



2025 Year in Review

Middlesex County Department of
Economic Development and Tourism

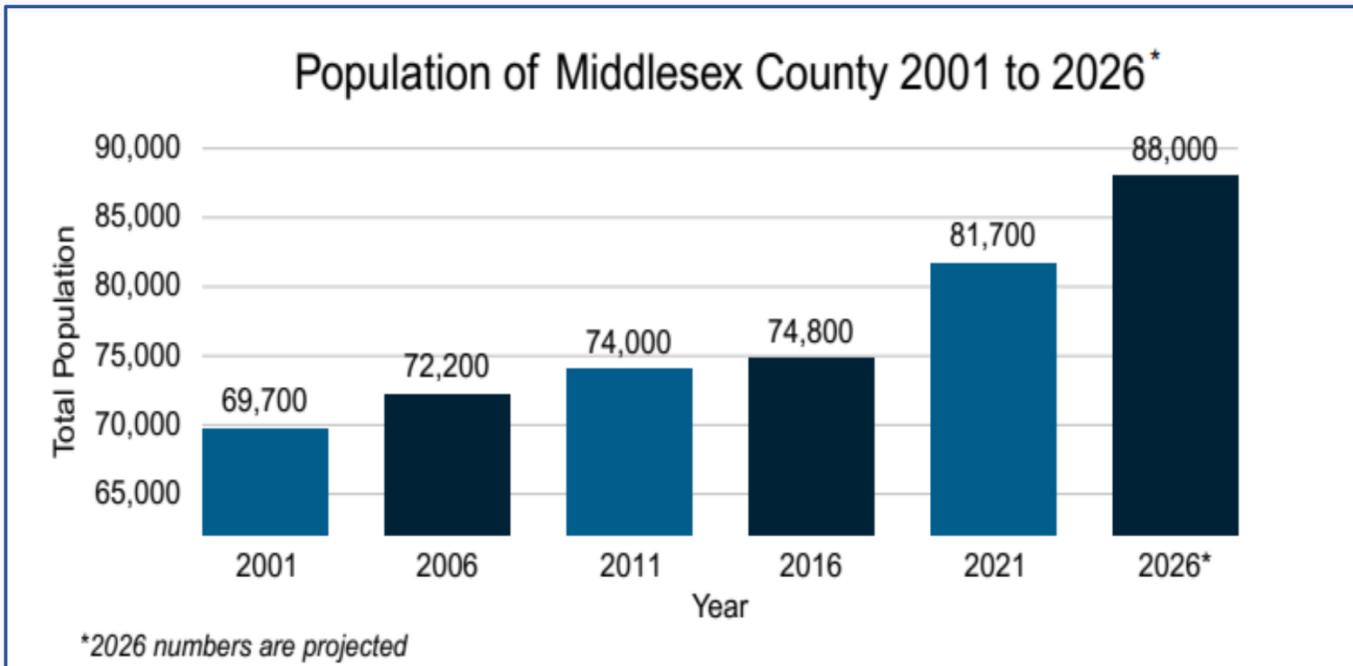
