

PROSPER BELLEVILLE

MANUFACTURING

2024

BR+E

REPORT

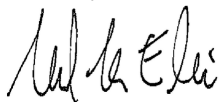


ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

The City of Belleville acknowledges that we operate on traditional territory. We recognize and honour the historic relationship of the Indigenous peoples to this land, and acknowledge our shared obligation to respect, honour, and sustain these lands and the natural resources contained within. We recognize all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit who call Belleville their home, and support the need for cultivating a strong relationship with them. We look forward to fostering a path towards reconciliation and show respect for the Indigenous peoples who first lived and currently live on the land where we now all reside together.

As manufacturing partners in our region, you continue to be a driving force behind our community's growth and success. Your involvement in this project has helped the City shape an action plan to support future economic growth. With a growing and thriving manufacturing industry, this project is essential to the success and development of our community. I'd like to thank everyone involved in Prosper Belleville, including the volunteer task force and economic development staff.



Mayor Neil Ellis, City of Belleville

TASK FORCE MESSAGE

When I consider the opportunity presented with the Business Retention and Expansion project, I think of the quote "we are stronger when we listen and smarter when we share". It seems to me the very essence of the process. Through active listening the City of Belleville acknowledges the need for constant improvement and, through their participation, our industry leaders share their company's strengths and challenges to help make our community a better place to live and do business.

Through over 50 hours of in-person interviews with business leaders, we moved beyond simple "yes" and "no" answers to explore key areas of concern and cooperation for our community's future. As you review the report, we encourage you to share your thoughts. We will listen, and together, we can grow smarter through sharing.



Rick Jeffries, Prosper Belleville BR+E Task Force Chair

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2023/2024 OVERVIEW

In August 2023, the City of Belleville engaged in a large-scale Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) project called Prosper Belleville, focused on the community's manufacturing sector. This project was supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and funded through the Rural Economic Development (RED) Fund.

A BR+E project is considered a best practice economic development tool that is used worldwide by municipalities to understand businesses in their community. The result is a final report and action plan presented at a public meeting that forms a key part of a municipalities' ongoing economic development strategy. Through face-to-face interviews municipalities receive timely and important information to help identify and support the current and future needs of its business community.

The City of Belleville has conducted many BR+E projects over the past 20+ years. The results of these BR+E projects play an important role in creating positive changes in the community.

Initiatives coming out of previous BR+E projects include the implementation of a successful and ongoing family physician recruitment program, transportation improvements, infrastructure improvements (water mains, increased water pressure, fibre optic service extensions) and many others.

Prosper Belleville was guided by a six person volunteer task force led by a volunteer chair and the City's Business Growth and Retention Specialist, Economic Development division. The project represents over 120 hours of volunteer involvement.



PURPOSE AND PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The last BR+E project focused on the City’s manufacturing sector was completed in 2012. The purpose of the Prosper Belleville Manufacturing BR+E 2023/2024 was to “**engage our manufacturers to understand the challenges, gaps and opportunities they face in operating and growing their business within our City**”.

Through a community-led process of interviewing, data was collected and analyzed to:

- Identify **immediate and long-term opportunities** to support manufacturing business, growth and retention.
- Foster **future investment and attraction** activities.
- Inform **future strategic planning**, including the planning for **the expansion of the North East Industrial Park**.

Surveys were provided by OMAFRA and revisions were made to reflect the community’s profile and needs. The task force committee recruited and trained 28 community volunteers to interview 38 out of 44 industry partners identified to participate in the Prosper Belleville BR+E. This represents an 86% participation rate overall and a very engaged audience. Interviews took place over a four-month period from October 2023 to January 2024. A copy of the Prosper Belleville BR+E survey can be found at <https://shorturl.at/Otsui>.

The data received from the face-to-face interviews was compiled and analyzed using an OMAFRA supported analytics tool and the data was then used to establish a number of action items in response to industry needs.

