikely to receive public support for continued investment.

In 2023, as part of the visioning process for the Airport, stakeholder interviews, a focus group and working session were conducted. A common comment from these meetings was that many members of the public were unaware of the services provided at the Airport. Some people interviewed stated that there is a misconception that the Airport services only a few private plane owners. Building awareness of the Airport can provide the “what’s in it for me” messaging that demonstrates its benefit to residents and businesses in Brantford and throughout neighbouring communities.

Actions to market the Airport as a regional brand include:

- Conduct a public awareness campaign and improve signage to inform residents of the Airport benefits.
- Link the historical aspects of the Airport to other tourism-related assets.
- Host public outreach events such as a “Doors Open” event and airshows to bring people to the Airport.
- Host class trips to the Airport.
- Involve the Chamber of Commerce to communicate opportunities for local companies to make use of the Airport (i.e., transportation for goods and employees).

Brantford Farmers' Market

Vision, Mission, Goals and Actions

2024-2041



Appendix B: Brantford Farmers' Market

The Brantford Farmers' Market has been serving Brantford and area since 1848. It comprises many long-standing vendors that offer fresh, local products. The market is housed in a municipal facility with adjacent parking and is open year-round on Fridays and Saturdays.

Market customers are primarily Brantford residents as opposed to some farmers' markets that cater more to tourists. This customer base is good for business as it is more likely to generate repeat customers on a regular basis.

The COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted market operations and vendors have indicated that as of 2023, attendance levels have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. Emerging from pandemic and looking to the future, the market faces three primary issues: the first is the existence of empty vendor stalls that can give the perception that the market is dying. The second issue is a lack of intriguing interactive experiences for customers. Lastly, the third issue is that information about the market is not being adequately communicated to existing and potential customers.

To create a better, more inviting Farmers' Market, the City of Brantford must look to build on the strengths of the historic market by addressing the above-noted issues.

As part of the broader City of Brantford Economic Development Strategy, a process was undertaken to review the current status of the Farmers' Market and assess how to best utilize and leverage this local asset. Specific to the Farmers' Market, six one-on-one interviews were completed, a visioning session with 12 attendees was held, and the farmers' market theme was incorporated into the larger Working Session where 50 participants provided input. Through these consultations a picture of the current strengths, challenges, opportunities, aspirations, and expected results was derived, mission and vision statements created, and goals alongside attainable actions drafted. These assessments are presented within this document.

SCOAR®

A comprehensive SCOAR® was compiled for the Brantford Farmers' Market. The SCOAR® reflects direct input from key community stakeholders through consultation that included interviews, a focus group, and working session. This input helped to inform the development of actions and themes for the market.

Strengths

- Strong relationships between local vendors and customers.
- Award winning vendors with expertise in their product areas.
- Vendors provide locally grown, fresh, specialized products that can be tailored to the customer, some of which can't be found at a regular store.
- A gathering place for the community, an anchor for the downtown.
- A place where customers can support the local business community.
- Beyond food products, there are other local vendors such as a woodworker.
- Customers are mainly residents, many of whom attend on a regular basis.
- Dedicated building, outdoor seasonal market, and parking availability, open year-round.



Since 1848, the Brantford Farmers' Market has served upwards of 3,500 customers each week.

Challenges

- Roles and accountability of Market Clerk and Economic Development staff are unclear.
- Lack of activities to provide more of an experience for customers such as entertainment, education (food demos).
- Lack of consistent WiFi availability.
- Market hours, Friday in particular, may deter people from visiting.
- Attracting new vendors.
- Attendance levels have not returned to pre-COVID levels.
- Perception that market is dying given reduced attendance and empty stalls.
- Price competition is a challenge within the market and with outside stores.
- Product quality is not standardized throughout the market.

Opportunities

- Fill the stalls and diversify the vendor composition to reflect the changing demographics of the growing community with products from around the world.
- Build relationships between the vendors and City staff.
- Make it fun! Add to the market experience with demos, events, entertainment and education.
- Strengthen the outdoor market.
- Create awareness and increase attendance.

Aspirations

The Farmers' Market will be:

- A top Brantford destination providing a unique shopping experience.
- A hub of activity and a place that vendors and residents are proud of.
- A place of commerce where vendors want to be located and can make money.

Results

- Increased awareness of the market in and around the community.
- Increased attendance at the market on a consistent basis.
- More diversity in the composition of vendors.
- Waiting list for vendors to join the market.



The Market features products that reflect the diversity of the community with new products introduced regularly.

Vision and Mission

Vision:

The Brantford Farmers' Market is a top destination of choice for residents and visitors to meet, shop and experience the world through a diverse array of vendors and products.

Mission:

The Brantford Farmers' Market is a meeting place for the community to find local, fresh award-winning products in a lively, enticing environment.



Open year-round, the Market offers meats, fresh produce, dairy, flowers, baked goods and artisanal products.

Recommended Goals and Actions to Fulfill Long-Term Vision

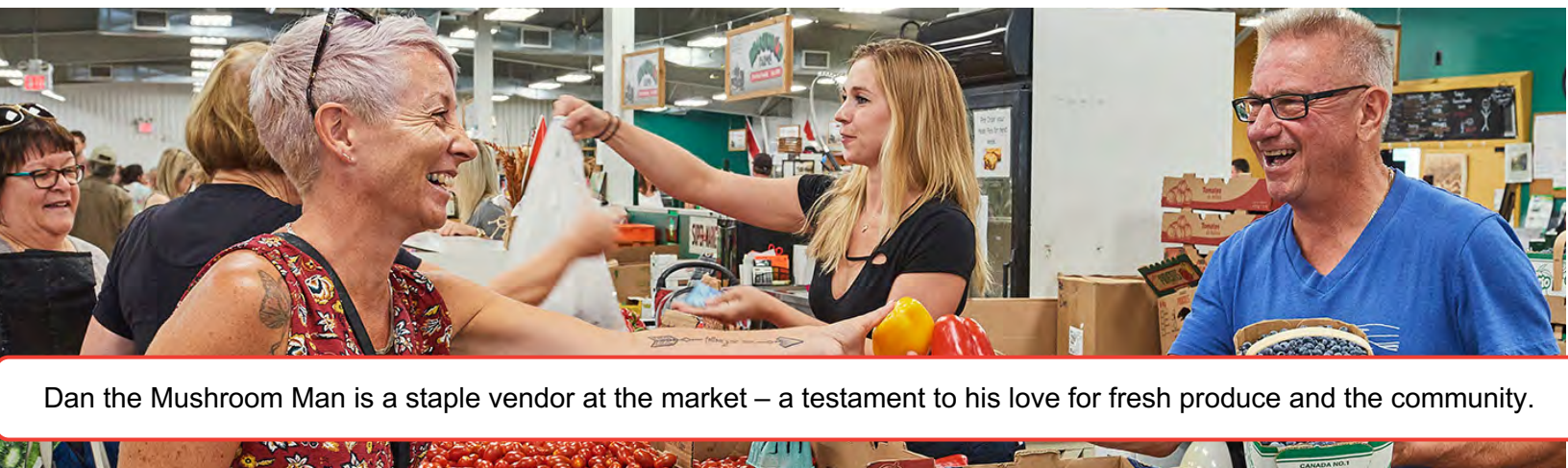
The consultative process throughout this project outlined the current status of the Brantford Farmers' Market and highlighted opportunities that exist to build upon current strengths and address perceived weaknesses. Building off this work, the aim of the four actions listed below is to outline what is needed to fulfill the long-term vision of the Farmers' Market and turn current opportunities into future successes.

Goal 1: Update operational responsibilities for the market and build relationships with vendors.

