

## Report to Council

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

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

**Department:** Economic Development

**Date:** September 9, 2025

**Report Number:** ED2025-13

**File Number:** C11EC

**Attachments:**

---

**Recommendation:**

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number ED2025-13 - Economic Development Update – September 2025, prepared by Christine Brandt, Community Development Coordinator, for information purposes.

**Report:**

**Background:**

The Community Development Coordinator (CDC) provides regular updates to Brockton Council to inform on activities relating to community and economic development. This report specifically touches on the following:

- Community Improvement Plan updates
- East Ridge Business Park
- Newcomer Familiarization Tour
- Business After 5 Networking Event
- International Plowing Match
- Brockton Job Fair
- Hometown Christmas Market
- Business Improvement Grants
- Business Retention and Expansion Program
- Online Business Directory
- Branding Guidelines
- Saugeen Connects

## **Analysis:**

### **Community Improvement Program Updates**

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

1. Adding affordable housing and additional residential units as eligible categories under CIP grants.
2. Creating a Priority Housing Planning Application stream, including development charge fee reductions.
3. Updating the wording of the Tax Increment Equivalent Financing (TIEF) program.
4. Revising CIPA mapping for clarity and expanding 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**

Brockton and some of the newer developments in the East Ridge Business Park will be featured in an upcoming edition of Business News magazine, as part of a broader interview with Mayor Peabody and CAO Watson about the municipality's economic development initiatives. A second pylon sign is also being planned to help advertise businesses within the park; that project is currently out for quotes. Upgrades to the existing pylon sign are nearly complete. The outdated LED display has been removed, and space for four new advertisers has been added. The Brockton logo on this sign will be updated by the end of the year.

### **Newcomer Familiarization Tour**

The Municipality of Brockton is participating in a Newcomer Familiarization Tour on Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup> in partnership with Bruce County and the Newcomer Centre of Peel. Approximately 50 newcomers to Canada will take part in a bus tour of the area, with stops in various communities, including Walkerton. The CDC is coordinating with local employers who wish to share information about employment opportunities in Brockton. A brief tour of the municipality's amenities will also be included.

### **Business After 5 Networking Event**

A business networking event is being planned for Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> in partnership with the Best Western Plus Walkerton's grand opening of @HOME. Business owners and managers have been invited to attend the hotel and conference centre from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

### **International Plowing Match**

The CDC is attending executive meetings for the 2026 International Plowing Match (IPM), alternating monthly with Bruce County staff. Brockton will host the 2026 IPM & Rural Expo from September 22–26, 2026, at Lang Farms. A joint Steering Committee has also been established with representatives from the Municipality, Bruce County, and local IPM organizers. A fundraiser for the event - the Family Farm Tour - is scheduled for Saturday, September 27<sup>th</sup> and will include a self-guided tour of seven Bruce County farms.

### **Brockton Job Fair**

The Municipality's popular bi-annual job fair returns this fall. Hosted in partnership with Bruce County at Walkerton District Community School, the event will run from 1:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 15<sup>th</sup>.

The afternoon portion will be open to students from all area schools, while the evening session will be aimed at adult job seekers. Employers can register for free on the Brockton website.

### **Hometown Christmas Market**

The Hometown Christmas Market will be held Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup>. The Market Garden will again be a focal point, featuring local artisans and crafters set up under Brockton-branded tents. Additional vendors will be placed along Durham Street to help attract visitors to the downtown area and promote holiday specials from local businesses. The evening will include a tree lighting ceremony, live entertainment, food vendors, and more. A refreshed holiday shopping promotion is also in development, with a variety of prizes to be awarded.

### **CIP- Business Improvement Grants**

The Municipality has approved six business improvement grants this year, including one façade improvement, three signage projects, one grant in the vacant/underutilized property category, and one accessibility improvement grant. The total funding awarded is \$14,769, leaving a remaining balance of \$231 for the rest of 2025. Additional funding for this program should be considered for 2026.

### **Business Retention and Expansion Survey**

The CDC is collaborating with Bruce County's economic development team on a Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) survey for Brockton. The previous BR&E study was completed in 2018. This updated survey will provide valuable data to guide municipal and county decision-making and improve support for existing businesses. The program aims to better understand the challenges local businesses face, offer targeted support and training, inspire entrepreneurship, and identify growth opportunities. A summary of findings will be presented at a future Council meeting.

### **Online Business Directory**

A new online Business Directory has been launched on the municipal website. Staff migrated data from an existing database and updated business information along the way. Businesses can now display their logo, contact details, and a brief description, with direct links to their websites, emails, and social media platforms.

### **Branding Guidelines**

New community logos for the settlement areas of Cargill, Chepstow, and Elmwood were unveiled in August. The designer hired for the project is now finalizing branding guidelines for each community. These guidelines will support service groups, non-profits, and businesses when applying for grants or promoting community identity. Completion is expected by the end of the month.

### **Saugeen Connects**

The CDC continues to attend monthly Saugeen Connects meetings, a partnership between the Saugeen Economic Development Corporation and five municipalities. Most recently, the Student Start-Up Program - which included five youth participants from Brockton - wrapped up with a barbecue showcasing student businesses. The group is now focused on planning the fall and winter WOWSA (Women in Wellington and Saugeen Area) events and developing the 2026 AWE (Advancing Women Economically) webinar series. Brockton's WOWSA event will take place in January at Victoria Jubilee Hall, with more details to come.

## 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


---

## Respectfully Submitted by:



Christine Brandt, Community Development Coordinator

### Reviewed By:



Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer