



COUNTY OF PERTH

Office of the CAO

Economic Development and Tourism Division

2021 Business Plan

December 2020

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Business Plan 2021

Economic Development and Tourism

Questions should be forwarded to the Manager of Economic Development and Tourism.

Preamble

The impact of COVID 19 on the Economic Development and Tourism division in 2020 was felt immediately and will persist into 2021. Many businesses that were forced to close or drastically reduce operations as a result will take years to fully recover. The tourism industry was one of the first sectors hit and will be one of the last to fully recover as tourists deal with border closures, quarantine periods and reduced consumer confidence. With so much uncertainty, businesses and tourism operators will be looking to the division to continue to provide resources, direct support where possible and innovative promotional and shop local campaigns that support them through the current pandemic and along the road to recovery.

The actions outlined in the 2021 business plan consist of a continuation of the work that the division has been involved in historically as well as some new initiatives and re-imagined initiatives that are approached with the perspective that COVID will continue to be a factor in service delivery over the year. The business plan outlines the key activities and initiatives that are planned for 2021 but also takes into consideration the fact that the situation around COVID may continue to evolve into much of 2021 and that flexibility will undoubtedly be required as new government support programs and funding opportunities arise.

Overview of the Service

The role of the Economic Development and Tourism Division is to facilitate and implement regional economic development and tourism strategies as a means of promoting the County as an attractive business location and place to live and visit. This is achieved by developing and delivering programs and policies that support, increase and strengthen the business communities of Perth County. We achieve this by engaging and working with our member municipalities, businesses, business organizations, community organizations, provincial and federal government partners, investors and associations. A collaborative approach is taken to ensure timely delivery of projects that will promote Perth County business development and stabilization.

The Economic Development and Tourism Division strives to provide exceptional service by participating as a key partner in regional initiatives, serving as a resource to Perth County's member communities and ensuring responsive action to inquiries and challenges facing business. This is achieved by ensuring a high level of professionalism, a proactive approach to dealing with challenges and ensuring high level of expertise and industry knowledge, as well as fostering partnerships and building relationships within and beyond Perth County. Collectively, we will continue to market our county as a sought-after destination to visitors, locals and investors.

Economic Development and Tourism Division activities include initiatives aimed at retaining existing businesses and creating a business environment that will enable local businesses to expand and prosper. These activities include business recruitment, investment attraction, strategic alliances and partnerships, entrepreneurship, quality of life, workforce development, downtown revitalization, tourism development, input into the updating of the

official municipal plan to increase capacity for growth and improvement municipal infrastructure, etc. These factors combine to position a community for growth and long-term economic sustainability. Support for business has never been more evident than during the COVID 19 pandemic. As businesses struggled with unprecedented shutdowns, partial closures and ever evolving health guidelines, the Economic Development and Tourism Division has been there to help ensure that they are supported, have access to the most up to date information and provide a local boost to morale.

Tourism initiatives will continue to promote Perth County as a destination area, promoting and strengthening the local economy, towns and community events. Through new strategic marketing initiatives, Tourism will continue to elevate the profile of the region's tourism offerings with the goal to increase visitor spending and lengthen visitor overnight stays. Strategic marketing of our region's tourism amenities to visitors and residents helps to create jobs, stimulate supply-chain spending, and enable business owners to prosper.

Corporate Communications are vital to maintaining the integrity of the Perth County brand, while striving for clear, consistent and unified messaging among all Perth County departments and representatives. Our communication strategy ensures that the public perception of Perth County staff, politicians and functions will be positively maintained at all times. A good communications strategy is essential for any municipality to get important information out to its residents. In addition, understanding what communication channels and tools are available to a municipality, and which are used by community members, is essential. Perth County staff maintains several social media platforms, website, public facing emails and media lists to ensure that corporate information are deployed in timely and professional manner to the appropriate audiences.

Key Customers

- County Council/Member Municipalities, staff and elected officials
- County Businesses and Industry/Taxpayers/Entrepreneurs
- Business Investors /Residents and Visitors
- Business Associations, BIAs and Chambers of Commerce
- Municipal Staff (Communications planning, training and coaching)
- Sector Associations (Federation of Agriculture, etc.)
- Other Economic Development based organizations
- Provincial Ministries
- Federal Departments

Core Businesses/Services

- Respond to business start-up and investment inquiries
- Promote the County as a favourable region to invest, live, work in and visit for people of all backgrounds
- Implement and maintain an effective Business Retention and Expansion program
- Implement Workforce Development Projects addressing our labour shortage by recruiting and retaining youth and newcomers
- Provide economic development support to member Municipalities, Businesses, Business Associations, industry and community organizations
- Serve as resource and partner for local BIAs and Chambers

- Lead and facilitate economic development and tourism research projects to support business and community development
- Support the continued success of key economic sectors such as Agriculture and Manufacturing
- Execute regional marketing strategies
- Identify emerging trends, challenges and opportunities and design effective responses
- Establish meaningful contact with other levels of government, business community, education institutions and interest groups to develop and further economic initiatives and goals
- Pursue funding opportunities and manage administration of projects funded from grant programs
- Develop and maintain an accessible online presence including web and social media
- Conduct research to gather information and identify resources to assist businesses and entrepreneurs
- Engage a diverse group of key stakeholders to ensure strategies are designed with community input
- Gather and analyze statistical data about the County needed to monitor socio-economic trends
- Work closely with other departments to consider economic impacts of County policies and programs
- Administration of annual divisional budget and work plans
- Facilitate training for Perth County business community and organizations
- Maintain the integrity of Perth County brand
- Develop and execute effective communications material, programs and policies

Legislated Standards

- Municipal Act, SO 2001
- Ontario Regulations
- County of Perth By-laws & Policies
- Municipal By-laws & Official Plans
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Development Charges Act
- Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, 2000, c.5
- Provincial Policy Statement, 2020
- County of Perth Official Plan
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
- Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, S.O.2020, c.17

Core Programs
Business Retention & Expansion
Marketing & Promotion
Member Municipal Support
Strategic Plan implementation
Business & Investment attraction and support
Program development
Communications

Policy & Administration
Policy Development
Divisional Budget
Grant Administration
Grant Procurement
Procurement of Services
Interdepartmental Communication of Economic interests
Manage Contracted Staff

Economic & Business Analysis
Socio-economic statistical data analysis
Business consultation and advising
Primary research
Performance monitoring of programs
Strategic Planning
Problem solving

Communications & Public Relations
Web and Social Media Presence
Stakeholder & Community Engagement
Media Promotion
Support to BIAs, Chambers and Stakeholders
Promote and maintain the integrity of the Perth County Brand
Corporate Communications, media releases, policy and strategy development

Communications with Member Municipalities
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Key Linkages with Strategic Plan

Economic Development is a key focus of the County 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. As such a number of goals and actions are directly linked to the County Economic Development Division. Primarily Goals 1, 3 and 4 and their subsequent actions are directly tied to the delivery of economic development or have overlap with economic development programs and priorities. In addition, Economic Development interests extend into other aspects of the Corporation.

The Economic Development Program continues to grow as a result of strategic planning, research and action plans that have been developed to address issues facing businesses across Perth County: Labour Shortage issues, Youth Outmigration, Lack of resources for Newcomers, and Workforce Development to name a few. These issues have been identified in previous work on Business Retention and Expansion, the Labour Market Strategy and Perth4Youth Strategic Plan. As the business community has become more aware of the County and the profile of the County increases, in addition to ongoing implementation of core programs, there is a need for additional support.

Goal 1: Growth & Economic Development

Economic Development is a key goal identified in the strategic plan. All of the work that the division does is in support of Goal 1, Growth & Economic Development. This includes working to ensure growth and investments are occurring throughout the County and not just in the larger centres. This goal and the actions to achieve the goal rely on our business retention and expansion, support for entrepreneurship and investment attraction initiatives outlined below. The goal also reinforces that County's growth will be driven by agri-business, value-added agriculture, agritourism and food processing and that Economic Development and Tourism must support this vital sector.

The 2021 business plan proposes a Countywide Community Improvement Plan (CIP) that would directly support this goal. A Countywide CIP would provide an incentive to existing and new businesses to improve, expand or establish a business in appropriately zoned locations across the County. Similar CIP programs in Elgin, Wellington, Grey, Bruce and other neighbouring counties have demonstrated the return on investment in this program and the CIP model can be tailored to meet the unique needs of Perth County. This Countywide CIP aligns with the goals of many of the lower tiers as their strategic plans and workplans indicate a desire to pursue the development of a CIP.

The 2021 business plan also demonstrates the continued commitment to enhancing the County's diversity by attracting and supporting newcomers, retaining youth and attracting families. Attracting residents and workers to Perth County from all backgrounds helps to drive economic growth and make the community more attractive for future residents and business investment. Economic Development and Tourism continues to participate in a variety of committees and associations that work on workforce and resident attraction as well as supporting those who choose Perth County as a place to live, work and play. The implementation of the Workforce Engagement and Attraction Project funded through RED will be a critical piece in delivering on this goal in 2021 after having to postpone implementation in 2020.

Growth & economic development and workforce attraction & retention rely on transportation links to help move people across the County and is essential to the long-term prosperity and sustainability of the County. Continuing

to market the PC Connect transportation service, building strategic partnerships to increase ridership and continuously improving the service will build the transportation links that were identified in the strategic plan.

Goal 3: Customer Service Excellence

Perth County's Economic Development and Tourism division continues to mature. Through continuous outreach to businesses through phone calls, surveys and committee and community engagement, staff are continuously working to understand and deliver on the changing needs of the business community. This customer service excellence has never been more important than during the COVID 19 pandemic and during the recovery. By focusing on meeting the needs of businesses through the stages of recovery in 2021, Perth County can deliver on the goal of service excellence. Our municipal partners are our customers as well and by continuing to engage with them through regular outreach and participation on local committees, staff will continue to work towards the best model for economic development and tourism services at both the overarching and local level.