Why is this important?

The responsibility for market operations recently shifted to the Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives Department. Ensuring that staff and vendors are clear about roles and responsibilities will help improve operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Feedback from the consultation with vendors found that many are unclear as to the involvement from marketing staff in Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives and the responsibilities of the onsite Farmers' Market Clerk. This has led to uncertainty and a lack of trust. They would like to have an open dialogue about what changes are possible to improve the market experience. Establishing regular two-way communication with vendors and transparency regarding staff roles are important steps in fostering a strong relationship with the City and achieving market sustainability.



Dan the Mushroom Man is a staple vendor at the market – a testament to his love for fresh produce and the community.

Actions:

1. Build relationships with vendors through regular meetings that include a review of initiatives and market activities. Solicit their feedback regarding market operations.
2. Update by-laws and regulations that are impediments to change.
3. Define metrics for the market such as attendance levels, vendor recruitment, customer satisfaction, etc.
4. Develop and implement a customer survey to help identify customer preferences such as hours of operation, types of vendors they would like to have at the market, types of demonstrations and entertainment, etc. Consider the use of local business students to conduct the survey under the supervision of staff.
5. Encourage Members of Council and staff to visit the market and show support for it.



Vendor, The Raw Carrot, reinvests their proceeds into employing people who face barriers to traditional employment.

Goal 2: Develop a Vendor Recruitment Strategy.

Why is this important?

The composition of market vendors is critical to its success. Feedback from consultations indicates that existing customers value the locally grown, fresh and specialized products that can be found at the market. They would appreciate more diversity in products as well opportunities to purchase and consume food on site. As Brantford continues to grow, there is an opportunity to attract new customers to the market. To do so, it is important that the market is reflective of the needs of the changing demographics in the community. Providing more diversity in the vendor composition would help to address the wishes of existing customers as well as attract new ones.

In addition to feedback regarding vendor composition, the issue of vacant stalls was raised in interviews with vendors. A full, lively marketplace provides a great first impression for customers and bodes well for repeat customers. The current vacant stalls in the market give a negative perception of the overall market environment to customers as well as potential vendors. A proactive, targeted approach is needed to fill the stalls by securing vendors who represent the vision for the market and are of interest to customers. That involves an assessment of the current and desired mix of vendors, a determination of barriers for new entrants, and a plan to attract desired vendors.



Graham Beam of Little Wing Creations offers handcrafted wooden bird houses, pet feeders and more.

Actions:

1. Consult with vendors to identify issues that may deter new vendors from joining the market.
2. Utilize the results from the above-noted recommended customer survey to help define the future vision for the market environment and appropriate vendor mix.
3. Develop and implement a vendor recruitment strategy with a vision for the vendor mix, criteria for vendors, and process for recruitment.
4. Be sensitive to cultural differences that may impact market operations. For example, certain vendors may not wish to sell on specific days for religious reasons.
5. Determine infrastructure that would be required to have hot food vendors at the market.
6. Consider use of local business students to participate in the development of the vendor recruitment strategy.



Serving the Market for nearly two decades, Danny Prowse of Herbs & Things offers both staples and seasonal delights.

Goal 3: Generate more awareness of the market.

Why is this important?

Awareness of the market, particularly for new residents to Brantford, will help attract new customers, adding to the sustainability of the facility. It will also serve as notice to existing customers that they can discover new experiences and products at the market.

The 2023 Marketing Plan, implemented by Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives staff, has had great success in increasing the market's presence on social media. The plan also includes advertising, events, influencers, and the development of a microsite. It provides a singular source for messaging, ensuring a consistent and targeted approach in attracting customers. Through the plan, staff could also link the market and its history to other historical features of Brantford, as well as reach out to different audiences.

Consultation regarding promotion of the market found that vendors are generally pleased with marketing efforts by the City and that the DBBIA would like to be more involved in helping to promote the market. Many of the people consulted suggested more signage. In particular, a large mural on the exterior of the market walls to showcase the site and encourage people to visit was suggested.

