Committee of the Whole Report

Report Number:	**ED2024-010**
Meeting Date:	March 5, 2024
Title:	**2023 Kawartha Lakes Business Count**
Description:	An overview of the 2023 Kawartha Lakes Business Count survey and Insight Report
Author and Title:	Rebecca Mustard, Manager Economic Development

Recommendations:

That Report ED2024-10, **2023 Kawartha Lakes Business Count**, be received; and

That this recommendation be brought forward to Council for consideration at the next Regular Council Meeting.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

The Kawartha Lakes Business Count project was launched in 2021. The project was initiated to provide the municipality with in-depth information to understand and strengthen the local economy, and inform policies and programs. The objectives of the project are to:

- Provide a snapshot of the Kawartha Lakes economy
- Provide enhanced regional employment and workforce data
- Assist in making informed decisions related to job and economic growth
- Enhance communication channels between businesses and the municipality

This report provides an overview of 2023 Kawartha Lakes Business Count project and Insight Report.

Rationale:

The 2023 Kawartha Lakes Business Count project surveyed the same geography as the 2021 and 2022 surveys, and expanded to include additional commercial areas. In 2023, the following areas were surveyed:

- Downtowns of Bobcaygeon, Coboconk andNorland, Fenelon Falls, Omemee, and Lindsay
- Industrial areas were surveyed in Fenelon Falls, Lindsay and Pontypool
- Commercial areas on Kent Street West and Lindsay Street South in Lindsay (new for 2023)
- The survey was also available online for all businesses to participate

Survey Methodology

The 2023 Kawartha Lakes Business Count Project was conducted in Summer 2023, between June and August. The survey was delivered (1) in person, (2) by phone, and (3) online from the municipal website at www.kawarthalakes.ca/businesscount.

Surveys were coordinated and conducted by the Kawartha Lakes Economic Development Summer Student team. Local Chamber of Commerce Summer Students, supported through the 2023 Kawartha Lakes Summer Tourism Experience Funding, conducted the survey in their respective downtown areas. The Lindsay Downtown BIA

(LDBIA) also support data collection in downtown Lindsay. Once data was collected in the field, it was reviewed in the office for completeness and quality.

The Business Count survey is designed with questions that can be compared across communities in Ontario conducting business count projects, as well as custom questions that are unique to Kawartha Lakes. Analysis can be conducted in multiple ways to gain insights into the local economy such as by community, employment, and business activity. As the Business Count project continues to be delivered annually, insights may be compared year over year to track changes in employment and business activity across the municipality.

Individual business data collected through the project remains confidential and is only shared with the public in aggregated form through the Insight Report (see the report in Appendix A). The raw data is shared between the City of Kawartha Lakes and the respective Chamber of Commerce/LDBIA in the area the business is located in. These partnerships were clearly communicated to respondents prior to participating in the survey.

Partner Organizations

The project is led by the City of Kawartha Lakes in partnership with the Bobcaygeon & Area Chamber of Commerce, Coboconk, Norland & Area Chamber of Commerce, Fenelon Falls & District Chamber of Commerce, Lindsay & District Chamber of Commerce, and the Lindsay Downtown BIA (LDBIA). The Chambers and LDBIA were ambassadors for the project and helped promote, conduct the survey, and each also received data specific to their community.

2023 Business Count Insights Report

The 2023 Kawartha Lakes Business Count Insight Report provides an overview of aggregate survey findings. It provides a valuable preliminary insight to the mechanics of downtowns, commercial and industrial areas in Kawartha Lakes. The findings are specific to the businesses surveyed and are not representative of businesses across Kawartha Lakes. The survey, and questions within it, are not compulsory and therefore is not a complete data set of every business and property in the focus areas. The number of responses to each questions is noted by the "n=" beside each data point. As such, the analysis must be read in the context in which it is presented. As the Kawartha

Lakes Business Count continues as an annual project, the data integrity will continue to improve and wider geographies across the municipality will be included in the analysis.

The Insight Report is organized into four sections. The first section is aggregate for all of Kawartha Lakes and includes data from every business and employment property in the municipality that completed the survey. For the past two years, the Insight Report has included subset analysis for three communities; Bobcaygeon, Fenelon Falls, and Lindsay. This year, for the first time, two new areas are also included in the report; Coboconk and Norland, and Downtown Lindsay.

The community specific report sections include all survey responses for that area. For example, the section on Lindsay includes all surveys from businesses and employment properties located in the downtown and east and west industrial areas. In each section of the Insights Report, a map is included to visually show the geography included in that specific section.

Communities without a specific section, for example Omemee and Pontypool, did not have enough surveys completed to separate out the data set for analysis and maintain confidentiality. In these instances, the data is included in the Kawartha Lakes section, along with every survey that was completed across the municipality.

The 2023 Kawartha Lakes Business Count Insight Report is attached as Appendix A, and highlights aggregated data from the 672 businesses and employment properties that participated in the survey.

Highlights reported by these businesses surveyed:

- A total of 6,479 jobs
- 3,061,606 sq. ft. floor space occupied
- 64% are independent businesses
- 43% of businesses are members of a Chamber of Commerce or the Lindsay DBIA
- 64% of businesses plan to hire in the future
- 12% of businesses plan to expand their floor space

The 2023 Kawartha Lakes Business Count is the third year of data collection in this comprehensive pan-industry data collection project. The highlights show business insights from the survey pilot areas. These insights will continue to become more

representative of the Kawartha Lakes business community in subsequent years as the geographic scope of the survey expands.

Other Alternatives Considered:

The 2023 Kawartha Lakes Business Count is for information only. No other alternatives have been considered.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities

The 2023 Kawartha Lakes Business Count supports the 2020-2023 Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan priority area:

1. A Vibrant and Growing Economy

This project aligns with the Strategic Plan Mission: to deliver the highest standard of municipal services while creating a healthy and sustainable future for all Kawartha Lakes' residents and businesses, the Guiding Principle: Service Excellence to "seek to understand and meet the needs of those we serve".

Through the Kawartha Lakes Business Count project, reliable, accurate and in-depth data of the local businesses community provides an in-depth analysis of the Kawartha Lakes economy for informed decision-making.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

The 2023 Kawartha Lakes Business Count is included in the 2023 Operating Budget. The Kawartha Lakes Summer Tourism Experience Fund supported local Chambers of Commerce student team to participate in the data collection portion of the project.

Consultations:

Bobcaygeon & Area Chamber of Commerce
Coboconk, Norland & Area Chamber of Commerce
Fenelon Falls & District Chamber of Commerce
Lindsay & District Chamber of Commerce
Lindsay Downtown BIA

Attachments:

Appendix A – 2023 Kawartha Lakes Business Count Insight Report

PDF

Adobe Acrobat
Document

Department Head email: lbarrie@kawarthalakes.ca

Department Head: Leah Barrie, Director, Development Services