



# TOWNSHIP OF BROCK



## Business Retention & Expansion Plan Final Report and Recommendations Summary November 2008

### Executive Summary & Action Plans

The Township of Brock initiated a Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) project to foster the stability and growth of local business through a community based initiative. The project started in May of 2008 and involved 58 businesses in all sectors of the economy. The final report provides an in-depth analysis on the dynamics of the local business climate through the collection and interpretation of the survey results. The report also includes an action plan which encourages the engagement of the community, government and business organizations to work in partnership for future development of the local economy of the Township of Brock. For the full report please visit [www.townshipofbrock.ca](http://www.townshipofbrock.ca)

An overarching theme is that the Township and its partners must invest time and resources to effectively coordinate efforts in the area of economic development, and the Township must assume the lead role showing commitment to the process and to growing the area.

Six action areas were identified by the Task Force:



**Action 1**  
**Clarify Economic Development Structure & Policies**

- **Goals –** Dedicate financial & human resources towards a coordinated approach to local economic development
- **Timing –** Begin immediately with full implementation by the end of 2009
- **Leads –** New Economic Development Committee from the partnership consisting of Township of Brock, Cannington Business Association, Beaverton Chamber of Commerce, Sunderland Business Association
- **Activities –**
  - FORMALIZE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
  - Memorandum of Understanding\*
  - Develop multi-year business plan
  - Identify funding sources
  - Secure 15 month funding – RED /OMAFRA funding
  - Hiring process
  - Presentation of draft 2010 Marketing Action Plan to partners
  - Implementation of Marketing Action Plan
  - 2011 onwards – Annual action plan completed with budget
  - \*Denotes key activities

The first action sets the stage for all of the other actions. It stresses the need for dedicated resources to build a strong team who will lead the Township towards a coordinated approach to local economic health and growth.

**Action 2**  
**Joint Marketing/Promotions for Retail/Service Businesses**

- **Goals –** Develop a Brock Township wide commitment to joint marketing and retail & service businesses & develop a recruitment strategy to attract new commercial activity
- **Timing –** Marketing strategy, 1 year from Q4 of 2009; recruitment strategy, 1 year from Q1 2010 and onward
- **Leads –** Regional Municipality of Durham, Township of Brock and proposed new Economic Development Committee.
- **Activities –**
  - Implement a downtown revitalization strategy including initiatives to enhance shopping experience. Explore OMAFRA funding source
  - Conduct trade area analysis and local business/residents survey
  - Complete joint marketing/ promotional strategy including logo/slogan development by Christmas 2010
  - Ensure area identity is maintained on online services i.e. Google Earth, Wikipedia, GPS systems
  - Complete investment readiness assessment, business mix assessment and gap analysis
  - Individual partners undertake various projects i.e. downtown beautification, capital needs
  - Begin proactive recruitment for new business

Participating in joint marketing efforts will increase the visibility and market potential of the Township of Brock businesses. Local businesses identified that individual efforts do not realize the strength of collaborative efforts. Businesses also felt that there were deficiencies in consumer services within the Township. It is

therefore very important to identify these service gaps and develop a plan to attract new services to meet the future vision of the Township.

**Action 3**  
**Enhance Municipal Relationships to Encourage New/Enhanced Business Development**

- **Goals – Promote and enhance bylaws and policies, conduct annual BR+E type evaluations, streamline the development approval process for commercial/industrial properties**
- **Timing – Begin immediately in 2009 to mid 2010 and then ongoing**
- **Lead – Township of Brock**

- **Activities -**
  - Review of policies that ensure the goals of heritage restoration and economic growth are achieved
  - Investigate new business development programs
  - Conduct annual BR+E projects
  - Maintain relationships
  - Establish user-friendly development process guide through consultation and research
  - Work with businesses in the development process
  - Support systems of compliance with fire/safety/accessibility issues
  - Provide customer service training for Township staff

Businesses felt strongly that it is critical for municipal officials to work with businesses towards planned growth by regular contact and ongoing BR+E type processes to identify issues and streamline the development process.

**Action 4**  
**Improve Small Business Owner's Access to Essential Programs**

- **Goals – Increase communications to businesses and provide an information brokerage service**
- **Timing – Immediately**
- **Leads – Township of Brock and proposed new Economic Development Committee working together with business development support agencies in the region**

- **Activities -**
  - Hire a communications consultant to develop a quarterly newsletters in 2009
  - Ensure partners and staff are current on small business initiatives and referral process
  - Maintain data base of current and relevant information
  - Set up a rotation of local business visitations in order to strengthen relationships and identify sector issues

Communications was also identified as a key area of concern with business owners feeling that more information should be readily available to inform them of new and essential programs that can assist their businesses.

**Action 5**  
**Building a Stable Workforce**

- **Goals – Ongoing identification of labour force challenges and communication to agencies who are responsible for solutions**
- **Timing – Q1 in 2009 and ongoing**
- **Leads – Township of Brock, training institutions, local training board**

- **Activities -**
  - Provide BR+E results to relevant organizations for their planning
  - Conduct ongoing sector specific evaluations to monitor skill and labour shortages
  - Search for ways to deliver small business employee training courses in specific gap areas
  - Investigate methods of on-line training

Many business owners felt a shortage of skilled labour was a very important issue to address. Through training and information this concern can be greatly alleviated – again this is an area for a collaborative approach with all partners.