Actions:

1. Continue implementation of an annual Marketing Plan and provide vendors with related updates. Review metrics and plan on a regular basis to ensure that the target market, messaging, and marketing tools are appropriate.
2. Add signage/murals to the building to showcase the market location.
3. Discuss partnerships with the DBBIA such as market-related banners throughout the downtown area.
4. Explore links with other community assets such as the historical connection of the market with the Brant Museum and Archives, as well as various community and newcomer groups.
5. Provide signage on nearby trails to inform hikers of the market as a place to visit.

Goal 4: Create New Experiences for Customers

Why is this important?

The creation of new experiences for customers at the market provides an alternative to the chore-like environment that a traditional grocery store offers. It also encourages repeat business. Adding food demonstrations, music, entertainment, and events creates a robust atmosphere in which people view the market as a destination for fun, meeting with friends, family, and enjoying a day out while shopping. Providing places to sit and/or eat will encourage them to stay longer and experience all that the market has to offer.

Actions:

1. Create a multi-purpose section for food demonstrations, events and entertainment.
2. Implement events, food demonstrations, and entertainment during regular market hours as well as piloting a night market or vendor-to-vendor competitions.
3. Consider the interests and needs of diverse customers when planning events.
4. Establish an outdoor sitting area to encourage people to stay longer and view the market as a community hub.
5. Consider bringing in food trucks for the outdoor market and/or recruiting hot food vendors for customers to enjoy a snack or meal.
6. Explore the feasibility of building a canopy for the outdoor market to improve attendance of vendors and customers during inclement weather.
7. Explore the feasibility of increasing the Farmers' Market Clerk position to full-time in order to lead onsite events, ongoing vendor recruitment and assist with marketing efforts including 'live' social media updates.

Appendix C: SCOAR® for Economic Development in Brantford

Strengths.

Geographic Location.

- Well situated in southern Ontario with respect to major markets across North America.
- Readily accessible to all modes of transportation (400 series highway, rail, and water).

Balanced Business Community.

- Diversity of industries, businesses, and age of ownership/companies across the business community with a balance of traditional and new businesses.
- Well established and prominent large international companies.
- Strong small business enterprise centre [Brantford-Brant Business Resource Centre (BRC)], encouraging new entrepreneurship.
- Competitive tax base mix (commercial, industrial, and residential).

Quality of Life.

- Beautiful location on the Grand River.
- Relative affordability in comparison to the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area.
- Mid-sized urban centre with a small-town feel.
- Residents are welcoming and work well together.
- Becoming a much more culturally diverse community.

Post-Secondary Institutions.

- Wilfrid Laurier University, Conestoga College and Six Nations Polytechnic are investing in Brantford and bringing young people into the community.
- Proximity to post-secondary institutions in surrounding municipalities (for example, Western University, McMaster University, University of Waterloo).

Tourism.

- Numerous protected trails offering a “wilderness in the City” experience.
- Well established sports tourism program.
- Elements Casino Brantford (major attraction and funder for community groups and city initiatives).

Heritage and Culture.

- Unique cultural assets (for example, Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts, Woodland Cultural Centre, Glenhyrst Art Gallery of Brant, Her Majesty's Royal Chapel of the Mohawks, Bell Homestead National Historic Site).
- Intangible, rich heritage and diverse history that is interconnected.
- Talented and passionate performing and visual arts community.

Downtown Brantford.

- Walkable, with unique small businesses and architecturally beautiful buildings.
- Two thriving post-secondary institutions (WLU and Conestoga College), City Hall, Harmony Square, Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts, Elements Casino Brantford, Bulldogs OHL investment.
- Historic Train station still in operation for VIA Rail.



An extended stay hotel, Home2 Suites by Hilton Brantford opened in 2019 with 90 stylish suites.