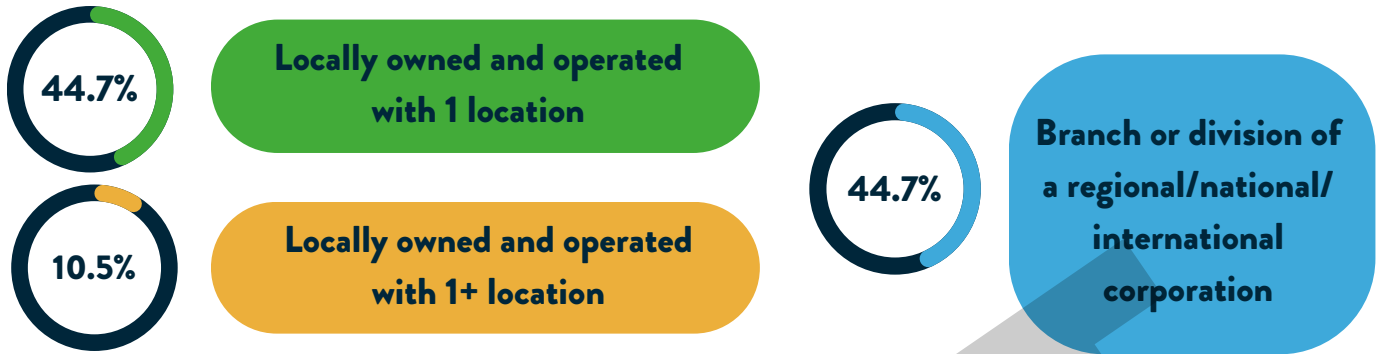
The following are high-level observations taken from the analyzed survey results. A full report on the data received can be found at <https://shorturl.at/WsP1a>.



MAIN RESULTS OVERVIEW

BUSINESS BACKGROUND

Our City is comprised of a variety of manufacturing types.



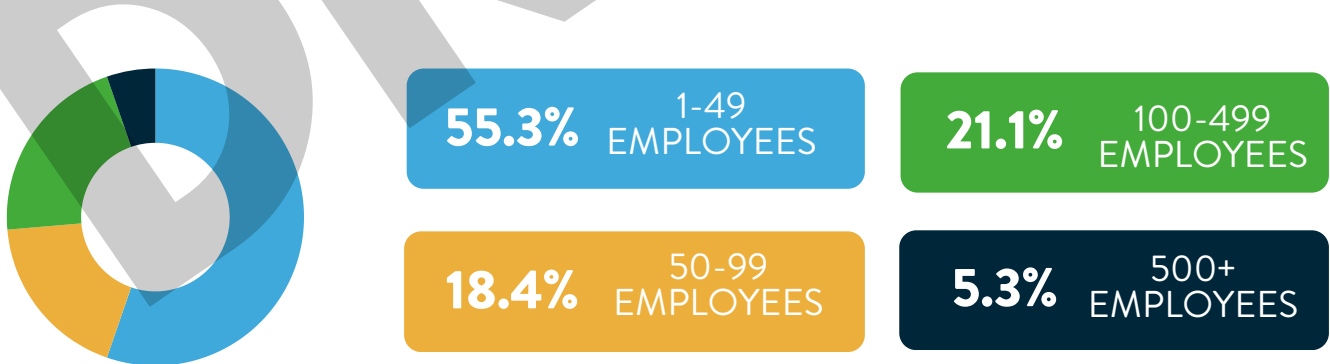
Years in Business

Half of our manufacturers surveyed have been operating in our community for over 35 years.



Number of Employees

The majority of manufacturers surveyed employ under 50 employees.



EXPORTING

66.7% of our manufacturers export products worldwide. The top 3 destinations being:

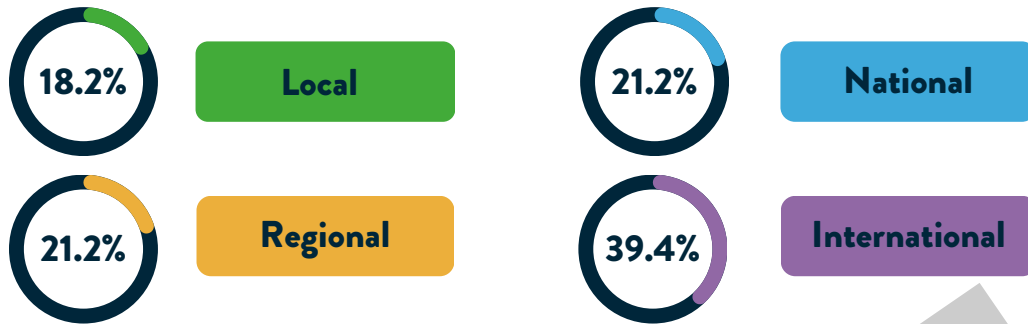
UNITED STATES

EUROPE

ASIA

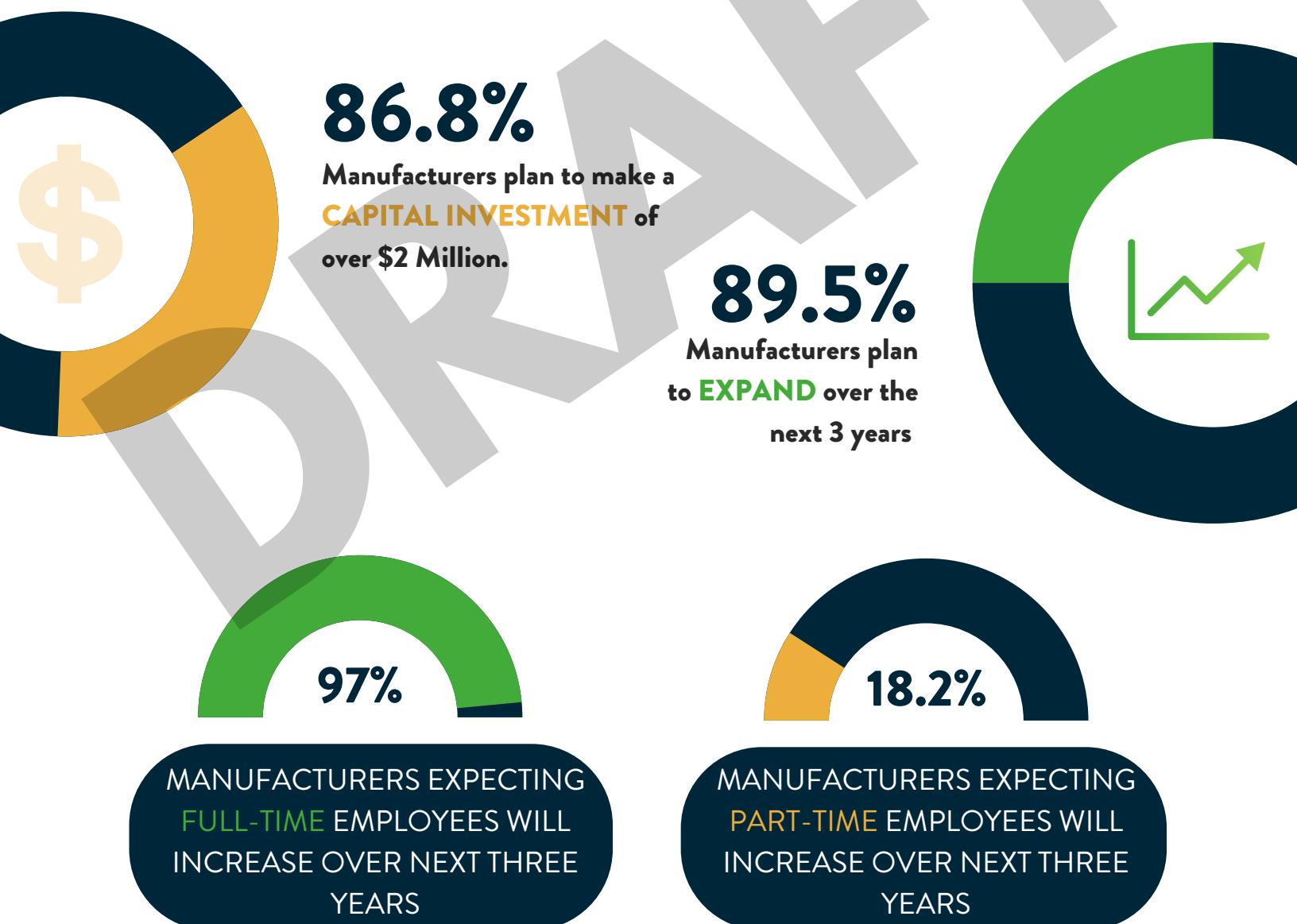
Primary Markets

More than 80% of our manufacturers have primary markets outside of our city.



STRENGTHS

Post-COVID, many manufacturers are expanding or looking to expand. The outlook for many industry partners remains positive, with continued growth on the horizon.



Overall, the majority of manufacturers surveyed indicated that the outlook for their industry was growing with **78.9%** of respondents stating that their projected sales were expected to increase.

Business Supports

There were many benefits identified by respondents to doing business within the City of Belleville. The top three advantages identified were:

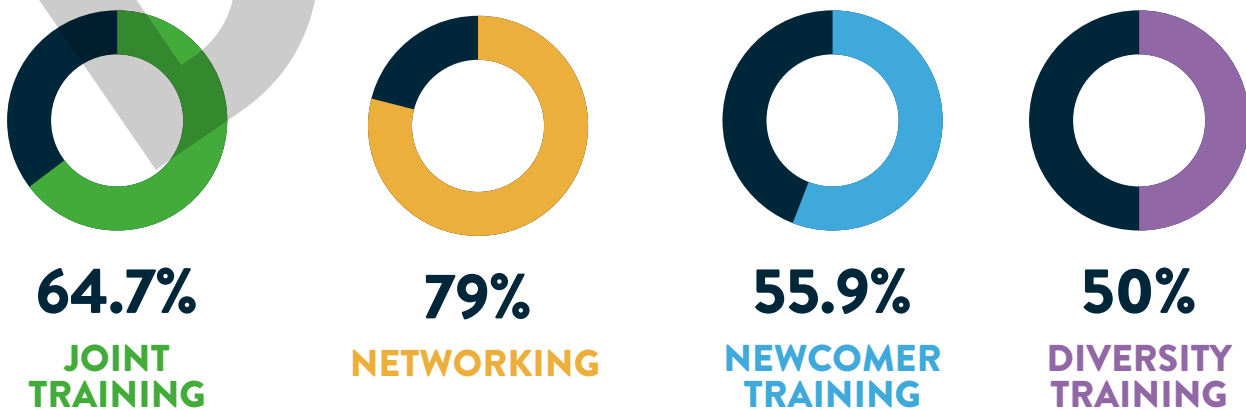


As demographics change in the City of Belleville, responding manufacturers have made adjustments to the way they do business. These included:



When it comes to business supports, **77.8%** of manufacturers participated in a variety of training programs including Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training, co-ops, internships, short-term corporate training and apprenticeship programs.

Many manufacturers were interested in programs and events that included the following:



CHALLENGES

Despite the many positive things happening for our manufacturing sector, some manufacturers are experiencing challenges in doing business within the community.

61.8% of manufacturers surveyed indicated that they are experiencing challenges with their expansion. **75%** of manufacturers stated that our community can assist.

The top three ways that manufacturers indicated the community could assist were:

**Attracting/Retaining
Labour**

**Assistance with City
Services and Processes**

**Providing
Information/Services**

While many of our industry partners cited benefits to doing business within the City of Belleville, **27%** of responding manufacturers had a more negative attitude than previously about doing business here. The top reasons identified for their change in attitude were challenges related to **city services/processes** and **attracting/retaining labour**.

When asked what the top three disadvantages of doing business in Belleville were, the following factors were cited:

**Labour/Workforce
Issues**

**Lack of Affordable
Housing**

**City Services
and Processes**

When asked what the most significant changes industry would like to see happen over the next five years, respondents requested **improvements with city services/processes, attracting/retaining labour and housing/homelessness.**



BR+E THEMES

On May 23, 2024, 18 industry partners and 30 community stakeholders - including City staff from Engineering and Developmental Services, Transportation and Operational Services and the CAO's office - met as part of a Data Retreat to formulate strategic action items that would shape the direction of the City's initiatives to support manufacturing in Belleville. The participants were welcomed by Mayor Neil Ellis and the retreat was facilitated by Karen Fischer, Economic and Business Advisor for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), Kent Fitzhugh, Senior Business Advisor for the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT) and Victoria Watts, Business Growth and Retention Specialist for the City of Belleville Economic Development division.

Based on the data received through the Prosper Belleville BR+E interview process, four themes emerged as being highly relevant and important to establishing a plan for future action. The following themes served as the framework for discussion at the Data Retreat:

NEWCOMER SUPPORTS

Lack of understanding of Canadian work culture; newcomer supports in the community; navigating immigration processes and the permitting system.

LABOUR ATTRACTION & RETENTION

A need for skilled labour; retaining and attracting youth to the City and the manufacturing sector; affordable housing for employees.

BUSINESS SUPPORTS

A need for Equity, Diversity & Inclusion training in the workplace; high school training, co-ops and apprenticeships; continued networking; funding and marketing support.

CITY SERVICES & PROCESSES

Understanding City services; infrastructure and services in the industrial park; a need for medical personnel and security as it relates to homelessness and crime.