**Action 6**  
**Enhanced Utilization of Information Technology**

- **Goals – Ongoing utilization of information technology systems and advances**
- **Timing – Q1 in 2009 and ongoing**
- **Lead – Township of Brock**

- **Activities -**
  - Provide findings of BR+E project to relevant organizations for them to build their business case for enhanced services in the area of information technology
  - Conduct more specific telecommunication and information technology needs assessments in the area of business applications

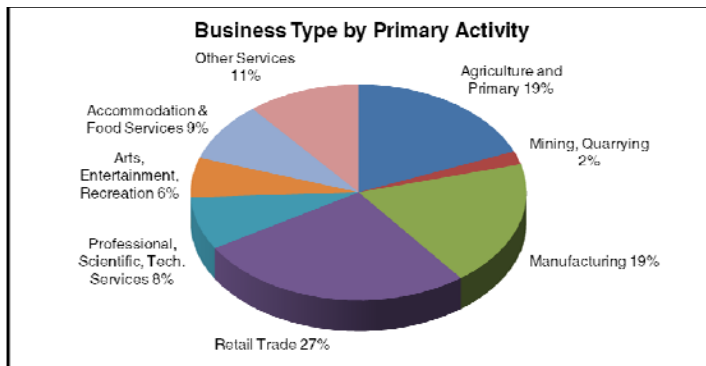
Finally the area of enhanced information technology must be addressed to meet the changing technology and the changing markets and communication needs of the businesses.

In general, Township of Brock businesses have expansion plans, are experiencing an increase in dollar sales and are positive for further growth in the future. They appreciate the quality of life and support of local residents as the area's greatest strengths while expressing concern over some municipal services, labour shortages and the overall cost of doing business.

Overall the business community of the Township of Brock is growing and has a positive attitude despite some obvious areas for improvement. Business owners have a 'can-do' attitude and are very willing and enthused to work with the municipality to develop the area to its full potential.

## Selected Survey Results

Figure 1.

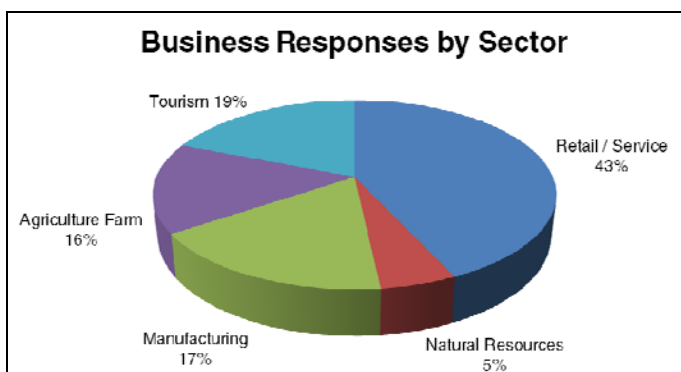


Of the 58 reporting businesses, 60% were corporations, 22% were sole proprietors, 10% were partnerships, 3% were non-profit organizations, 2% were branch plants, and 2% were cooperative.

A significant number of businesses (90%) reported their company headquarters was in the Township of Brock, while 7% were elsewhere in Ontario, 2% were outside of Ontario and 2% were outside of Canada.

The BR + E process included 58 participants from a number of different business types. The majority (43%) identified themselves as part of the retail/business service sector. The second largest business sector identified was from the tourism sector (19%), followed by the manufacturing sector (17%) and lastly, the agriculture/farm industry (16%).

Figure 2.



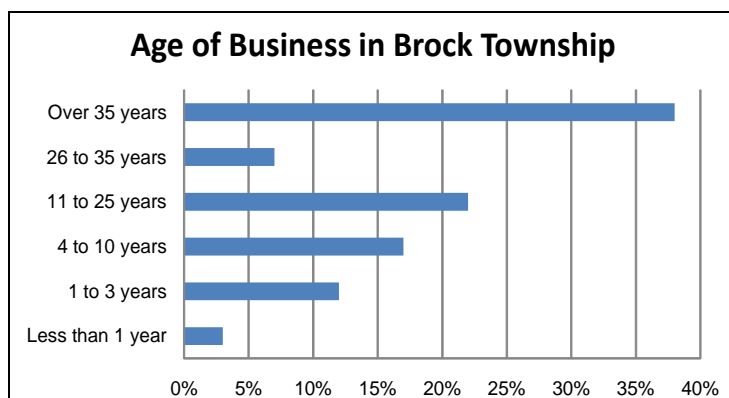
Approximately, 83% of respondents indicated the owner is a resident in the Township. Only 7% of the respondents indicated that their business is part of a franchise. 90% of businesses identified the Brock Township location as the headquarters.

The business respondents for the survey are split quite evenly throughout the three communities of Brock Township.

Figure 3.