Challenges.

Difficult to find Workforce.

- Competition for labour leading to poaching of employees.
- Lack of experience in employees, with not enough high-skill workers or people willing to learn.
- The needs of manufacturers often do not match employee desire for that type of employment.
- Difficulty finding meaningful jobs (specifically, but not only, youth).
- International or students from outside the community may not know about the workforce opportunities in Brantford and therefore don't stay.

Limited Transportation Options.

- Transit system within the municipality is limited (both times and routes).
- Lack of transit system between Brantford and Cambridge, Kitchener/Waterloo, and Six Nations.
- Due to lack of other options, there is a heavy reliance on cars.

Regulatory Environment.

- Approvals and permit/planning approval costs and event fees can be prohibitive for small businesses and community organizations.
- Perceived opposition to change because of the “that’s the way it is” attitude.
- Perception that City is averse to risk and not willing to weight risk versus benefit for initiatives that drive positive growth and/or change.

Business Retention and Expansion.

- Connection between business and the City is limited.
- Inconsistent promotion of business across the community.
- Inequities around enforcing business regulations (especially with regard to home based-versus-storefront businesses).
- Businesses lack understanding of what the City’s role is in terms of partnerships, funding, et cetera.
- Currently land-locked and out of land for new investment.
- Some businesses/investors have difficulties with permitting process and times.

City Staff and Council.

- Recent staff turnover makes it difficult to connect with the appropriate City staff.
- Service needs are beginning to outgrow Corporation capabilities.

Regional Relationships.

- Appears to be a lack of regional focus on economic development efforts.
- Lack of a cohesive, cooperative vision.
- Lack of a long-term, sustained positive working relationship between the City and Indigenous communities.

Downtown Brantford.

- Social issues (for example, homelessness and drugs).
- Safety perception (especially at night) and in the parking garage and parkade.
- Commercial rents appear to be too high for some smaller businesses.
- Vacant buildings and empty lots are uninviting to potential consumers or investors.
- Downtown core does not “show well” to prospective students and parents.

Heritage, Arts and Culture.

- As a community, “sport” is seen as being put above everything else and that opportunities outside of sport tourism are not pursued to the same extent as sport tourism events.
- Limited understanding of the value of Brantford’s heritage and culture.
- For smaller events, permitting and approvals processes are prohibitive to overcome.
- Lack of art studio spaces in Brantford.
- Lack of consistent funding for arts and culture organizations makes long-term planning very difficult.
- Accessibility to the Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts is prohibitive due to non-ticket costs (for example, public transportation access), and parking lot payment system.

The City.

- Reluctance to promote Brantford and its strengths.
- Resistance to change and new ideas due to the attitude that “we have always done it that way.”

Opportunities.

Enhancing the Arts and Culture Sector.

- Provide opportunities for performing arts space, studio space, et cetera, to grow, for cultural organizations.
- Develop a cultural hub in downtown.
- Support cultural events with a view to long-term sustainability.
- Grow local capacity as an emerging location for film production.

Improving Regulatory Services and Processes.

- More engagement with all businesses in Brantford.
- During the permitting process, focus on being a catalyst for growth, streamlining the planning and regulatory process where possible.
- Building the Food/Agri-Food Sector.
- Connect farming and ground-to-table businesses, but then also connect farmers with national and larger-scale processors and manufacturers that operate in Brantford.
- Room to grow as a food hub in development, with prospective workers potentially being offered training at Conestoga Brantford.
- Raise culinary capabilities (for example, enhanced farmers’ market, fine dining, bakeries, et cetera) and capture that food industry.

Expanding Tourism.

- Regional (potentially in partnership with County of Brant, Norfolk County, Six Nations, et cetera) experience packages with overnight stays including leisure, outdoor, culture, heritage, Indigenous tourism.
- Lean on actions identified within the Tourism and Culture Strategy.
- Continue to grow sports tourism, especially as the OHL Bulldogs come to the City.