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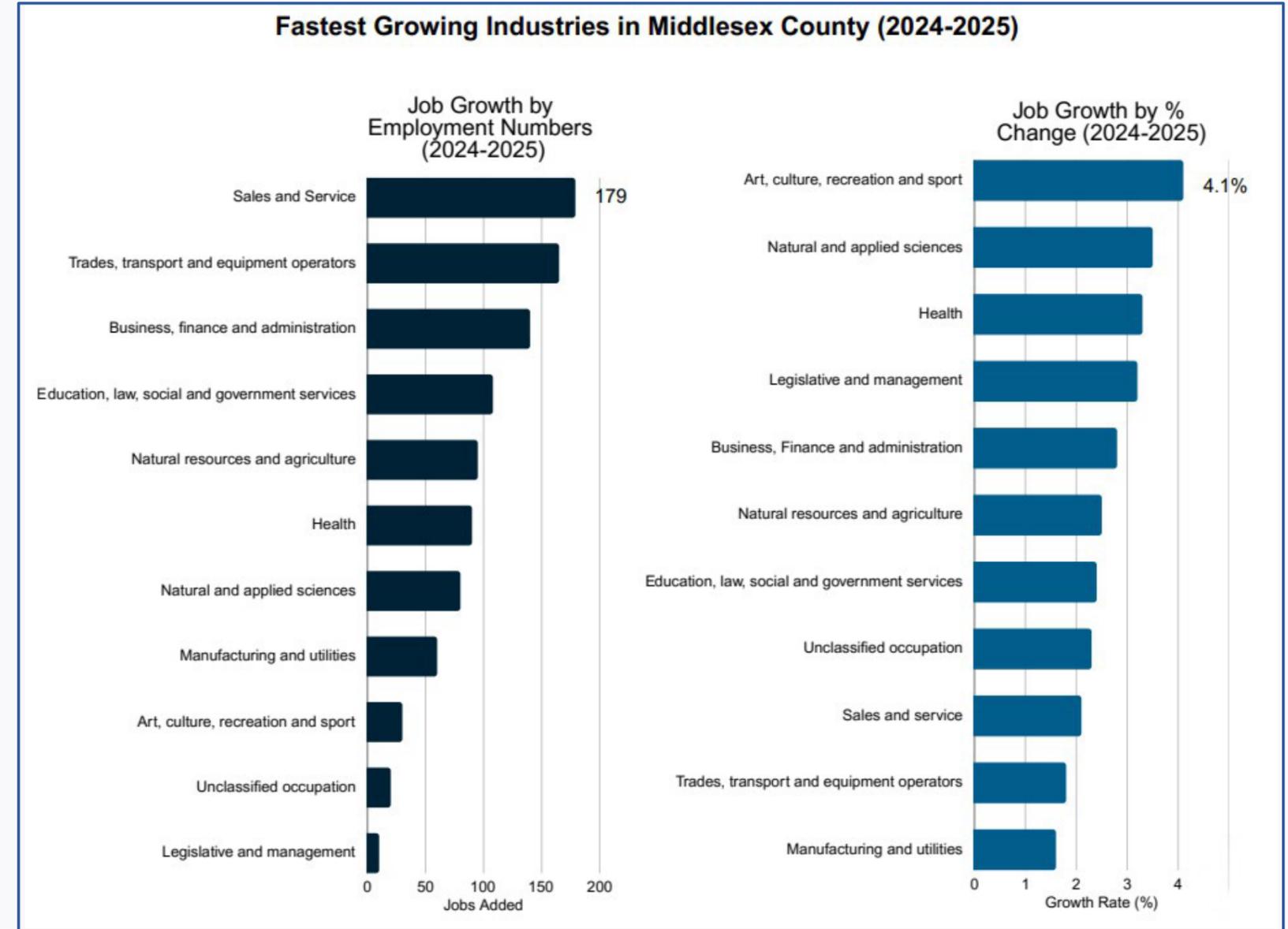
photo credit: westdellcorp.com/the-glenns-shopping-centre

Key Economic Indicators

Middlesex County has continued to experience steady growth, with job gains of 4.1% across a wide range of industries and strong momentum in both traditional and emerging sectors. This employment growth is supported by a steadily rising population, **projected at 88,000**.

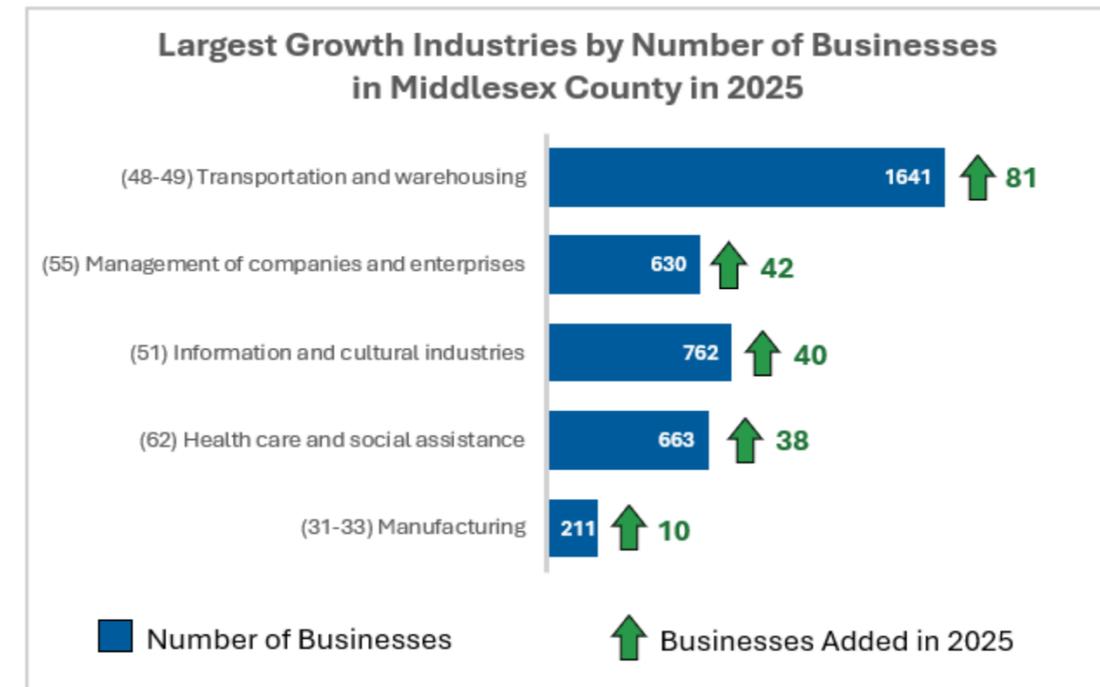
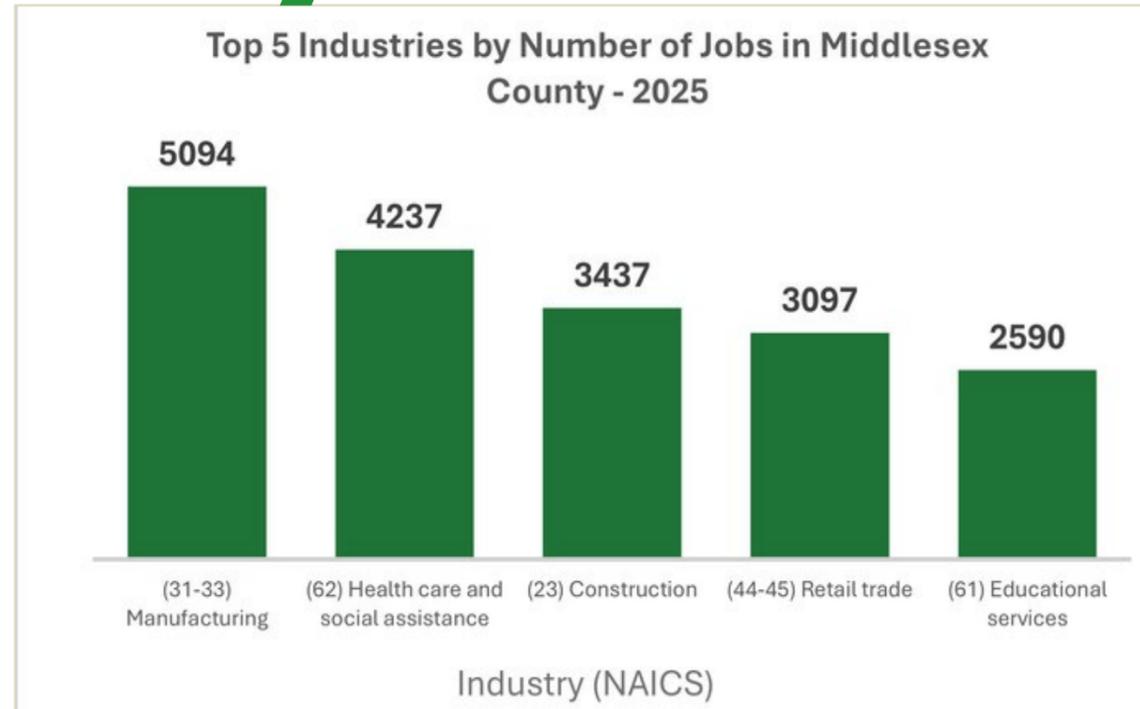


