

# 2017 Economic Development Strategy

Activities to date, October 2024

This is a high-level summary of activities to date.

## Goal 1: Adopt a City-wide Process

Strategic Action	Activity	Status	Progress highlights
Build awareness of the City of Kawartha Lakes as a destination	Develop an economic development marketing campaign to align existing programs and messaging (2017- 2018)	Complete	The Welcome Home business and workforce attraction campaign was developed and launched in 2021 and continues to be delivered with a stronger focus on business attraction and site selection for large business investment projects.  A highlight: The Welcome Home business and workforce attraction campaign won provincial an economic development award.
Build awareness of the City of Kawartha Lakes as a destination	Create and implement a digital marketing campaign to promote existing programs and new opportunities (2018)	Complete	Digital marketing campaigns were refined and include the Welcome Home business and workforce attraction campaign newsletter, Economic Development Newsletter, and dedicated social media accounts for Economic Development and Tourism.
Build awareness of the City of Kawartha Lakes as a destination	In collaboration with the Branding and Advertising Strategy, develop a targeted Media Relations Plan to reach desired outside audiences (potential tourists, residents, investors) through earned media with a focus on regional/ national/ international media (2018)	Complete	Kawartha Lakes was showcased in premium Canadian publications like The Globe and Mail, Yahoo, People, and Forbes, along with innovatingcanada.ca, Kawartha Lakes is being promoted as a prime business and tourism destination—a community-based lifestyle hub and a compelling investment opportunity.
Build awareness of the City of Kawartha Lakes as a destination	Develop and implement a City of Kawartha Lakes brand across all departments to align and integrate messaging across the municipality (2020)	Complete	The refreshed Kawartha Lakes Jump In brand was launched with branding guidelines by the Communications, Advertising and Marketing Division and integrated across the municipality, including Economic Development programming.
Leverage city wide resources with local implementation (e.g. village place making and community economic development)	Implement the Downtown Revitalization Action Plans in Coboconk-Norland, Omemee, Lindsay, Fenelon Falls (ongoing)	Complete	Kawartha Lakes Downtown Revitalization projects in Lindsay, Fenelon Falls, Omemee, and Coboconk Norland completed five (5) year action plans.
Leverage city wide resources with local implementation (e.g. village place making and community economic development)	Develop, fund and implement a Downtown Community Improvement Plan (2018)	Complete	The Strategic Community Improvement Plan was adopted by Council in 2018 and launched as the 'Million Dollar Makeover' (MDM). This program is funded annually and is igniting private sector investments across the municipality.

Leverage city wide resources with local implementation (e.g. village place making and community economic development)	Develop a Kawartha Lakes Downtown Revitalization program based on the Ontario Downtown Revitalization Program (2019)	Complete	A Kawartha Lakes Downtown Revitalization Framework was developed to support downtowns in their vibrancy. In 2024, Fenelon Falls initiated a Downtown Revitalization Project 2.0.
Leverage city wide resources with local implementation (e.g. village place making and community economic development)	Seek new opportunities for place making initiatives to attract new residents, visitors and businesses (e.g. heritage conservation districts, cultural districts, art programs, trails etc.) (ongoing)	Ongoing	<p>Seeking opportunities for placemaking initiatives continue.</p> <p>Highlights include conservation of heritage properties through designations and heritage Inventory projects are underway in Lindsay, Omemee, Bobcaygeon, and Fenelon Falls.</p> <p>And, the launch and growth of the Public Art program including the Temporary Public Art Traffic Control Box three (3) year program which animates boxes across the municipality.</p>

## Goal 2: Grow Specific Business Clusters

Strategic Action	Activity	Status	Progress highlights
<p>Refocus economic development programs around the five clusters focusing on entrants, growers, mentors and cluster growth</p>	<p>Identify an economic development team leader (Pilot) for each cluster. Each Pilot to undergo training to better understand trends and needs of the industry segment, how and what municipal services impact that segment and how best to partner with it (2017)</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Sector plans were developed and implemented for the clusters of Agriculture and Food, Culture, and Tourism. Internal business plans were created for the cluster of Manufacturing, and new partnerships were formed to support the cluster of Innovation.</p>
	<p>Integrate programs (existing and new) around each cluster (network building, shared promotion, business skills training, youth business training, capacity building, skills identification and attraction) (starting 2017)</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Program plans focused on investing in each cluster including education, business development training, business supports.</p> <p>Highlights include several workforce development projects undertaken leveraging multiple partnerships to support various clusters including agriculture and food, and manufacturing, such as the AdvancED Job Skills Training Program, and Pathways to Prosperity.</p>
	<p>Align cluster activities and communications within the new City of Kawartha Lakes brand (2018)</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>The refreshed Kawartha Lakes Jump In brand is now used in all program areas.</p> <p>In 2023, the KLBEC rebranded with a refreshed contemporary brand as the Kawartha Lakes Small Business Centre (KLSBC).</p> <p>In 2024, a new brand for Kawartha Lakes Tourism is in development.</p>
<p>Agriculture and Food Including value-added food processing and agri-culinary</p>	<p>Grow the City of Kawartha Lakes agri-brand; begin with a focus on the existing livestock strength and build Grow the food processing sector (expansion of existing processors, identify new opportunities for processing and distribution) to build employment around value added agriculture Support the innovation and diversification of local agriculture to increase farm revenues Grow agri-culinary participation among producers and connect the results to tourism Increase businesses, Increase employment, Increase tourist visits</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The work of this area is outlined in the Ag and Food Action Plan 2020-2024. A number of initiatives are complete or underway.</p> <p>Highlights include celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Kawartha Choice FarmFresh program, and an increase membership in 2023 by 30%.</p> <p>Agricultural Development Advisory Committee continued successful VIP educational tours.</p> <p>International Plowing Match and Rural Expo was held in 2024 celebrating agriculture in the region and across the province.</p>