ACTION ITEMS

The Data Retreat resulted in the identification of 26 strategic action items. What follows is a list of the actions developed by participants to support the City’s manufacturing sector.

When reviewing these action items, it is important to note that over 12 months have passed since the Prosper Belleville BR+E project began. These action items, therefore, represent a “snapshot” in time and should be viewed within the context of evolving priorities, timelines and funding opportunities inherent in a municipal setting and in collaborating with community stakeholders.

Some actions identified are already in progress or have concluded since the Data Retreat, while others may need to be reprioritized, delayed or changed in response to external factors such as economic climate, unemployment rates or recent federal or provincial policy announcements. Despite this reality, the City of Belleville’s Economic Development division remains committed to working with stakeholders to implement the Prosper Belleville BR+E action items and will continuously monitor the progress of these actions through the Economic Development Committee. Additionally, a yearly report to Council outlining what has been accomplished, what remains to be done and any challenges to implementation will also be completed.

GLOSSARY

ED = Economic Development
EDS = Engineering and Development Services
COMMS = Communications
TOS = Transportation and Operation Services
QLIP = Quinte Local Immigration Partnership
QEDC = Quinte Economic Development Commission
QMA = Quinte Manufacturing Association
CFWD = Centre for Workforce Development
ROQRMB = Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board
BPS = Belleville Police Services

Short-term: 1 year (to March 2026)
Medium-term: 2-3 years (to March 2028)
Long-term: 4+ years (with annual reports)

Q1: January - March
Q2: April - June
Q3: July - September
Q4: October - December

NEWCOMER SUPPORTS

GOAL: Support the integration and retention of new immigrant workers in the community.

OBJECTIVE: Support immigrant workers to achieve permanent resident status and remain in our city.	ACTION	PARTNER	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
	<p>Establish a working group with key stakeholders to undertake the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Understand Federal and Provincial Immigration programs and processes that lead to Permanent Residency (PR); (b) Understand challenges rural communities face in retaining newcomer talent; (c) Understand the challenges industry faces in supporting newcomer workers to obtain PR status and challenges newcomers face in obtaining PR status; (d) Assist employers in navigating the various immigration programs that lead to PR status; (e) Assess the need for enhanced services to assist employers in navigating the various immigration programs that lead to PR status. <p>Note: The action also falls under Labour Attraction/Retention and Business Supports.</p>	<p>QLIP with ED, QEDC, QMA and CFWD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working group is established. • Terms of Reference is established. • Strategic plan is established with timeline, budget, next steps. • Meeting schedule is established. • Public Consultations (industry and newcomers) are conducted. • Contact with relevant Government Agency is made. 	<p>Medium-term Q2 2026</p>

ACTION	PARTNER	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
<p>Offer a pilot training program for newcomers on Canadian culture and workplace expectations.</p> <p>Note: The action also falls under Labour Attraction/Retention and Business Supports.</p>	<p>QLIP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working group is established. • Terms of Reference is established. • Strategic plan is established with timeline, budget, next steps. • Research is conducted on available programming. • Project plan is established with timelines, budget, next steps. • Workshop/certificate course is offered. • Funding is pursued. 	<p>Medium-term Q2-Q4 2027</p>
<p>Identify a communications tool that clearly outlines resources and services available to both newcomers and employers.</p> <p>Note: The action also falls under Labour Attraction/Retention and Business Supports.</p>	<p>QLIP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact is made with nearby communities with similar objectives and tools. • Clear and accessible tool is researched, identified and established. • Tool is promoted to industry. • Funding is pursued. 	<p>Short-term Q3 2025</p>

ACTION	PARTNER	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
<p>Develop and promote a strategy around the Workplace Inclusion Charter (WIC) that will support industry, business and organizations to integrate EDI practices in the workplace.</p> <p>Note: The action also falls under Labour Attraction/Retention and Business Supports.</p>	<p>ED/QLIP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working group established with key stakeholders involved. Terms of Reference established. Strategic plan established with timeline, budget, next steps. Funding is pursued. Increase in WIC signatories is seen. 	<p>Short-term Q2 2025</p>
<p>Investigate the need for an Industry Working Group to navigate workplace issues related to inclusion and diversity in the workplace.</p> <p>Note: The action also falls under Labour Attraction/Retention, Business Supports.</p>	<p>ED/QLIP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canvass industry employees about participation and interest in a working group. Next steps established based on results. 	<p>Short-term Q2 2025 (aligned with WIC)</p>

