

# Strategic Action Plan 2025 Business Survey

Dear Brockton Business Owner,

Brockton Council has committed to work on an Economic Development Action Plan that will solidify our priority actions for the next five years, to 2025. The plan will ensure that the municipality gets things done in accordance with our business community's highest priorities. To achieve that, we need YOUR input.



## How do I participate?

This survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete. We want you to be as honest and thoughtful as possible in your answers, so please do not put your name on the survey.

Please drop off your completed survey to a drop off location, or complete the survey online at [bit.ly/BrocktonBusinessSurvey](https://bit.ly/BrocktonBusinessSurvey) before **April 14th, 2021**.

We are looking for input from local businesses in various sectors, including retail, hospitality, manufacturing, agriculture, tourism, construction and other industries.

The Strategic Plan facilitators will be the only people to see your full responses to the survey, though specific department related comments may be summarized for the appropriate department heads. Your answers will not be publicized individually.

## Do you want to tell us more?

If you would like to send additional comments or ideas, please email [actionplan2025@brockton.ca](mailto:actionplan2025@brockton.ca).

## A little bit about your business:

Which of the following best describes your business? (circle one):

Retail	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Tourism
Professional Services (including health and wellness)	Trades and Service Industry (including trucking)	Real Estate or Property Development	

Where is your business located? (circle one):

Hamlet or Village	Walkerton
Rural Brockton in Brant or Greenock	

Are your employees mostly full time or seasonal?

Full Time	Seasonal
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Approximately, how many people do you employ?

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How many years have you been in business?

<2 years	3-7 years	8 -14 years	>15 years
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## Lessons from the past

Over the past decade, a number of plans and studies have addressed strengthening the Brockton economy, based on consultation with the business and farm communities. Although Brockton's economic development efforts face more significant financial constraints than many nearby municipalities, a number of initiatives have been launched and a number of programs are in place.

In your opinion, what is one (1) example of a Brockton economic development initiative that has been WELL WORTH the money, time and effort?

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In your opinion, what is one (1) example of an economic development initiative that has NOT proven to be worth the money, time and effort?

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In your opinion, what is one (1) example of an economic development initiative that has often been discussed in Brockton, but – to your disappointment – has never really been tried?

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## Vitality of our hamlets and villages

While the community continues to grow, the municipality wants to help our hamlets and villages share in the vitality and growth prospects.

What priority should the municipality give to encourage and enhance the following aspects of the business environment in our hamlets and villages? (5 = high priority)

	1	2	3	4	5
Offer incentives to improve the appearance of commercial premises and heritage buildings					
Opportunities for new residential lots					
Improve the streetscape and offer incentives for building facades					
Improve signage to local attractions and sites					
Encourage the restoration, re-use and promotion of heritage properties					
Attract new businesses					
Market local produce and crafts					

## Commercial Properties

Are you the owner or tenant of a commercial property in Brockton?

Yes	No
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If yes, have you recently (within the past 5 years) undertaken a significant improvement to that property?

Yes	No
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If you have taken, or are considering, such improvements, please rate the importance of the following objectives (5 = very important).

	1	2	3	4	5
Creating more space for your business					
Creating more space to accommodate an additional business or tenant					
Making the exterior more appealing					
Creating more parking					
Better signage or branding					
Addressing COVID-related requirements or other health and safety reasons					
Accessibility for customers or clientele					
Matching a similar investment on the part of a neighbouring property					
Creating an on-street patio to spur interest or clientele					

How important was, or would be, each of the following factors in your decision to go ahead with the property improvement project? (5 = very important).

	1	2	3	4	5
Profit from having a good sales year					
Availability of a commercial bank / credit union loan					
Availability of a government no-interest, or low-interest loan					
Availability of grant funding (over \$1,500 from the Municipality, Bruce County or other government agency)					
Seeing increase growth and development in the community					

## Housing

Several studies have indicated concern that a lack of decent rental or attainably priced housing is an impediment to the attraction and retention of workers, and thus an impediment to the stability and success of businesses and farms in Brockton.

On a scale of 1-5 (5 = serious concern), how serious do you consider a lack of decent rental or attainably-priced housing in Brockton to be? (circle one):

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How effective on a scale of 1-5 (5 = very effective), do you think the following potential Municipal initiatives would be in producing more attainably priced housing and increasing the number of rental units over the next 5-10 years?

	1	2	3	4	5
Planning policies that would require a certain percentage of all new units in a subdivision to be semi-detached and row houses					
Planning policies that would allow the construction of "tiny homes" (e.g. as small as 500 sq ft)					
Planning policies that would allow the creation of rental units within or connected to an existing home					
Modest incentives for the creation or renovation of apartments above or behind existing commercial premises					
Phasing in any property tax increase that might result from the creation or renovation of apartments above/behind existing commercial					
Leasing or selling vacant municipal property on favourable terms in return for the creation of rental and/or small-footprint homes					
Phasing in the full property tax impact on new purpose-built rental units					

## Tourism

It has been suggested that Brockton has some potential to boost its economy through tourist spending. Does your business generate a significant portion of its sales from tourists?