<p>Tourism Including specialized retail and downtowns as tourism hubs</p>	<p>Increase the volume of year-round accommodations of all kinds, in all markets Develop operator experiences to boost tourism traffic (cross-sector and cross promotion) Develop a guided touring sector (e.g. two wheels, snowmobiles, cross-country skiing, waterways) Expand visitation into the shoulder-season and winter and connect these off peak activities to culture Identify and support unique or differentiated retail that either generates tourism visits or extends those visits on a community by community basis</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The work of this area is outlined in the Destination Development Plan 2020 with a focus on year-round, overnight stays.</p> <p>Highlights include the launch and delivery of the Knapsack Signature Experience Program business training for tourism operators, and the creation of new paddling and scenic drives products.</p> <p>The Summer Tourism Experience program was launched in 2021 through the Economic Recovery Task Force to support Chambers of Commerce in their hyper local visitor information services programs to enhance visitor engagement.</p>
<p>Specialized Manufacturing Including fabrication, assembly, and technology</p>	<p>Cultivate a community of specialized manufacturers that raises the profile of the cluster across Kawartha Lakes Support the innovation, growth and expansion of existing businesses to increase sustainability and employment Create an active network of local manufacturing mentors Develop a program to attract new manufacturers (start-up and relocating) to existing employment areas Develop infrastructure to support the health of local industrial areas</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>An annual business plan was developed to focus this work with a focus on a corporate visitation program.</p> <p>The development of the Development Concierge Program supports investment from private business in this cluster.</p> <p>New partnerships to address identified cluster development and workforce challenges were built with the Kawartha Manufacturing Association and school boards.</p>

<p>Culture Including arts, heritage, makers and events</p>	<p>Increase the number and capacity of arts, culture and heritage for profit and not-for-profit businesses (expansion and attraction) Foster the development of cultural events and festivals (partnering with tourism) Develop the arts, heritage, culture brand of Kawartha Lakes so that it becomes an attraction for tourists, new residents and entrepreneurs working in the sector Grow the craft/ maker segment (number of small or micro businesses and sales per business due to increased tourism traffic) Action the Heritage and Cultural Implementation plans</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The work of this area is outlined in the Cultural Master Plan which was updated and adopted by Council (Cultural Master Plan 2020-2030) and a number of initiatives have been undertaken including additional professional staff resources to support both municipal programs and the community in the areas of an Archivist and Curator.</p> <p>Cultural Centre Project Phases 1 and 2 are completed, recommendation to move forward to Phase 3.</p>
<p>Engineered Products and Related Services Inventors and makers that improve processes and technology across clusters</p>	<p>Develop opportunities with Fleming College, educational institution and innovation organizations to expand business and employment opportunities in Kawartha Lakes (particular emphasis on environment and water engineering, and disruptive technology) Establish a network of existing business owners and leaders with ambitions to grow their cluster (to grow businesses and employment)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>In 2020, Council entered into a partnership agreement with the Innovation Cluster to provide specialised services for high growth entrepreneurs. This pilot project partnership become an ongoing contract-based arrangement and is currently located at LAUNCH Kawartha.</p> <p>In 2024, Kawartha Lakes joined a new regional partnership to bring Ontario Centres of Innovation resources to local businesses and post-secondary institutions.</p>