Sources: (1) Statistics Canada, Watson and Associates, 2024, (2) Ministry of Finance, adapted by Watson and Associates, (3) Statistics Canada, adapted by Watson and Associates, 2024



Source: Province of Ontario Analyst Lightcast 2025

Key Economic Indicators



Total jobs in Middlesex County grew from 33,069 in 2024 to **34,138 in 2025**, with all industries maintaining or increasing employment.

This growth was accompanied by a year-over-year increase of **390 businesses**.

Source: Province of Ontario Analyst Lightcast 2025

Foreign and Domestic Investment Attraction

- Middlesex County became a member of [Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance \(SOMA\)](#) in July 2025; ensuring ongoing membership in [Ontario Food Cluster \(OFC\)](#) and [Ontario Manufacturing Communities Alliance \(OMCA\)](#)
- Business Investment Leads Generated/Meetings Held: **Increased from 228 in 2024 to 338 in 2025**; demonstrating strong qualified private sector engagement in making regional investments in 1-5 years.
- Trade Shows Attended: Commercial - (Toronto Franchise Show) and Industrial - Supply Side, IPACK, Anuga, Hannover Messe, PLMA, Food Ingredients, and Fabtech.
- The ROI on Lead Generation/Investment Attraction efforts for 2025 was **1233%** considering the value of regional FDI budgets for 2025 versus Middlesex contributions. *Sources: SOMA; OMCA; OFC*



Investment Highlights

Arvaspring

- **\$8.5 million new investment** by Arvaspring Farms to open a new state-of-the-art poultry-processing facility in Lucan.
- **26 jobs** supported through the project, including 8 new jobs and 18 retained positions.
- Expanded processing and export capacity strengthens the local agri-food sector while also supporting sustainable culturally-diverse markets.

Nortera

- **\$25 million expansion** completed on Nortera's stand alone frozen vegetable warehouse in Strathroy, adding 100,000 sq ft of storage and distribution capacity.
- Supports **274+ local jobs** and reinforces the company's role in the regional agri-food economy.
- Strengthens supply-chain capacity for Ontario-grown produce, while bolstering the county's position as a centre of agri-food processing.



County Funded Improvement Projects

Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Funding Leveraged

23 CIP projects led to **\$117,026** in reimbursements to municipalities and **\$2,587,565 invested in the community**, yielding a **2211% ROI: \$22.11** invested by partners for every \$1 reimbursed by the County.

County Infrastructure Loan Fund

- In 2025, the newly adapted County Infrastructure Loan Fund was utilized for the first time for industrial land servicing.
- Southwest Middlesex accessed the fund for \$687,500 towards a total capital project cost of \$2.75M (Glencoe Business and Industrial Park Servicing Project).
- Thames Centre accessed the fund for \$930,000 towards a total capital project of \$1.86M (Thorndale Industrial Drain).