Yes	No	Unsure
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How much potential do you consider each of the following to have in attracting tourism revenue to Brockton (5 = high potential)

	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation opportunities on the river					
Trails (snowmobiling, cycling, ATV touring)					
Charming, vibrant downtown in Walkerton					
Farm tours / farm gate sales / farmers market					
Heritage building, self-guided tours and exhibits					
Packaged tours or 'getaways'					
Charm of villages / hamlets					
Sports tournaments					
Festivals / special events / concerts					
Training at the Walkerton Clean Water Centre					

## Community Improvement

Brockton is reviewing its 2014 Community Improvement Plan (CIP) and would appreciate your input. A Community Improvement Plan gives the Municipality the legal authority to provide incentives to upgrade private properties to achieve community objectives, including economic development. While Brockton has a CIP program, it only applies to the historic downtown core of Walkerton; we propose to extend it to the whole Municipality.

To date our CIP has only been used to provide small grants to improve the street-facing façades of commercial premises. It also authorizes incentives for energy-efficient construction (such as LEED standards or solar panels), as well as upgrades to existing buildings to meet Building Code and accessibility standards or to create apartments. While the municipality's budget for cash incentives is limited, other types of incentives are – or could be – authorized.

How effective on a scale of 1-5 (5 = very effective) do you think the following municipal incentives could be in spurring the improvement of premises throughout Brockton to meet community objectives?

	1	2	3	4	5
Modest matching cash grants					
Modest matching interest-free loans					
Phasing in any property tax increase that might result from the renovation					
Permitting use of municipal property to expand business operations (sidewalk patios, farm gate parking)					

	1	2	3	4	5
Making commercial buildings more accessible					
Improving the façade of commercial buildings					
Renovations / repurposing of vacant or underused buildings for commercial purposes or to provide housing					
Rental apartments within or connected to existing commercial buildings					
Renovations / repurposing of heritage buildings for tourism or other commercial purposes					
Significant energy-efficiency improvements to existing buildings					
New construction with significant energy efficiency features					

What priority should the municipality give to providing property improvement incentives for the following (5 = very important)

## Agriculture

Agriculture is one of the foundations of Brockton's economy. Many factors that affect our large farms owe far more to national and international market forces than to local policy. Fundamental municipal services such as building and maintaining rural roads to accommodate wide and heavy farm equipment, and advocacy for good Internet and natural gas service in rural areas, are the most critical municipal contributions.

Nonetheless, it has been suggested that the Municipality could also support farm incomes and employment in other ways.

Do you operate a farm or Agri-business?

Yes	No
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If yes, to what extent (5 = a great extent) do you think the following initiatives could bolster income and employment on Brockton's farms and rural properties?

	1	2	3	4	5
More zoning flexibility for on-farm industry, provided that it did not interfere with agricultural operations					
Permitting more 1-5 acre rural lots, provided that they did not interfere with agricultural operations					
Incentives for farm-gate sales of agricultural produce and local crafts					
Promoting farm tours and exhibits for schools and visitors					
Farmers' Markets in Walkerton and/or villages					
Advocating and providing incentives for farm labour training programs in the local area					
Good rural roads and bridges					
Access to high-speed internet					
Access to natural gas service					

## Skilled labour

Does the success of your business depend on attracting and retaining skilled labour?

Yes	No
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If yes, how important do you feel the following factors are in helping to attract and retain skilled labour (5 = very important)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Affordable rental housing available					
Attainably prices homes for sale					
Natural environment, parks and open space					
Workforce diversification and attracting skilled new Canadians to our area					
Attracting college-level skills training programs to our area					
Sport and cultural amenities					
Charming small-town atmosphere					
Child care services					
More specialist high skills major programs in local schools					
Local transportation services or walkable community					

## Our next move

The will is strong in Brockton to support our local businesses and farms, and to attract and foster new businesses, as evidenced through previous studies. Unfortunately, money, time and partners are more limited. The municipality must diligently set priorities, picking those that will combine maximum results with feasibility.

Here are a number of business retention and attraction ideas, some of which have been put forward in the past. How would you rate the priority that Brockton should give to each over the specific 2021-2025 period (5 = high priority)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Pre-zoning so that – with conditions on parking, noise, etc – new small businesses and industries can spring up in more areas without zoning restrictions					
Shared office space and services for virtual workers: a location where small and home based businesses could share a boardroom, photocopier, etc at a minimal cost					
A stock of larger lots (1-5 acres) where home –based industries can spring up along with a residence					
Servicing and marketing new lots in the East Ridge Business Park					
Expanding our community improvement incentives for a broader range of purposes throughout the whole municipality					
Strong marketing campaign to families from urban areas, emphasizing our child care, more affordable prices, community safety and health					
Partnering with neighbouring municipalities for a broader approach to regional economic development and business diversification					

## Last question!

If there was just one (1) thing that the Municipality of Brockton could do this year to make Brockton an even better place, what would that one (1) thing be? Please be as specific as possible.

## Looking for help?

Do you have a specific question regarding your business that you would like to speak with someone at the municipality about? If so, we invite you to email our Community Development Coordinator, Paulette Peirol at [ppeirol@brockton.ca](mailto:ppeirol@brockton.ca) or call 519-881-2223 ext 131.

Paulette is able to help you with expansion opportunities, for instance a new product line or new buildings, relocation, assistance with marketing and promotion, and more.

THANK YOU for taking the time to complete this survey! Your contribution is valued.