Creating a Safe and Vibrant Downtown.

- Improve the downtown business mix (for example, complementary businesses to support the Sanderson Centre and Casino).
- Investigate ways to work with the downtown BIA to be more effective.
- Disperse social services to other locations away from just the City's downtown core.
- Sanderson Centre expand their offerings and cater to the university students and families.

Building Relationships.

- Work closer with the Six Nations of the Grand River to facilitate conversation and collaboration on important issues that support both communities.
- Brant and Brantford work together for the economic betterment of the region.

Continue to build a community where people want to live.

- Attract more physicians to Brantford.
- Utilize the riverfront to its fullest, respecting the need for long-term ecological sustainability.
- Build pride in Brantford.
- Make the City more beautiful by leaning into cultural events, artwork, and opportunities such as the "best Blooming City", et cetera.
- Involve different cultures across the community to build diversity and richness.
- Leverage the reinvigorated Neighbourhood Associations, as their members care about their neighbourhood and community.

Aspirations.

The City of Brantford will:

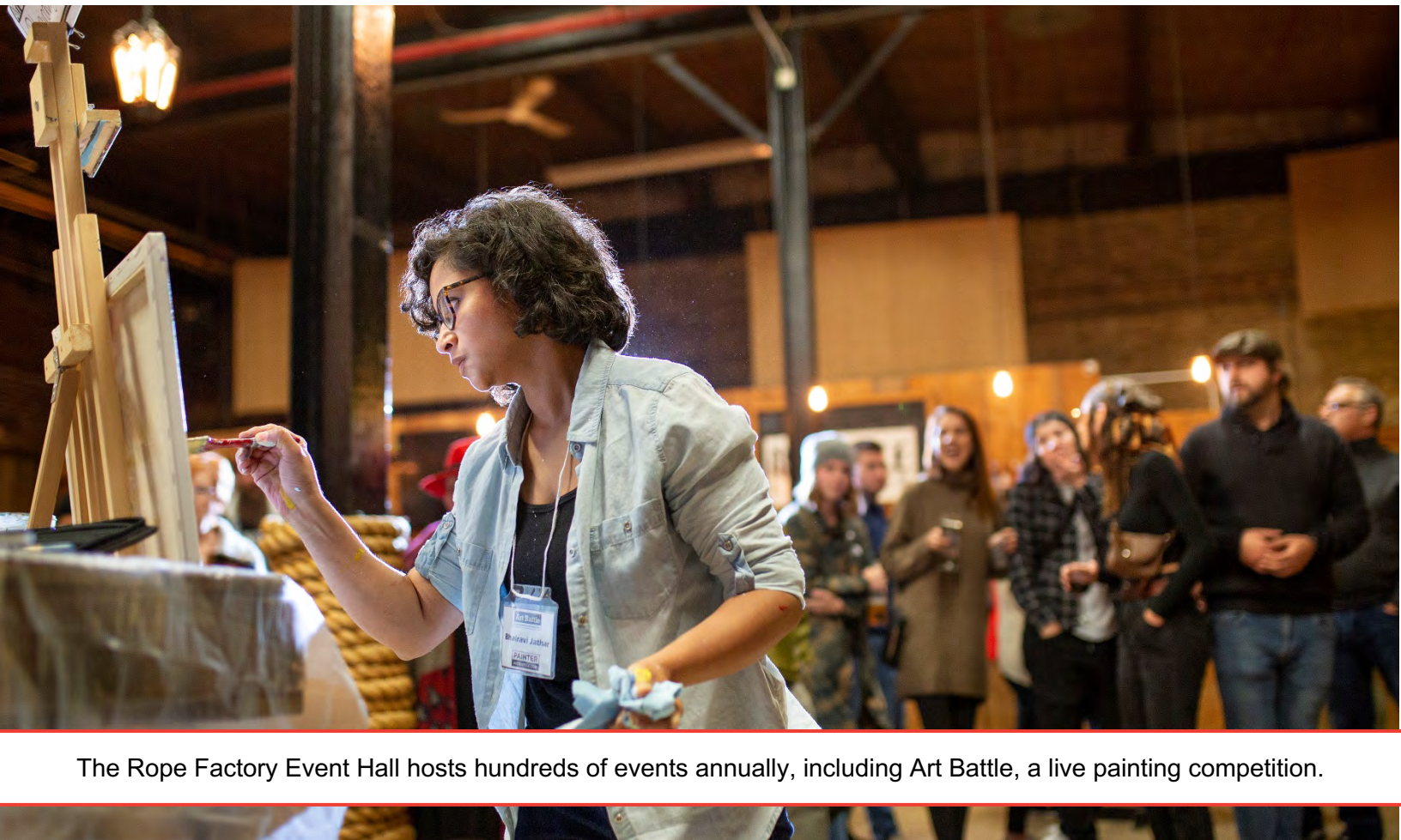
- Develop stronger partnerships with the County of Brant and local Indigenous communities, post-secondary institutions, and non-governmental organizations, including arts and culture groups and economic agencies (DBBIA, Chamber).
- Have a revitalized downtown, with safe streets, sustainable and engaged businesses, family-friendly activities, attractive signage and décor, and a diverse business mix.
- Build an empowered and supported business community.
- Be a catalyst for investment and growth for both businesses and not-for-profit organizations.
- Work with partners to help drive a more modernized workforce with employment opportunities that offer meaningful, sustainable employment in emerging sectors (agri-food, tech, film, advanced manufacturing, et cetera).
- Promote current and anticipated shovel-ready, serviced lands to support business growth.
- Foster a “proud” Brantford community.
- Leverage the growth that is coming to continue growing Brantford into a diverse community with a range of experiences and events to build community.



Since 1919, the Sanderson Centre's design, architecture and programs reflect our remarkable past and dynamic future.

Results.

- Increased collaboration across a range of potential partners (County of Brant, Indigenous communities, post-secondary institutions, non-governmental organizations, et cetera).
- A vibrant downtown where the community can celebrate and experience safely.
- Enhanced Business Retention and Expansion efforts to engage local business more directly.
- Driven growth in the community by reducing regulatory burdens on small, large, new, and established businesses.
- Expanded availability of shovel-ready, serviced lands.
- Become a proud and welcoming community to all newcomers.



The Rope Factory Event Hall hosts hundreds of events annually, including Art Battle, a live painting competition.

Appendix D: Climate Change

Today's Situation on Climate Change

Climate change is referred to as the phenomenon of human-accelerated global warming where an average global temperature rises without precedent in the 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 on the earth.

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

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.



Tens of thousands of paddlers travel along the Grand River, a designated Canadian Heritage River, annually.

The City of Brantford has a *Climate Change Action Plan* (CCAP) for both the Corporation and the Community to focus on mitigating our impact on climate change by reducing our GHG emissions. The Corporate CCAP provides a plan for reducing GHG emissions emitted by the Corporation of the City of Brantford. This includes any emissions that are produced by any City owned or managed assets including buildings, fleet, water and wastewater treatment facilities, streetlights and traffic signals, and emissions from the landfill.

The *Community Climate Change Action Plan* focuses on actions that community members can take to reduce their own emissions and provides tools to make behavioural changes, such as reducing single passenger vehicles, making homes and buildings more energy efficient, reducing waste and water use, and focusing on carbon offsets that absorb emissions from the atmosphere.

The City has declared a municipal target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 for both the Corporation and the community with the following interim targets:

- 30% reduction from 2018 levels by 2030.
- 40% reduction from 2018 levels by 2040.
- 100% (net-zero) reduction from 2018 levels by 2050.