LABOUR ATTRACTION & RETENTION

GOAL: Enhance labour attraction and retention within the City.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase youth engagement with the manufacturing sector.			
ACTION	PARTNER	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
<p>Promote and support educational related activities around manufacturing including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Skills Ontario Truck; b) Doors Open Manufacturing Day; c) Increasing skills training within the education system. <p>Note: This action also falls under Objective 2 & 3.</p>	ED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate stakeholder partners identified. • Plan is established with timeline, budget, next steps. 	<p>Short-term Q4 2025</p>
<p>Partner with the City's Youth engagement committee to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Establish a high school award for manufacturing and skilled trades; b) Survey high school students and determine what would keep them in the community beyond high school. 	ED with City's Youth Engagement Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with the City's Youth Engagement Committee is established. • Financial support for a scholarship from the City is established. • Survey is developed and distributed. • Feedback is obtained. 	<p>Short-term Q2 2025</p> <p>Medium-term Q2 2026</p>

ACTION	PARTNER	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
<p>Organize a public interest campaign that promotes the manufacturing sector as a viable career.</p>	<p>ED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding source is pursued. • Relevant stakeholder partners identified. • Strategic plan established with timeline, budget, next steps. 	<p>Medium-term Q4 2026</p>
<p>OBJECTIVE 2: Promote skilled trades development and labour retention in the City.</p>			
<p>See Objective 1</p>			
<p>OBJECTIVE 3: Promote manufacturing as a viable career choice within our community.</p>			
<p>See Objective 1</p>			
<p>Promote the City at community events outside of Belleville with the purpose of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Attracting skilled workers to manufacturing jobs; b) Promoting Belleville as a place to live, work and play. <p>Note: Active</p>	<p>ED with BOQRMB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belleville is represented at 1 out of City career fair. 	<p>Short-term Q1 2025</p>

OBJECTIVE 4: Enhance the image of the City of Belleville as a welcoming place for doing business.

ACTION	PARTNER	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
<p>Develop a positive image campaign to promote the City as a place to live, work and play.</p>	<p>ED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is secured. • Strategic plan is established with timeline, budget, next steps. 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Continue with the City’s Physician Recruitment Program. Note: Active</p>	<p>ED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources dedicated for City annual review of incentives. • Number of physicians recruited continues to be highlighted. 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Encourage community clean-up initiatives to address garbage, boarded-up buildings etc.</p>	<p>ED, by-law, Green Task Force</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite an industry rep to meet Green Task Force to talk issues/create solutions. 	<p>Short-term Q4 2025</p>
<p>Continue the plan for Community Integrated Model of Care for the homeless population. Note: This action also falls under Business Supports. Active</p>	<p>ED, City, Council, The Bridge consortium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for The Bridge Hub executed in phases. • Quarterly updates shared with City and stakeholders. • Feedback from business and industry is measured through an annual survey. 	<p>Ongoing</p>

BUSINESS SUPPORTS

GOAL: Support ongoing industry growth and expansion.

OBJECTIVE 1: Support industry in navigating workplace challenges.			
ACTION	PARTNER	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
Housing: Explore the need and feasibility for establishing innovative, diverse housing solutions to address lack of housing for industry employees.	ED/EDS with housing stakeholders TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings with EDS are held annually to review plans, progress and communications. Research and explore innovative housing solutions. 	Medium to Long-term Q1 2026-Q4 2028 (measured annually)
See Actions under Newcomer Supports and Labour Attraction & Retention			
OBJECTIVE 2: Understand the safety concerns faced by Industry partners.			
Quantify industry safety and security concerns related to the homeless population.	ED with BPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular reporting structure established with BPS reporting on safety and security issues in relation to the industry. 	Short-term Q4 2025

CITY PROCESSES & SERVICES

GOAL: Increase transparency and understanding of the City of Belleville’s Development Process.