Serving as the County's lead on communications, the 2021 business plan outlines how the division supports external communications. Communicating the County's progress, sharing timely and relevant information to the community and ensuring that County services are easy to access is critical delivering exceptional customer service. This includes support for Planning, Paramedic Services and other County divisions which are public and business facing. The Economic Development and Tourism business plan also incorporates this goal through the work that the County does to promote itself as a leader in the economic development and tourism space. The redevelopment of the County's economic development and tourism webpages will help ensure that the division's key customers, county businesses and tourists, can quickly and easily find the information that they need.

Goal 4: Community Development & Planning

The goal of community development goes hand in hand with economic development. As the County looks to grow and diversify its economic base, it must also work to ensure that it remains an attractive destination for residents of all ages. Through the division's workforce development activities including youth and newcomer engagement, the goal of building community ensures that Perth County remains vibrant, livable and attractive. Support for business and community organizations is a critical piece of this community development and engagement goal and the 2021 business plan demonstrates how the County will continue to work with its partners to build a community that is welcoming and inclusive.

2020 Achievements

- Further developed tourism presence through strategic marketing in over ten official publications, targeted social media advertising video production, Perth County website and social media, development and management of several strategic national campaigns
- Distributed over 40,000 copies of the 'Discover More' tourism brochures including direct mail out of 35,000 to 56 different villages, towns and cities.
- Provided on-going support to fifteen organizations, including member municipalities, BIAs, Chambers and other stakeholders. Initiated new strategic partnership with Cycle Stratford.
- Three Foreign Direct Investment Missions and ongoing virtual FDI meetings with SOMA
- Secured two provincial grants through the Rural Economic Development Program.
- Secured one federal grant through the CanExport Communities Initiative to develop four sector profiles and enhance FDI expertise through online training
- Hosted three information & advocacy sessions related to SWODF, NAFTA and Agriculture with Minister Hardeman
- Design and installation of gateway signage at key entrance points to the County
- Attended a number of virtual job fairs throughout the region, to promote employment opportunities
- Collaborated on key strategic communications campaigns including the Official Plan process and paramedic services
- Provided support and sponsorship for a number of community initiatives including business awards, anti-racism and inclusion training, Stratford Cycle annual Perth County tour, Stratford-Perth Museum Inn Keeper's Dinner, virtual commencements for local schools, and more.
- Secured a data agreement with the Huron Perth Association of Realtors to bring real-time commercial property listings into the County website.
- Continue to participate on a number of key regional and community committees including Newcomer Huron Perth Settlement Committee
- Manager of Economic Development and Tourism chaired the Ontario Food Cluster during 2020 on behalf of the SOMA partnership
- Manager (on Mat Leave) served as member of WOWC Economic Development Committee
- Launched the Community Transportation service, PC Connect with two fixed route, accessible buses
- Supported the launch of Perth South's Farm Gate signage program
- Launched an online training portal for Welcoming Communities Training including the 'Essentials of Intercultural Competency-Cultural Connections', 'Intercultural Communications-Cultural Bias' and Intercultural Competency in Action-Diversity and Sensitivity'
- Staff presented at a number of regional and provincial conferences to showcase the leading initiatives that were undertaken. This included a presentation at AMO on Youth Retention, a presentation on COVID Pivots at OMAFRA's Teeny Tiny Summit and presentations on service delivery in transportation and tourism to the Municipal Association
- Developed seven thematic 'Plan Your Trip' online tourism itineraries
- Hosted four groups of tourism travel writers to Perth County
- Produced three Economic Development and Tourism newsletters
- Promoted and maintained Opportunity Lives Here
- Attended two engagement days at Queens Park advocating for rural issues (workforce, lack of housing, no support for newcomers, etc.) and tourism (virtual)

COVID 19 Pivot Initiatives

- Created a business resource page of available COVID-19 government and community supports
- Launched the Perth County Podcast and released 17 episodes
- Launched two COVID-19 Business Impact Surveys that were used as a best practice by other County's across Ontario
- 19 Days and 19 Ways Campaign digital campaign launched to support businesses during early shutdown period
- Launched a 'Meet the Owner' campaign to showcase how local businesses are impacted and encourage support during the shutdown
- Hosted four webinars that focused on teaching businesses how to take their business online through social media and Google
- Partnered with Mentorworks to deliver free training to businesses during the shutdown period
- Launched the Perth County BINGO challenge to promote shopping local and community spirit during early months of business closures.
- 'Proudly Perth County' and 'Discover Perth County from Home' video campaigns to show the resilience of business community and provide escape from isolation
- Launched the 'How to From Home' series with seven episodes
- Launched a 'Support Local' video campaign featuring local business owners encouraging resident to shop local and stay positive
- Developed Perth County and member municipality Zoom videoconferencing backgrounds
- Delivered 17,000 Farm Gate maps during Local Food Week
- Perth County Care Kits were distributed to 90+ businesses including PPE, sanitizer, gloves and resources for curbside pickup and contactless transactions
- Delivered a full Tourism Week slate of marketing encouraging safe local tourism options
- Local Love campaign saw Perth County branded merchandise delivered to support delivery and curbside pick-up
- Chalk it Up Campaign which supported sharing messages about re-opening, positivity and support for front line workers during the summer
- Launched a video in conjunction with Local Food Week celebrating local producers and farmers
- Business Check-In Calls were launched to engage directly with businesses by telephone to assess the ongoing impact of COVID and provide individual support
- Created a social media guidebook for distribution to local businesses
- Marketed the Business Concierge/Help Line as one stop shop for business support information and referrals
- Created three unique campaigns for Perth County trails, golf courses and campgrounds to showcase outdoor recreation. Campaigns included POV video profiles, website pages and social media profiles
- Collaborated with the University of Guelph on promotion and distribution of survey researching impact of COVID 19 on social, mental and economic well-being of Perth County residents
- Participated in virtual roundtables including a Newcomer Youth Zoom presentation, Stratford and District Chamber webinar and Merged Media podcast
- Developed targeted campaign to support Shakespeare businesses enduring the double impact of construction and COVID including a gift card promotional campaign

- Delivered a three-month digital marketing campaign with funding from RTO4's Regional Tourism Marketing Fund
- Hosted a virtual roundtable with our partners at Immploy helping newcomers in the London area discover careers in Manufacturing and Food Processing in our region
- Successfully applied for a grant to launch Perth County's own Digital Service Squad. Assisted businesses through the hiring of contract staff person and marketing of the one on one service to help improve their digital presence and get them online
- Received a \$153k grant through the Regional Relief Recovery Fund through FedDev Ontario and delivered a suite of tourism support programs during Q3 and Q4.
 - Direct business support and marketing through the RRRF grant included the Tourism Recovery Care Kits, Travelling Wheel Deal promotion, recruiting travel writers, video and photo development, digital and traditional billboard advertisements, advertorials and shop local initiatives including Take the Pledge, and expansion of the Discover More Flavour Farm Gate Map program including an updated website, comprehensive signage program, new hard-copy map, and more.
- Perth County was successful in obtaining the WTTC Safe Travel Stamp
- Participated in the Culinary Tourism Alliance's Great Taste of Ontario program with development of a number of Perth County itineraries for the digital passport program

Major Initiatives for 2021:

Projects	Description
<p>Advertising Perth County as the place to visit (when it is safe to do so), do business, grow and prosper</p> <p><i>We're in the business of people attraction</i></p>	<p>Develop creative and book ads</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. STA Culinary Guide 2. Enroute Summer Fun Ad 3. Stratford Festival Playbill 4. Summer Music Festival Ad 5. Culinary Guide 6. Epoch Time Travel Ontario Guide 7. Grey Bruce Escape Back Page
<p>Tourism Brochure</p>	<p>Design and distribution of 70,000 Copies regionally at points of interest (border crossings, tourist attractions, and airports). Direct mail out of brochure to targeted markets within day trip distance</p>
<p>Municipal/Business Association Support, Stakeholder/Industry organization engagement</p>	<p>Support to member municipalities, BIAs and Business Associations and Chambers and engaging with stakeholder/industry organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Perth Ec Dev / West Perth Ec Dev • Mitchell BIA / Milverton BA / Millbank BA / Listowel BIA • Tourism Industry Association of Ontario • Economic Development Council of Ontario • Travel Media Association of Canada • Stratford and Area Human Resources Association • Listowel Win This Space Committee • North Perth Chamber of Commerce • Stratford Chamber of Commerce • Huron Perth Association of Realtors • Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance Membership • Perth East Twinning Initiative Group • Partners In Resources for Employment (PREP) • Cycle Stratford
<p>Southern Ontario Marketing Alliance</p>	<p>The Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA) is a partnership of Southwestern Ontario communities, grown out of natural economic ties. This region, known as Canada's Industrial Heartland, encompasses the municipalities of Ingersoll, Perth, Stratford, St. Thomas, Tillsonburg, and Woodstock. It stretches across Elgin, Oxford and Perth Counties.</p> <p>Continue with virtual investment attraction meetings through Q1 & Q2</p> <p>Potential Shows for 2020 (virtual or in-person, COVID dependent)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Selectors Guild

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Processing (Expo West, Anuga, etc) • Manufacturing (SEMA) • ThinkGlobal Show
Experiential Tourism Training Program RED Funding Received	<p>Through a successful application to the Rural Economic Development Program, Perth County staff will work with regional tourism-oriented businesses to create memorable rural tourism activities through providing experience development training to enhance product and service planning and visitor experience implementation. This destination development will support the tourism industry by engaging existing and new operators and sector champions to enable sustainable experience models for the region and encourage collaborations between tourism businesses to draw visitors. With a target of increasing tourism during traditional “shoulder seasons”, the project will have a special focus on culinary tourism in this agricultural community. Experiences will be added to the annual update of the Perth County Farm Gate map and tourism brochures.</p> <p>This project address opportunities in experience development and collaboration within the sector with a view to address gaps in products and services geared toward experiential activities within our existing and new tourism sector opportunities.</p>
Business Retention and Expansion	<p>Organize Business Tours that were postponed in 2020 due to COVID. Businesses who had been previously engaged for 2020 tours would be the target group along with those with greatly altered operations as a result of COVID.</p>
Community Improvement Plan (CIP) (Apply for RED Funding)	<p>Develop a Countywide Community Improvement Plan that enables economic development, investment and COVID recovery across the County. The CIP would will have particular focus on target sectors including value-added agriculture, tourism, housing and economic diversification. The CIP would address an increasingly competitive landscape for investment with the prevalence of CIPs in surrounding counties.</p>
Tourism Writer Recruitment	<p>Recruit travel writers to Perth County to highlight tourism attractions from various points of view and on different online platforms. Each writer attracted brings a unique audience and showcases a variety of experiences available throughout Perth County.</p>
Tourism Photography Development	<p>Continued to build our photo library to capture new business, attractions or events. Continue to add to the four-season photo bank that is available for deployment in various design and creatives.</p>
Workforce Engagement & Attraction Project (WEAP) RED funding	<p>The goal of this Workforce Engagement & Attraction Project (WEAP) is to take a creative approach to tackling the persistent workforce challenges experienced by employers in rural Perth County. Recruiting workers from larger centres including newcomers and helping them feel welcome in Perth County is essential to the long-term growth of the community. This project consists of four components including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Job Fair Workforce Recruitment – This item will continue but

	<p>attendance at job fairs will take place virtually rather than in person to avoid any potential risks associated with travel and large group settings during the pandemic. Many job fair organizers have taken their events online and this would allow us to adapt to the changing formats. The goal will remain to continue marketing the job opportunities available in Perth County as well as promote the benefits of building a life in our rural region.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Employer Lunches – We will explore a hybrid solution (dependant on COVID restrictions) to allow us to host virtual webinars, produce videos and offer informational marketing packages to employees. The goal will continue to be to communicate to employees who currently commute to the region to consider building their life in Perth County. While the events were intended to be on site at employers’ locations, using a hybrid format including video will allow us to deliver the information in a safe manner that more employers are open to accommodating. The target will remain those who are currently commuting or being bussed in from the GTA or surrounding jurisdictions to fill jobs in our region. 3) Housing Forum – We will explore a virtual option for this event allowing the solutions-based conversation regarding rural housing to occur in a virtual format. The goal will remain to host a solution focused housing forum online to share presentations and panels of best practices for rural housing solutions. In particular highlighting the need for attainable housing to match the workforce needs. 4) Youth Events – while an in-person youth networking event is difficult given COVID restrictions, we will explore different ways to connect with a youth/young professional audience providing a chance to further build that network in Perth County. A marketing campaign will be designed and executed to recruit youth and those who have left Perth County and rural Ontario to pursue post-secondary opportunities to return. The youth component will feature the development of photo and video content to support a social media campaign which will be targeted into these urban markets where post-secondary institutions exist (GTA, Kitchener-Waterloo, London) to provide youth with information about the opportunities to build a life in rural Ontario. The campaign will feature professionals who have built a career in Perth County, young people who have returned from urban areas to pursue local opportunities and link youth with current employment opportunities by connecting them with employers in the region. We will also explore options for virtual meetups or information packages. The goal will be to build off the success of the in-person networking opportunity hosted in the summer of 2018. It is still important for youth and young professionals to find ways to connect during the pandemic.
<p>Local Business Information and</p>	<p>Organize virtual and in-person sessions for local businesses to share information about government support, funding and COVID recovery</p>

training Sessions	measures
Workforce Development Projects	Ongoing projects with stakeholders and partners. Joint projects with education and training partners to promote career opportunities and support resident retention and attraction.
Support of Diversity, Inclusion and Welcoming Newcomers	Engage in activities that support the community values from the County's Strategic Plan, particularly the value that Perth County is diverse, caring and safe for all residents. Continue with hosting and supporting training for businesses and residents around inclusivity and anti-racism. Continue to build engagement with the communities through engagement with the Newcomer Huron Perth Settlement Committee, Immploy and Huron Perth Multicultural Association
Welcoming Communities Online Training	Continue to offer the online modules of the three Welcoming Communities Training developed in partnership with Fanshawe's Corporate Training Solutions and Intercultural Competency Advantage Program. Training modules include: 1. Essentials of Intercultural Competency 2. Effective Intercultural Communications and 3. Power Dynamics and Systemic Discrimination. Investigate additional modules to increase the available training options
Multicultural Celebration Month	Work with local community groups including the YMCA, Huron Perth Multicultural Association, Immploy and other stakeholders to identify if a Perth County multicultural celebration month may be proclaimed for June to correspond with Canadian Multiculturalism Day on June 27. Identify and promote actions and activities throughout the month that focus on origin stories, diversity and anti-racism
Perth County Charter	Develop a Charter for Perth County which outlines the County's vision for equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism. Consult with the community including those with lived experience and expertise in addressing systemic racism.
Newcomer Huron Perth Settlement Committee	Perth County Economic Development continues to participate in this committee. Engage with the committee to identify enhanced opportunities for collaboration, new initiatives and deployment of the welcome brochure
Welcoming Community Nights	Perth County will have a presence at these events in the upcoming year. Engaging with those new to the area and informing them about the opportunities in Perth County.
Government Advocacy for Rural Perth County	Participate in Queen's Engagement days with EDCO, TIAO, and Perth County Federation of Agriculture/Randy Pettapiece Rural Farm Day. Take every opportunity to engage with local politicians, MPP, MP's to discuss rural issues such as transportation, housing, workforce development, etc.
Immploy	Perth County has been working with Immploy and the Economic Development and Communications Officer currently sits on the Leadership Council.

Opportunity Lives Here Website	Work with Stratford and St. Marys to investigate an updated solution to the aging website that reduces manual website administration and is more dynamic
Regional Ride Share	Continue to support the regional rideshare program. Investigate complementary service delivery with PC Connect
Tourism /Economic Development Familiarization Tour	This annual familiarization tour will be developed to accommodate both an in-person or virtual format. The focus will be on new businesses as well as those that have developed new sources of revenue or adaptations in response to COVID-19. This will also be an opportunity to showcase newly developed experiences following implementation of the Perth County Certified Experiences Program.
Tradeshows/Events /Job Fairs/College & University Fairs	Participate in consumer tradeshows promoting Perth County as a destination, and job fairs across the GTA and Southern Ontario to promote available jobs. Potential shows include: London Works Job Fairs Epoch Times – Travel and Investment Fair North Perth Home Show London Works Fall Job Fair NCP Job Fair
Digital Main Street – Digital Service Squad and continued digital support	Continue delivering one-on-one training to assist local businesses to improve their digital skills and increase their online presence until the contract ends in March. Investigate and apply for potential funding to continue the program beyond the end of current deadline.
Presentations/Outreach	Develop and deliver presentations on Perth County’s innovative approaches to youth attraction, COVID response and areas of thought and practice leadership. Engage with local and regional community organizations to raise the profile of the County and continue building awareness of tourism, employment and investment opportunities. Potential presentation includes: Lower Tier forums Rural Ontario Institute Huron Perth Association of Realtors AGM Technical Training Group AGM OMAFRA Communities of Practice and regional summits AMO and EDCO/EDAC Conference
Business Directory Update	Continue to update with new businesses, update old and closed businesses and ensure CASSL consent.
Economic Development Website Update	Update, streamline and re-organize resourced on the Economic Development portion of Perth County’s website

Farm Gate Program Expansion	Complete the expansion of the Discover More Flavour signage program from Perth South to the remaining three lower tiers. Distribute the approx. 80 signage and promotional packages to farm gates along with enhanced digital waiver.
Farm Gate Map Redesign and Digital Redevelopment	Conduct a complete redesign of the Farm Gate Map to include new businesses, enhanced design elements and launch an enhanced digital version based on Google Maps platform to bring it in line with industry standard and mobile friendly.
Perth County Podcast	Develop content plan for the Perth County podcast as a quarterly, bi-monthly opportunity to share critical business and community information to stakeholders
PC Connect Community Outreach	Continue to build the ridership of the service through sustained marketing efforts. Establish strategic partnerships with community groups and social service providers to provide a cost-effective option for their members and clients and generate ongoing and predictable ridership.
PC Connect Employer Outreach	Meet with large employers across the County to market the service to their employee base and potential employees. Develop partnerships that generate recurring revenue and ridership that both assists with longer term sustainability and addresses acute labour force challenges
PC Connect Booking and Service Improvements – APP	Work with Voyago to implement a mobile app to allow for advanced payment, booking and real-time tracking of travel. Work in collaboration with the SCTA to enable seamless transit across all community transportation services for enhanced rider experience.
PC Connect Funding Alternatives	Investigate alternative sources of funding for the longer-term sustainability of the PC Connect service including Gas Tax, FCM grants and any infrastructure and community funding released in response to COVID 19 recovery. Investigate advertising and sponsorships with private businesses to diversify revenue streams beyond ridership.
TIAO Hyperlocal Initiatives	Utilize the remaining TIAO RRRF grant to delivery hyperlocal promotions during Q1. Focus of the initiatives will be shop local and safe tourism activities that encourage local spending.
Tourism Webpage	Develop a business case and funding applications to develop a standalone Perth County Tourism webpage to house the Discover More Farm Gate program, existing tourism pages and mobile friendly and itinerary development.
Co-Op Student	Work with Secondary schools to resume taking on a co-op student as was done annually prior to COVID
EDCO Awards Applications	Apply for the industry award to recognize the work done by the County and continue to generate brand awareness across the province.
TIAO Award Application	Apply for the industry award to recognize the work done by the County

	and continue to generate brand awareness across the province.
Cycle Stratford Partnership	Continue to build this partnership with this group of riders from throughout southwestern Ontario that bring groups of cycling enthusiasts and riders into the County. Develop opportunities for riders to discover and patronize County businesses.
COVID Recovery	As the COVID 19 pandemic winds down as restrictions are lifted, sectors across Perth County will require varying levels of support to assist with re-opening plans and return to pre-pandemic operations. The Economic Development and Tourism Division will need to remain responsive to emerging needs related to the recovery. The division will also need to be prepared to take advantage of funding programs that arise to aid in recovery.
Business Check-In Calls	Continue the program of direct telephone calls to businesses to understand critical supports as a result of the pandemic as well as keys to local recovery. Develop a key short-term action plan based on the feedback received to inform COVID recovery and complement survey work.
Impacts of COVID Business Survey 3.0	This survey will be seeking input from local businesses to continue monitoring the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The input will help track the impact locally and advocate on behalf of our business community to the Provincial and Federal Government.
Great Taste of Ontario Road Trip	Continue to develop itineraries for the Culinary Tourism Alliances GTOO featuring Perth County businesses and attractions to be featured on the online digital passport and Globe and Mail special travel editions
Stratford Festival Gazebo Video/Stratford Perth Museum Partnership Project	Deploy a video that showcases the County as a desirable tourism destination just minutes outside of Stratford, to be played at the outdoor media gazebo by the Stratford Festival entrance. This video has the potential to be seen by 500,000+ attendees of the festival. The video further promotes our Discover More brand with a special focus on discovering more shopping, flavour, and outdoor adventures.
Ontario Trillium Foundation: Youth Friendly Community Designation	Support lower tiers with preparation of these applications that assist with Perth County's youth attraction efforts.
Four County Labour Market Planning Board	Contribute to the data sharing and needs related to workforce and participate on projects with benefit to recruitment and retention by local employers
Technical Training Group	Manager of Economic Development and Tourism is a Director on the Technical Training Group, Board of Directors.
Connect2Skills	Economic Development/Communications Officer sits on the Connect2Skills Program Committee to help get Perth County residents who are currently

	unemployed or underemployed in the manufacturing sector.
Workforce Development Taskforce	The Economic Development/Communications Officer is the chair of the Perth County Workforce Development Taskforce
Ontario Food Cluster	Support the transition of the incoming Co-Chairs of the OFC and continue to contribute to the association through marketing support and attendance at tradeshow on behalf of the SOMA partnership
Government Relations and Advocacy	<p><i>Queen's Park Engagement Days</i></p> <p>Attend Queen's Park engagement days held by the Economic Developers Council of Ontario and Tourism Industry Association of Ontario to discuss and advocate for workforce development and infrastructure issues across the region.</p> <p><i>Local MP and MPP Engagement</i></p> <p>Attend MPP Randy Pettapiece's Rural Farm Tour (if applicable), to speak with agriculture industry representatives and advocate for the needs of agriculture-based economies.</p> <p><i>Regional Advocacy</i></p> <p>Continue to participate in the Western Ontario Warden's Caucus and contribute to advocacy efforts on rural broadband, economic development, transportation and regional labour market initiatives</p>
University of Waterloo Economic Development Certificate Program Student Projects	Provided case studies for students of the Economic Development Certificate Program. These case studies both serve as educational tools for students and opportunities/business cases for new County programs and projects
Workforce Development Projects (Schoolboard projects)	<p>Ongoing projects with stakeholders and partners</p> <p>Joint projects with education and training partners</p> <p>Promote career opportunities, support youth retention by supporting the mobile learning lab with TTG/AMDSB/Huron County/InvestStratford</p>
Corporate Communications	<p>On a continued basis, staff completed the following activities and provided on-going support related to communication for all departments and politicians:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Warden's/Council Remarks for events</i> • <i>PerthCounty.ca Website</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Approved Event Submissions ○ Content Approvals/Editing ○ Posted Notices of Office Closures ○ Posted other main-page alert banner (public engagement sessions, incidents, etc.) • <i>Staff support</i> – assist and advise staff on communications related components to a variety of projects and events (AMO Conference Delegations, New Official Plan, New Strategic Plan, Budget, public

	<p>engagement)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Post relevant content to social media (LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter) about Corporate initiatives and activities ○ Create Facebook event pages to manage and encourage public engagement ○ Monitor contributor posts for consistency and quality of content ○ Monitor comments, tags, etc. ○ Monitor and share relevant content from member municipalities and key partners ○ Post office closure information ○ Develop content to educate and elevate the visibility of the Corporation and its functions in the community ○ Manage lists of posting authorities ○ LinkedIn – manage corporate page, poste jobs and relevant corporate activities • Media/News Releases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draft press releases and public statements as needed ○ Review and edit press releases generated by other divisions ○ Respond and direct media inquiries accordingly ○ Update and maintain local media contact list ○ Review and proofread wording for printed material and press releases to ensure a cohesive tone is maintained • Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Act as a resource for staff for internal and external communications ○ Provide training and coaching on communications best practices and procedures (particularly regarding social media) ○ Communications support and resource for member municipalities ○ Collaborate and work jointly to support communications efforts of member municipalities as well as partner initiatives with Stratford and St. Marys ○ Coach businesses in social media assistance ○ Train County Staff on Website, social media, Canva, etc. ○ Organize training from external sources for county Staff and Council • Policy Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to work to formalize program documents and policies to mature the Corporate Communications program
<p>Promotional Community Support Sponsorships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stratford Chamber Golf Tournament • RE-Max Golf Tournament • Innkeepers Dinner • Japan Society of Canada Golf Tournament • Association of Roads Supervisors