### Goal 3: Encourage a positive community business culture

Strategic Action	Activity	Status	Progress highlights
Develop peer-to-peer networks	Work with leaders in each cluster to develop networks and an annual summit focused on building the cluster through new ideas, private investment and informing the City's annual cluster work plan (2018)	On hold	During and following the pandemic, annual business cluster summits transitioned from group events to smaller virtual cluster sessions or alternative engagement methods to seek engagement.
	Create a peer-to-peer business ambassador program in each cluster to attract and connect with new business owners and promote the City (2018- 2019)	Complete	The Welcome Home business and workforce attraction program was launched as marketing campaign to attract investment and includes local business testimonials, three (3) signature Kawartha Lakes brand videos, and a Talk to a Local network championed by Chambers of Commerce and LDBIA.
Support local community business organizations	Continue to develop relationships and programming with local business organizations (e.g. business development workshops, integrating support networks) to advance the area as a place for business (ongoing)	Complete	Kawartha Lakes Ecosystem Network (KLEN) continues to thrive, representing over 20 business support agencies and meets regularly to share resources and work collaboratively to support a thriving business community. Several joint projects are the direct result of this Network.
	Support community-based business organizations in local economic development activities (ongoing)	Complete	<p>Networks between the four (4) local Chambers of Commerce and Lindsay Downtown BIA continue to be fostered.</p> <p>Partnerships between the City and local organizations are continually developed to deliver various economic development activities.</p> <p>Highlights include the 2024 creation and implementation of the Economic Development Fund Local Economic Development Support Organizations Operating Grant program.</p>

## Goal 4: Inspire and align City resources

Strategic Action	Activity	Status	Progress highlights
Establish business pilots	Develop and implement a business pilot program where businesses have a single point of contact in the Economic Development Division that focuses on business expansion or start-up (2017)	Complete	The Economic Development Division Staff team is organized with business sector leads for key clusters: agriculture and food, tourism, culture, downtowns, manufacturing, innovation, and entrepreneurship.
	Integrate new economic development programs around, and in support of, growth in the five clusters (2018)	Complete	Economic Development program is organized around, and in support of, the five key clusters.
Enhance team building within City of Kawartha Lakes staff to build the reputation for business receptiveness	Develop and implement an integrated business owner support process within in the development process to encourage business growth and expansion (2018)	Complete	Development Concierge Program was piloted through the Economic Recovery Task Force and formalized as a program in 2023.
Improve municipal policies and procedures	Integrate an economic development focus to projects City-wide (e.g. parks, trails, downtown redevelopment, infrastructure) (2017)	Ongoing	<p>Economic Development team involvement with corporate projects included; Rural Zoning By-Law, Trails Master Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Growth Management Strategy, Downtown Parking Study, Housing and Homelessness Plan, Healthy Environment Plan, Development Charges Taskforce, Park and Recreation Master Plan.</p> <p>A highlight includes the Kawartha Lakes film office, launched in 2023, that significantly improves the facilitation of film across the municipality.</p>
	Compete the Comprehensive Zoning By-law and Official Plan updates (2018 and beyond)	Ongoing	The Rural Zoning By-Law consolidation was adopted by Council in 2024. The Official Plan update is forthcoming. The Economic Development Division contributes to this work.
	Continue to implement the Planning Approvals Taskforce recommendations and update policies to facilitate leading edge development that is in the best interests of growing a vibrant community (ongoing)	Ongoing	Internal work to improve the development process continues. The intent of this action is included in the Economic Development Strategy Refresh.
Plan and execute critical infrastructure projects	Fund and implement infrastructure projects to accommodate growth and investment in a competitive manner (ongoing)	Ongoing	<p>Several infrastructure projects to accommodate growth and investment are underway or complete.</p> <p>Highlights include Downtown reconstructions in Lindsay, Fenelon Falls and Omemee, Eastern Ontario broadband and cell projects, and Enbridge Gas pipeline developments Fenelon Falls and Bobcaygeon. The Economic Development Division contributes to this work, were appropriate.</p>

## Goal 5: Attract and retain a new generation of great workforce

Strategic Action	Activity	Status	Progress highlights
Diversify the talent and age of our community	Create a millennials steering group with representation from across Kawartha Lakes to guide youth retention, repatriation and attraction plans (2018)	On hold	This action remains incomplete and can be considered in future workplans.
	Promote Young Professionals week annually and support young professional groups (2018)	Complete	Young Professionals week was promoted through social media while it was an active larger external campaign.
	Support the development of affordable housing across Kawartha Lakes, enabling young people in the early stages of their work life to have affordable, safe housing. (2018)	Ongoing	Council adopted the Housing Pledge that will support the provincially-set target of 6,500 new housing starts in Kawartha Lakes by 2031. The local target is part of the provincial goal to build 1.5 million new homes by 2031.
Repatriate Kawartha Lakes alumni	Develop projects with Sir Sandford Fleming College and local universities to connect with and keep alumni in the community (2019)	Complete	Strong partnerships were developed with both Trent University and Fleming College.  Highlights include the Kawartha Lakes Trent Community Concierge to support graduate retention and develop a pipeline of talent won provincial and national economic development awards.
	Create an alumni Kawartha Lakes homecoming event in the Summer to communicate the new opportunities for relocating back to Kawartha Lakes (2020)	On hold	This action remains incomplete due to the pandemic.