The combined ROI on these two projects is 185%

Sponsored Tourism & Special Events

Tourism Initiative Sponsorship

Through the 2025 Tourism Initiative Sponsorship Program, Middlesex County invested **\$25,000 to support 18 local events** with a total third-party organizer spend of \$250,000 - delivering an immediate **900% ROI: \$9 in event value for every \$1 invested** by the County. These 18 events attracted more than **100,000 visitors** to the region. Based on RTO1's average visitor spend of \$145 pp (food, retail, gas, accommodation, etc.), these events in turn are estimated to have generated **\$14.5 million in regional economic impact.**

Source: Southwestern Ontario Tourism Corporation



Department Hosted/Engaged Events

- 180+ Marketing Supports provided & 100+ Tourism Events Promoted
- Tourism FAM Tour hosted 35+ attendees and featured six businesses
- Invest Ag Tour hosted 45+ attendees and highlighted six businesses
- Teeny Tiny Summit
- Trade and Tariff Webinar
- Business Appreciation Event
- WOWC 2025 Conference
- Business Opportunities Event
- EDCO Tourism Investment Dragons Den
- WOWC Fall Funders Forum
- EDCO mentorship
- London Chamber of Commerce Business Achievement Awards Judging
- Sarnia Lambton Business Achievement Awards Judging

Engagement: Metrics

2025 Social Media Snapshot

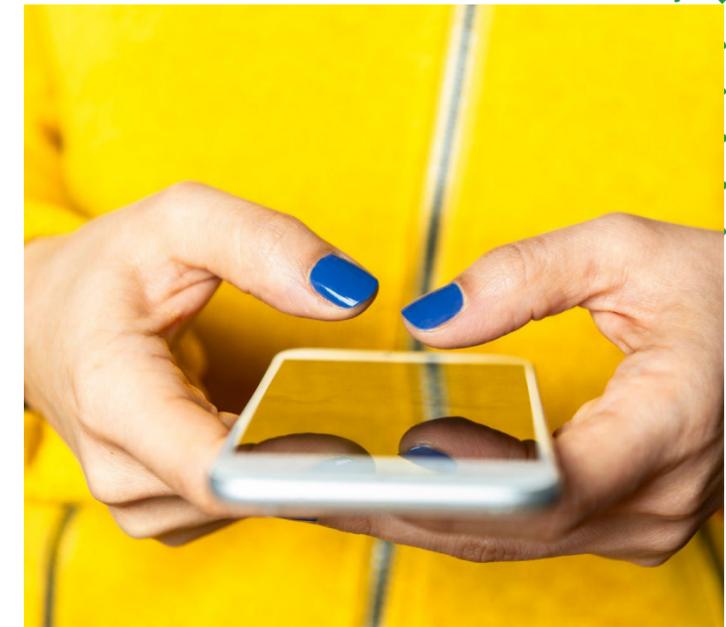
Across Visit Middlesex, Invest in Middlesex, Hands to Table, and Work in Middlesex, digital channels generated approximately **1.5 million impressions and views**, with a combined **13,295 social media followers** and strong growth, highlighting continued visibility and engagement supporting Middlesex County's attraction efforts.

The *Only Fall Guide You Need in Middlesex County* campaign, delivered with Destination Ontario, generated over 64,000 views, highlighting the power of seasonal storytelling and strong provincial partnerships in amplifying Middlesex County's tourism appeal.



Municipal & Public Engagement

In 2025, the team tracked **7,459 communications**, held **140 meetings**, and completed **14** Business Retention and Expansion interviews.



\$72,910 in grants and sponsorship was secured for 2025 economic development and tourism initiatives.

\$3.45 million in Provincial and Federal grant funding was approved for community transportation initiatives.

Engagement: Stories & News

Making it in Middlesex: Stories of Business Success

This series highlights local businesses and investment successes across Middlesex County, increasing their visibility and showcasing why our region is a great place to grow. Through targeted marketing, the series supports tourism and investment attraction while strengthening the local economy, with a new business feature released each quarter.

Quarterly Newsletter

The Invest in Middlesex quarterly e-newsletter continues to be a key engagement tool for the 1900 subscribers including elected officials, businesses, and community partners...providing timely updates on economic development, tourism initiatives, funding programs, and local success stories. These newsletters help keep interest holders informed, connected, and engaged with the County's ongoing growth and priorities.