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listowel Kinsmen Casino Night • Economic Developer Council of Ontario Conference sponsorship basket • Youth Networking Events • North Perth Chamber Golf Tournament • Facebook Contests (various) • Community Living – Stratford and Area Golf Tournament • Perth East Youth Action Council Events • Community Living Stratford and Area Golf Tournament • Aspire to Inspire Women – A Celebration of Women • West Perth Economic Development Committee Breakfast • Stratford Tourism Alliance – Flavours of Perth County basket • Farm and Food Care Auction Basket
Win This Space – Listowel	Continues to assist and sponsor the Listowel BIA’s Win This Space program and participate as part of the Committee.
Economic Development Newsletters	Continue to produce quarterly newsletters, including updating format to suit both email and magazine style. Distribution online to 1,600+ email list and at key local destinations such as municipal buildings, libraries, PC Connect, etc.

Major Initiatives for 2022:

2022 Goals / Objectives	Comments
Continue Advertising Perth County as the place to do business, grow, and prosper	Advertising, direct marketing, web and social media, strategically marketing Perth County as a great place to visit, grow and prosper. Extend the target market for tourism attraction beyond neighbouring regions and into the GTHA as tourism assets and marketing collaterals continue to be developed
Municipal/Business Association Support	Continue to provide support to Member Municipalities, BIAs and Business Associations and Chambers with a focus on a return to normal operations and increased events and programming post-pandemic
Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance	Continue to mature the County’s FDI programming and expertise as municipal lands come online and servicing developments occur across the County
Professional Development	Implement enhanced Program Evaluation processes and metrics based on having in-house expertise.
Best Practice and Training Brunch Series (BPTBS) project	The Best Practice and Training Brunch Series (BPTBS) project aims to educate and inform local businesses and assist with the attraction and retention of labour to Perth County.
CanExport Community Investments 2022 Application (Formerly ICCI)	Implement a client relationship management (CRM) program and software that will enable more targeted follow up and nurturing of investment leads and inquiries.

Tourism Writer Recruitment	Focus resources on promoting media writers to our area, encouraging them to write stories on their experiences here and focus on post COVID recovery
Business Retention and Expansion	Continue with annual Business Tours (12 per year)
OLH Website Redevelopment	Redevelop the OLH website onto a new, more user friendly and sustainable platform for the longer-term viability of the partnership
Local Champion Familiarization Tour	Organize a familiarization tour for front line staff, municipal staff and stakeholders.
Stratford Festival Gazebo Video/Stratford Perth Museum Partnership Project	Created a two-minute video highlighting Perth County as a desirable tourism destination just minutes outside of Stratford, to be played at the outdoor media gazebo by the Stratford Festival entrance. This video has the potential to be seen by 500,000+ attendees of the festival. The video further promotes our Discover More brand with a special focus on discovering more shopping, flavour, and outdoor adventures.
Tradeshows/Job Fairs/Bus Tours	Continue to participate in consumer tradeshows promoting Perth County as a destination, job fairs across the GTA and Southern Ontario to promote available jobs
Corporate Communications	Continue to support on-going activities related to communication for all departments and politicians. Continue to formalize the communications function and role across the municipality.
Perth County Brand Champions	Maintain integrity of the Perth County brand and provide support and approvals to all divisions/departments and staff to ensure colours/logo placement/use and verbiage represents the Perth County brand values.
Develop an Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Plan	Develop a strategic plan with focused and targeted priorities for the division which complements the corporate strategic plan and provides more focused direction on best practices and programs

Financial Allocation/Deployment Plan

Service	FTE Requirements by Year			
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Economic Development and Tourism Division				
Total Program FTE Requirements	3.04	3.7	3.7	3.7

Significant Variances

- Nothing significant identified. 2021 Includes an additional summer student compared to 2020 when only one student was taken on due to COVID.
- Transportation Coordinator position (1FTE) operates within the division but is funded through the CT Grant

Training and Development

- Program evaluation
- Annual association conferences
 - Annual EDCO Conference for Manager of Economic Development and Tourism
 - Annual EDCO Conference for Economic Development/Communications Officer
 - Annual Destination Ontario Conference for Tourism Officer
 - Sector specific workshops or training provided by Ministry (OMAFRA, Ministry of Economic Development)
 - Various training workshops pertinent to position (AMCTO, AMO)