Location	Percentage	Number of Businesses
Beaverton	37%	22 businesses
Cannington	28%	16 businesses
Sunderland	35%	20 businesses

Figure 4.



Nearly 38% of the respondents have been in operation over 35 years. Two-thirds (67%) of businesses were established at least 10 years ago, possibly indicating a low level of new business start up initiatives.

Figure 5.

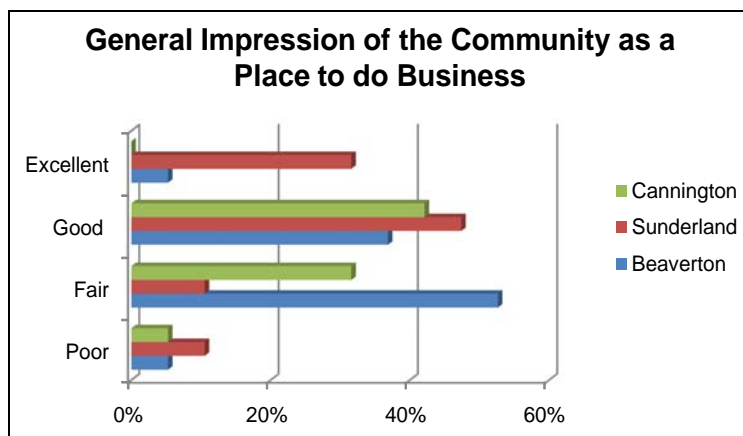


Figure 6.

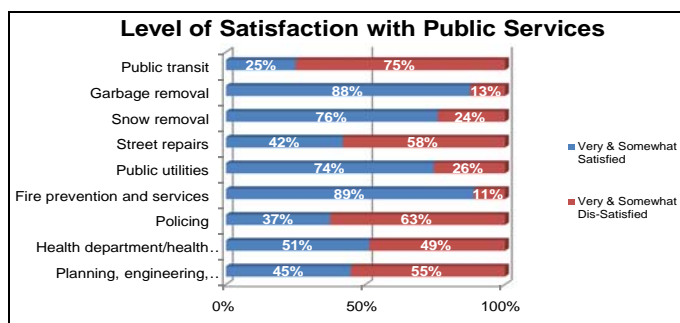


Figure 7. How can local business associations and/or economic development offices assist your business?

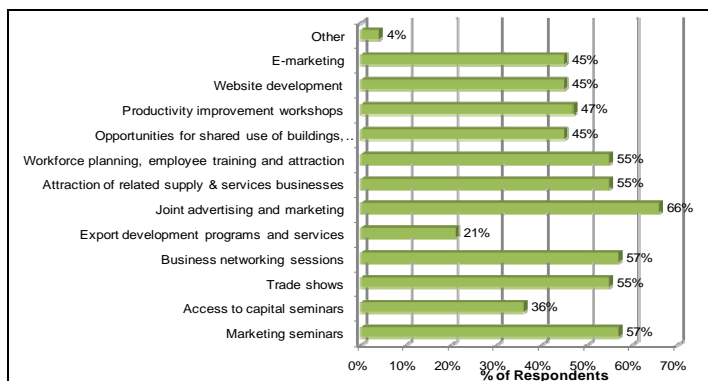
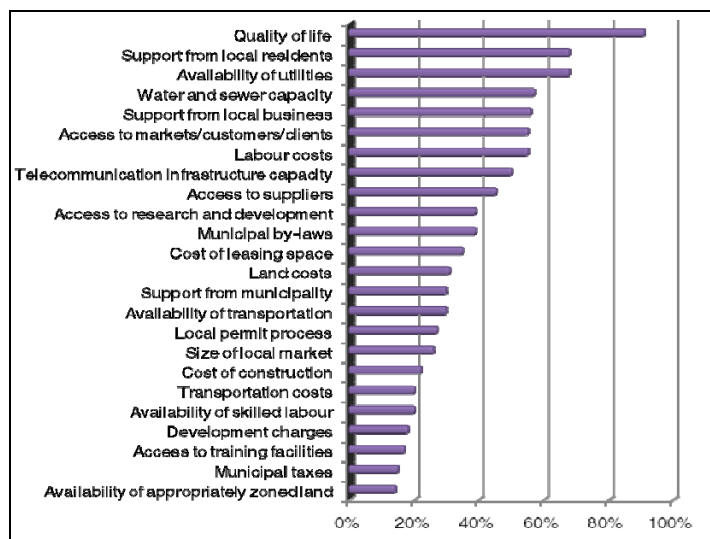


Figure 8. What factors contribute to a positive business climate in your area?

Businesses rated quality of life and support from local residents as the number one factor in a positive business climate in Brock Township, followed by good utilities and water and sewer capacity.



### Conclusion

Brock Township Council and the Economic Development Liaison Committee have taken a very important step for the future of local business development with the initiation of this BR+E process. Successful implementation of the recommended actions will require partnerships within the business community and with the local and regional governments and support agencies.

*"For Brock Township we are on the cusp of good things happening. Lots of potential. Lots of businesses just waiting to prosper."*

Brock BR+E Participant

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