Committee of the Whole Report

Report Number:	**ED2025-002**
Meeting Date:	April 8, 2025
Title:	**2024 Kawartha Lakes Business Count**
Description:	A summary of the 2024 Kawartha Lakes Business Count survey and Insight Report
Author and Title:	Rebecca Mustard, Manager, Economic Development

Recommendations:

That Report ED2025-002, **2024 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 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).

This report provides an overview of 2024 Kawartha Lakes Business Count project and Insight Report.

Rationale:

The 2024 Kawartha Lakes Business Count surveyed businesses and employment properties in downtowns and industrial areas of Lindsay, Bobcaygeon, Fenelon Falls, Pontypool and Coboconk-Norland. This year the survey area expanded to include significant commercial sections of Lindsay Street and Kent Street in Lindsay.

The survey was conducted between June and August 2024 by a team of Summer Students from the City of Kawartha Lakes, local Chambers of Commerce, and the LDBIA. The survey was delivered in-person, by phone, and online by methodically going door-to-door to each property in the survey areas gathering information wherever possible. The survey was also available online for all business in Kawartha Lakes to complete.

The survey process has become an important outreach program for the City and partner organizations. As surveyors visit businesses door-to-door they are able to

respond directly to questions and concerns. Any issues that are not able to be addressed immediately are shared with the Economic Development team for follow up.

The Insight Report is a graphically presented analysis of the Business Count data for the purpose of sharing survey results. The Insight Report presents data by geographic areas where sufficient data has been collected to maintain confidentiality of the participating businesses and employment properties. In 2024, these areas are; Kawartha Lakes, Lindsay, Downtown Lindsay, Fenelon Falls, Bobcaygeon and Coboconk. New to the survey data analysis in 2024, is a section of analysis by four industry groups: Arts, Culture and Hospitality; Industry and Trade; Retail; and Services. This new analysis helps to understand trends across industries in addition to geography.

Survey Highlights

A total of 762 businesses and employment properties were surveyed in the 2024 Kawartha Lakes Business Count.

Highlights reported by these businesses surveyed:

- A total of 7,186 jobs
- 2,798,732 sq. ft. floor space occupied
- 62% are independent businesses
- 48% of businesses are members of a Chamber of Commerce or the LDBIA
- 64% business plan to hire in the future
- 12% of businesses plan to expand their floor space

The 2024 Kawartha Lakes Business Count marks the fourth year of data collection in this extensive pan-industry project. The highlights provide key business insights from the surveyed areas. As the data and geographic scope of the survey become more consistent each year, these insights will increasingly reflect the broader Kawartha Lakes business community. At this point, data is not being compared year to year. However is hoped the ability to start comparing year to year will be trialed in the 2025 project.

2025 Kawartha Lakes Business Count Project

The 2025 Kawartha Lakes Business Count project will launch in Summer 2025. The project will continue to survey the same properties as previous survey years. This will support consistency in data collection, improve data quality, and contribute to the ability to compare data trends year over year. The survey will launch with a press release and a marketing campaign to encourage participation.

Other Alternatives Considered:

The 2024 Kawartha Lakes Business Count is for information only. No other alternatives have been considered.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities

The 2024 Kawartha Lakes Business Count supports the 2024-2027 Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan priority areas:

- A Vibrant and Growing Economy
- Good Government

And 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 business community provides an in-depth analysis of the Kawartha Lakes economy for informed decision-making.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

The 2024 Kawartha Lakes Business Count is included in the 2024 Operating Budget. The Economic Development Fund Policy funding program and the Summer Tourism Experience Fund program supported local Chambers of Commerce 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 – 2024 Kawartha Lakes Business Count Insight Report

PDF

Adobe Acrobat
Document

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Department Head: Leah Barrie, Director, Development Services