OBJECTIVE 1: Explain & communicate the City’s development process to developers and businesses.			
ACTION	PARTNER	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
<p>Develop and conduct education workshops to educate businesses and developers about the development process.</p> <p>Note: Active, RED Funded Program.</p>	ED/EDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet planning staff to establish plan, timeline, budget, roles, next steps. Work with planning staff to execute a workshop as a pilot project. (Summer planning for fall, Winter planning for spring). Report on KPI’s and determine if workshops should continue. 	Medium-term Q1 2026
<p>Produce explainer videos covering key aspects of the City’s development process.</p> <p>Note: Active, RED Funded Program</p>	ED/EDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan is established with timeline, budget, next steps. Explainer videos developed for the development process. (engineering, planning, approvals, policy planning). 	Short-term Q3 2025

ACTION	PARTNER	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
Clearly identify and communicate the department within the City to support/navigate businesses and developers through the development process.	ED/EDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting between departments established. Roles and responsibilities clarified. Communications plan and tool established to clearly navigate clients to appropriate staff and services. 	Short-term Q4 2025
GOAL: Explain the role of the City's Economic Development department and services offered.			
OBJECTIVE 1: Strengthen the City's relationship with industry and offer continuous support and resources.			
ACTION	PARTNER	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
Implement a CRM within the Economic Development Department	ED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete CRM implementation. Train staff on CRM use. 100% use of the CRM by ED staff. 	Short-term Q1 2025
Establish a communications plan for ED staff that will include branding and tools for communicating with industry.	ED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete strategy by Oct 2024 to inform 2025 budget. Implement and use communication tools and track industry interactions. 	Short-term Q1 2025

<p>Create an easy to navigate Economic Development webpage that details services offered by the department and connects industry, supports and public to resources and relevant information.</p>	<p>ED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webpage developed. • Referrals to website tracked. • Website traffic tracked. 	<p>Short-term Q2 2025</p>
<p>Update the City's Community Profile Plan</p>	<p>ED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Profile Plan is updated into a fully digitalized toolkit. 	<p>Short-term Q2 2025</p>
<p>GOAL: Develop and maintain City infrastructure to support business growth.</p>			
<p>OBJECTIVE 1: Communicate City's long-term plan for the development of key industrial infrastructure and supports.</p>			
<p>ACTION</p>			
<p>Communicate timelines for establishing Elexicon Services when Industry expands. a) Research whether a process map currently exists and can be used by the City as a communication tool for industry; b) Create a process map tool for industry.</p> <p>Note: Active</p>	<p>ED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research is completed. • Process map created. • Process map shared with stakeholders. • Referrals are tracked. 	<p>Short-term Q2 2025</p>
<p>PARTNER</p>		<p>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</p>	<p>TIMEFRAME</p>

ACTION	PARTNER	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME
<p>Receive feedback from industry about the impact of recent changes to transit route.</p>	<p>TOS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey is developed. • Survey is distributed to Industry. • Feedback is received and reviewed. • Appropriate changes are made. 	<p>Short-term Q2 2025 (completed annually)</p>
<p>Review City by-laws to see if updates can be made to support the provision of childcare services in the Industrial Park.</p> <p>Note: Active</p>	<p>ED with EDS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting is established. • By-laws are reviewed and recommendations are made. • Appropriate changes are made and approved by Council. 	<p>Short-term Q1 2025</p>
<p>Investigate opportunities for establishing childcare for employers in the North East Industrial Park.</p>	<p>QEDC/ QMA with ED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from the survey in 2023 will be quantified for next steps. • Plan for next steps established. 	<p>Short-term Q2 2025</p>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Prosper Belleville BR+E project is the culmination of over 12 months of dedicated work and participation by a committed group of community volunteers, industry partners and city stakeholders.

The City's Economic Development division would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the following Prosper Belleville BR+E Task Force members for their ongoing commitment and invaluable guidance throughout this process:

Rick Jeffrey, Task Force Chair
Chris King, Quinte Economic Development Commission
Brian Pennell, Loyalist College
Jill Raycroft, Belleville Chamber of Commerce
Jack Alexander, Community Volunteer
Chris Ripley, Community Volunteer
Barb Tait, Community Volunteer

We have sincere gratitude for the multitude of community volunteer interviewers, community partners and the industry partners who participated in this project.

Thank you to the participating City of Belleville staff from the Mayor's Office, Engineering and Development Services, Transportation and Operational Services and Economic Development who shared their expertise, insights and administrative support throughout this project.

Special thanks to Karen Fischer, Business Advisor Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and to Kent Fitzhugh, Senior Business Advisor, Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT) for their expertise and support. The Prosper Belleville BR+E was generously funded by the Rural Economic Development (RED) Fund, OMAFRA.

PROSPER BELLEVILLE MANUFACTURING

Questions about the Prosper Belleville BR+E project?

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