Norbec

Marketing & Print Publications



Middlesex County produces engaging print publications and advertising campaigns that reach audiences across **Canada and the U.S.**, showcasing the region's unique tourism offerings and investment potential. A new Visitors Map and several sector specific publications were developed in 2025.

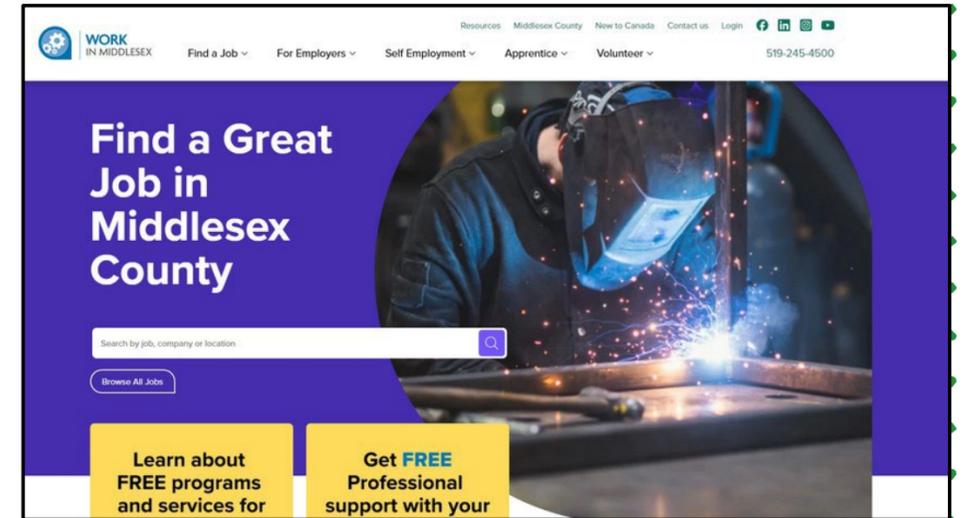
Awards and Recognition

The Visit Middlesex *Immerse Yourself in Middlesex County* campaign earned a **Gold Viddy Award for Excellence** in Commercial and Ad Campaigns and was a finalist for the Tourism Marketing Campaign Award (Under \$50K) at the 2025 Ontario Tourism Awards of Excellence.

Workforce Development

In 2025, Middlesex County continued efforts to strengthen workforce attraction through the Work in Middlesex website, which features a **job-matching portal connecting local employers with talent.**

Building on this momentum, the County-led Middlesex Workforce Development Partnership applied for a two-year **Workforce Navigator pilot project through the Rural Ontario Development (ROD) Fund**, reinforcing our commitment to supporting businesses, workers, and long-term labour force development, in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs. The County also actively participated in dissemination of **2025 Employer One Survey** of 60+ local businesses and served on the organizing committee of the **Small But Competitive Employer Workshop Series.**



2025 Economic Development and Tourism Team



Cara Finn

Director of Economic Development and Tourism



Demetri Makrakos

Economic Development Officer



Paul Napigkit

Tourism Officer



Kelly Hunt

Economic Development Marketing Officer

Anum Maqsood

Transportation Manager

The Path Forward

Middlesex County is advancing several key initiatives to support long-term economic growth.

A new five-year ***Economic Development Strategy*** is being developed in-house and will be presented to Council in Q1-2026. Work is also underway on the ***Community Improvement Support Program*** and the ***County Wayfinding and Heritage Signage Strategy***; each targeted for implementation in 2026.



With hiring now complete, the Economic Development and Tourism team will be fully staffed with six full-time positions in 2026.

To support operational needs and service delivery, the team has **relocated to the Primary Operations Centre** at 1988 Gainsborough Road, providing improved space, functionality, and visibility to better serve businesses, partners, and residents.