In 2019, the City of Brantford Council [declared a Climate Emergency](#), stating that Canada has disproportionately contributed to the climate and ecological crises, and that emergency mobilization on an unprecedented scale will be required.

The climate emergency declaration also requested that staff develop a process by which all matters coming before council consider and quantify (where possible) the impacts on climate change. As a result of this, all staff reports that come before council have a discussion section for climate change and environmental impacts where information on this topic will be provided for Council to aid in their decision making. Where it is feasible to do so, an estimated total lifetime GHG emissions is calculated and provided for Council's information, with information consolidated into quarterly and annual reports and made publicly accessible.

Opportunities

Despite the many unanswered questions and the stark realities faced by all, a changing climate presents some opportunities for positive change. The urgency of the situation makes it difficult to perceive these opportunities, but communities that are proactive in their approach to reducing their environmental impacts are increasingly perceived as desirable places to live by young and new Canadians alike.

Rethinking how communities are designed and how they ought to develop can be transformative not only for the quality of life of residents but for the long-term sustainability of the local economy.

Specific to Brantford

As climate change begins to have more of an impact on global, national, and local scales, local natural assets will be impacted. As such, respondents were asked how the City could help to ensure that Brantford's economy is minimally affected by future climate change predictions. Though some respondents felt there was nothing the City could or should do, the majority felt that at least some initiatives should be considered. Responses have been grouped into key themes, outlined below.

It should be noted that while the themes below have actionable outcomes, the themes are major action items within other City documents or are outside the scope of this Economic Development Strategy. That being said, the Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives Department will use this consultative feedback to encourage other departments with more direct influence over these outcomes to be aware of the themes identified by residents.



The banks of the Grand River boast some of Canada's largest stands of Carolinian forests.



Leading the Way

Respondents noted many ways in which the City and staff could be more of a leading force with respect to encouraging Brantford to “think green.” These general initiatives included increasing the general “City clean up” to promote well-kept green spaces, a green bin recycling program (set to launch November 1, 2023), solar panels on City-owned infrastructure, increasing tree cover, and supporting businesses in pursuing green energy initiatives. It also included relatively inexpensive options such as continuing to promote proper recycling/garbage habits within City-owned facilities and during City-led events.

Transportation Infrastructure

Infrastructure is noted within the Actions section of this report while discussing the corporate master planning related to transportation. Once again, though, transportation was mentioned consistently and therefore needs to be mentioned here. With respect to improving climate change estimates, residents noted that improved public transit, pedestrian/cycle-friendly community infrastructure, and installing electrical charging stations across the City would all be potentially worthwhile options.

Small-Scale Changes

A number of local small-scale changes were suggested, many of which are more organic initiatives that would be likely to be led by non-staff stakeholders but can be supported by the City. These included the residential planting of trees, having stakeholders help protect local green spaces, encouraging naturally planted lawns and greenspaces, encouraging “eat local” initiatives, and rewarding citizens who make efforts to beautify city in “green” ways.



Along with revitalizing the lands in the area, the City is working to improve the environmental quality of Mohawk Lake and Mohawk Canal

Grand River Protections

Though it was noted by many that the City has a plan in place and has initiated mitigation procedures already, the 2018 Grand River Flood and the subsequent state of emergency still loomed large for many residents when considering the impacts of climate change. As such, respondents wanted to ensure that flood management and waterfront master plans remain updated and adequate into the future.

Ensuring New Developments are “Green”

The last key theme repeatedly discussed surrounded new developments. To that end, respondents asked that new developments be incentivized to consider “green” opportunities. Though specifics weren’t identified, broadly, residents asked that the City consider encouraging all new business and residential properties to build “green”, adapting building codes to adapt to new climate realities, enforcing the use of energy efficient building materials on new developments, and assess opportunities to offset the increasing urban heat brought on by new developments.



Brimich Logistics is a family, locally-owned and operated supply chain and logistics business that continues to expand.

