

## Report to Council

**Report Title:** Economic Development Update – June 2025

**Prepared By:** Christine Brandt, Community Development Coordinator

**Department:** Economic Development

**Date:** June 24, 2025

**Report Number:** ED2025-09                      **File Number:** C11EC

**Attachments:** 2024 Brockton Visitor Survey Results

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### Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number ED2025-09 - Economic Development Update – June 2025, prepared by Christine Brandt, Community Development Coordinator for information purposes.

### Report:

#### Background:

Brockton continues to make meaningful progress on key community development initiatives and economic growth opportunities. Staff remain committed to sustained engagement, promotion, and support of local businesses, tourism efforts, and investment readiness. This report provides updates on the following topics:

- Community Improvement Plan Update
- East Ridge Business Park
- Business After 5 Networking Events
- Business Improvement Grants
- Business Recognitions
- Spruce the Bruce Grant for Downtown Signage
- Brockton Settlement Area Brands
- Summer Streetfest
- Brockton Job Fair
- Saugeen Connects
- Walkerton Clean Water Legacy Award
- International Plowing Match & Rural Expo
- Tourism Updates

## **Analysis:**

### **Community Improvement Plan**

The CDC and CAO are working to update the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to support expanded housing development. This aligns with the Housing Accelerator Fund and ongoing Official Plan updates. Four key action items are currently being pursued:

1. Add affordable housing and additional residential units as eligible categories under CIP grants.
2. Create a Priority Housing Planning Application stream, including development charge fee reductions.
3. Updates to the Tax Increment Equivalent Financing (TIEF) program wording.
4. Update CIPA mapping for clarity and expand eligibility to include all commercially zoned properties in downtown Walkerton and other applicable areas along settlement roadways.

Community consultation will be incorporated as the process moves forward.

### **East Ridge Business Park**

Upgrades to the existing pylon sign at Bruce Road 4 and Ontario Road are being completed this month. The outdated LED display is being removed, and space for four new advertisers is being added. Planning is also underway for a second pylon sign at Bruce Road 19 and Creighton Road. Land in the park continues to be actively marketed for sale with discussion with interested parties ongoing.

### **Business After 5 Networking Events**

The first Business After 5 networking event of 2025 took place in April at Balaklava and Luxury Woodworking and was well-attended. Unfortunately, the June event was cancelled due to low registration; it will be rescheduled for the fall.

### **Business Improvement Grants**

To date, the Municipality has approved four business improvement grants, including one façade project, two under the signage program, and one in the vacant/underutilized category. The total value awarded is \$12,331.50, leaving \$2,668.50 available for the remainder of 2025. More funding for this program should be a consideration in 2026.

### **Business Recognitions**

The Municipality of Brockton recognized three new businesses this quarter:

- Titan Electrical Contracting, Walkerton
- Ethereal Aesthetics, Walkerton
- J&H Women's Fashions, Walkerton

Future recognitions are being planned to celebrate other new businesses in Brockton including Accent Nails, Pro Sport, and the Squinty Sparrow.

## **Spruce the Bruce Grant for Downtown Signage**

The Municipality successfully secured a Spruce the Bruce grant for three downtown Walkerton signage projects. A new series of open/closed signs has been delivered, and four complementary large window signs are available to advertise commercial spaces for rent in vacant buildings. A new Walkerton visitor map, highlighting parks and attractions, is in development and will be displayed in the existing free-standing sign at the Walkerton library.

## **Brockton Settlement Area Brands**

To support community identity and meet eligibility requirements for Spruce the Bruce funding, Brockton Council approved the creation of sub-brands for Cargill, Chepstow, and Elmwood. Two logo options per community were shared online for public feedback. Results are being presented in a separate report, and final logos will be integrated into distinctive branding guides.

## **Summer Streetfest**

Planning is underway for the annual Summer Streetfest, scheduled for Friday, July 18 in downtown Walkerton. The event will include sidewalk sales, business promotions, and free children's activities in the Market Garden. It will proceed rain or shine.

## **Brockton Job Fair**

The Municipality will host a job fair at WDCS this fall, in conjunction with the County of Bruce. A tentative date in October has been identified and will be confirmed shortly.

## **Saugeen Connects**

The CDC continues to participate in monthly Saugeen Connects meetings. This partnership includes the Saugeen Economic Development Corporation and five municipalities, including Brockton. The initiative supports succession planning, workforce development, youth entrepreneurship and women in business.

The Advancing Women Economically (AWE) webinar series concluded in May. Brockton and Hanover co-hosted the final Women of Wellington Saugeen Area (WOWSA) event on June 14 at the Saugeen Municipal Airport. The Student Start-Up Program (SSUP) is now underway, with strong participation and sponsorship from Brockton.

## **Walkerton Clean Water Legacy Award**

Applications closed on May 31 for the fifth annual Walkerton Clean Water Legacy Award. One student in the region will receive a \$1,500 bursary to support post-secondary studies in environmental science or clean water management. The winner will be announced shortly.

## **International Plowing Match & Rural Expo**

Brockton will host the 2026 IPM & Rural Expo from September 22–26, 2026 at Lang Farms. This marks Bruce County's fourth time hosting the event. A joint Steering Committee has been formed with representatives from the Municipality, Bruce County, and local IPM organizers. Brockton's focus will be on minimizing

municipal costs and maximizing visitor experience, including a contribution to the Bruce County Showcase Area.

**Tourism Updates**

Lobies Park Campground continues to accept reservations and is staffed part-time this summer. An updated events rack card is in circulation, and the new Brockton Visitor & Community Guide has been printed in partnership with The Walkerton Herald-Times. Copies are available throughout the municipality.

Three of five Greenock Swamp tours, organized by volunteers in Cargill, are already sold out. Margaret’s Mercantile, a local store in Cargill, is open for the season, offering locally made goods.

As part of an annual partnership with Bruce County, a regional visitor survey was conducted to collect insights from travelers in the area. While the data includes visitors to Brockton, their accommodation and spending may have occurred elsewhere. The attached report presents findings specific to visitors who identified Brockton as part of their trip.

**Strategic Action Plan Checklist:**

What aspect of the Brockton Strategic Action Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?		
• Recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision		Yes
• Recommendations contribute to achieving Heritage, Culture, and Community		Yes
• Recommendations contribute to achieving Quality of Life		Yes
• Recommendations contribute to achieving Land Use Planning and the Natural Environment		N/A
• Recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Development		Yes
• Recommendations contribute to achieving Municipal Governance		Yes

**Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:**

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective? Yes

**Reviewed By:**



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

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**Respectfully Submitted by:**



Christine Brandt, Community Development Coordinator

**Reviewed By:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sonya Watson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer