



# BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION PROJECT FINAL REPORT

**Town of Kingsville**

**June 8, 2020**



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**Cover Image:** “Kingsville main street” via Wikimedia Commons user Andrea\_44 (CC BY 2.0)



# 1. Background



The Town of Kingsville has enjoyed significant growth in recent years. Located in the southernmost region of Canada, its diverse business base includes agriculture and agri-food, manufacturing, and retail, among others. It benefits from a healthy mix of established businesses with deep

roots in the area, and newer recent investments, especially in the greenhouse and food and wine sector. The economy is healthy and broad, though the Town is interested in further diversifying and strengthening its local economy.

The Town has a clear mandate toward economic and business development, but it has had no formal approach to business engagement. With that in mind, it undertook this Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) project to engage its business base to improve relationships with business owners/managers, identify and address any concerns, and improve business competitiveness.

A BR+E survey was commissioned to engage businesses and report on observations generalizable to the broader business community, while also allowing for the identification of potential expansion or retention opportunities, which can be followed-up with on an individual business level. The intention of the survey was twofold:

- To gather a statistically significant amount of information from business owners so that future economic development initiatives could be pursued with confidence, knowing they will have a positive impact on the business community.
- For each business, identify whether there were issues that the Town could follow-up on and attempt to address. These responses would identify businesses that reported growth opportunities (green flags) or challenges that might result in downsizing, relocation, or closure (red flags).

This project was supported by a Volunteer Task Force, who contributed to vetting both the questionnaire and the business listing for the random sample survey and conducted outreach to businesses based on survey results. Green and red flag businesses were prioritized, but follow-up was conducted with even those that did not emerge as a Triage priority.

Near the end of the project, the COVID-19 pandemic had significant impacts on the business community. Thus, the project was altered to include an online workshop to check in on the consequences that businesses were experiencing during this challenging time. This move was embraced and provided needed feedback to address some of those challenges. This report accounts for some immediate-need responses to the crisis. COVID-19 has served to highlight the importance of close relationships between municipalities and their business base.

The pandemic has accelerated business trends that were emerging before the crisis, such as the need for broadband connectivity and digital literacy. It has also, unfortunately, had dire impacts on the tourism sector, which has been an essential driver of Kingsville's economy in recent years. This project accounts for those challenges in the short-term. It also accounts for the need to prioritize more BR+E outreach in the medium-term and partnerships and advocacy in the long-term.



## 2. Methodology

MDB Insight has developed a unique approach to the development of business retention and expansion strategies through a process known as Triage BR+E. Triage BR+E refers to the immediacy of the findings and strategy development through the use of random sample telephone surveys. This allows for a statistically significant sample of businesses to be surveyed and identify challenges, gaps, and opportunities on which the local economic development service can focus. It also allows the identification of green flag and red flag issues that could impact a business's decision to grow/remain in the community and for an immediate follow-up to take place.



<sup>1</sup>This project involved a unique internal communication plan that allowed for the identification of businesses with both green and red flag issues to be identified during the survey process. They were asked for their consent to have their information shared with their local economic development organization. This provided the opportunity for their concerns or issues to be addressed in real-time. This is an advantage that the majority of other BR+E programs lack.

In total, 120 business owners/managers were targeted and were successfully surveyed out of an initial sample of 390.

The survey was administered during November and December of 2019, and March 2020. In-person follow-up was conducted by the volunteer task force in late 2019 and January 2020 for the first 40 businesses.

Telephone surveying was completed in March 2020, before the drastic and immediate economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the final survey results, in place of in-person follow-up meetings, an online remote workshop was held on April 28, 2020, to follow-up on survey results and to engage with businesses on the impacts of COVID-19. This workshop allowed the Town to connect with business owners at a critical time in the business health of the community.

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<sup>1</sup> Image: "Lakeside Pavilion" via Wikimedia Commons, user Andrea\_44

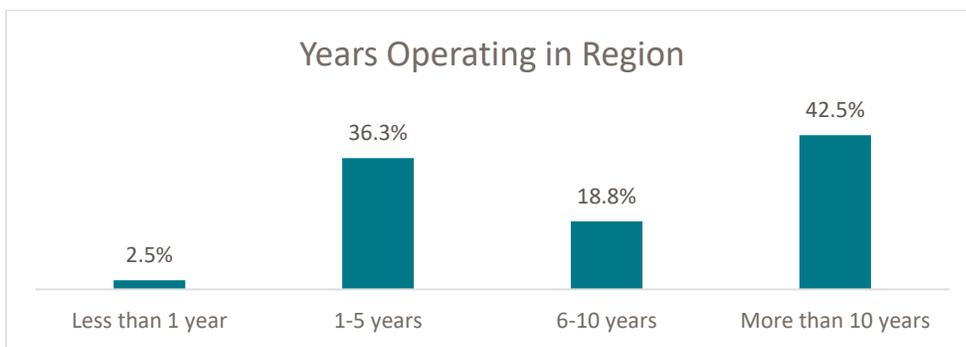


## 3. Triage BR+E Survey Findings

### 3.1 Business Profile

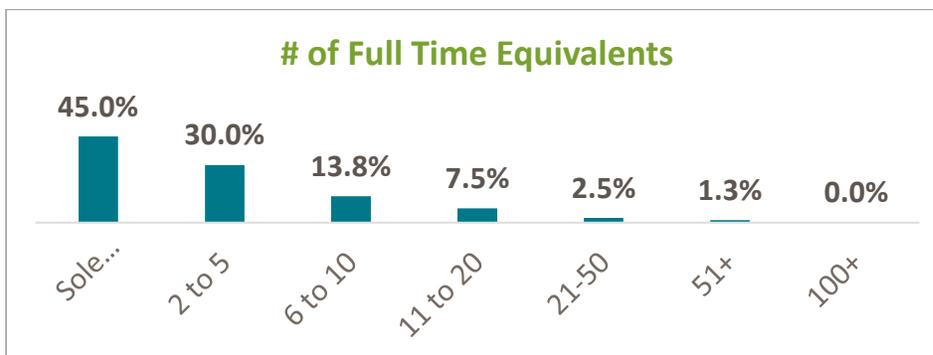
#### Balanced Business Community – Longevity and Entrepreneurship

Surveyed business owners were from a healthy mix of established and newer businesses. The high representation of businesses that have operated for more than six years suggests a commitment to the community and a stable economic base. As for the 36.3% that in the establishment and growth phase (1-5 years), it is critical to ensure these newer businesses have access to business support resources and to build a strong relationship between them and the Town.



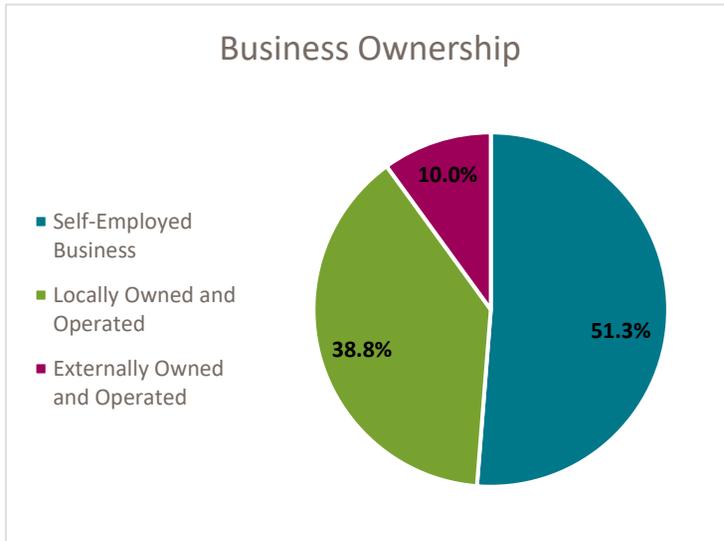
#### Employee Size

Businesses were asked about the number of full-time employees (FTEs) in their organization. A substantial percentage (45%) were sole proprietorships, followed by 30% reporting that they had 2-5 employees. Those employing 6-10 made up 13.8% of businesses, and those employing 11-20 accounted for 7.5%. These percentages suggest that many of Kingsville's businesses are SMEs. While only representing 1.3%, businesses representing 51+ employees have a significant impact on local employment and, by extension, the local economy. This distribution is similar to what one would find in Ontario or Canada.





## Ownership



The businesses surveyed were predominantly locally owned and operated (38.8%), including those that were self-employed (51.3%). These are positive results, as they suggest that business decisions are made at the local level rather than through headquarters elsewhere in Canada, the United States, or anywhere else abroad. It also points to a grassroots business culture in the community. This means that relationships with businesses can be as close as desired. The Town can have a direct impact on business wellbeing. A small proportion, 10%, were externally owned and operated. Many of

Kingsville’s externally owned and operated businesses may also be large employers – like greenhouse businesses or manufacturers. Site visits may be required to cultivate relationships with these critical business owners/managers.



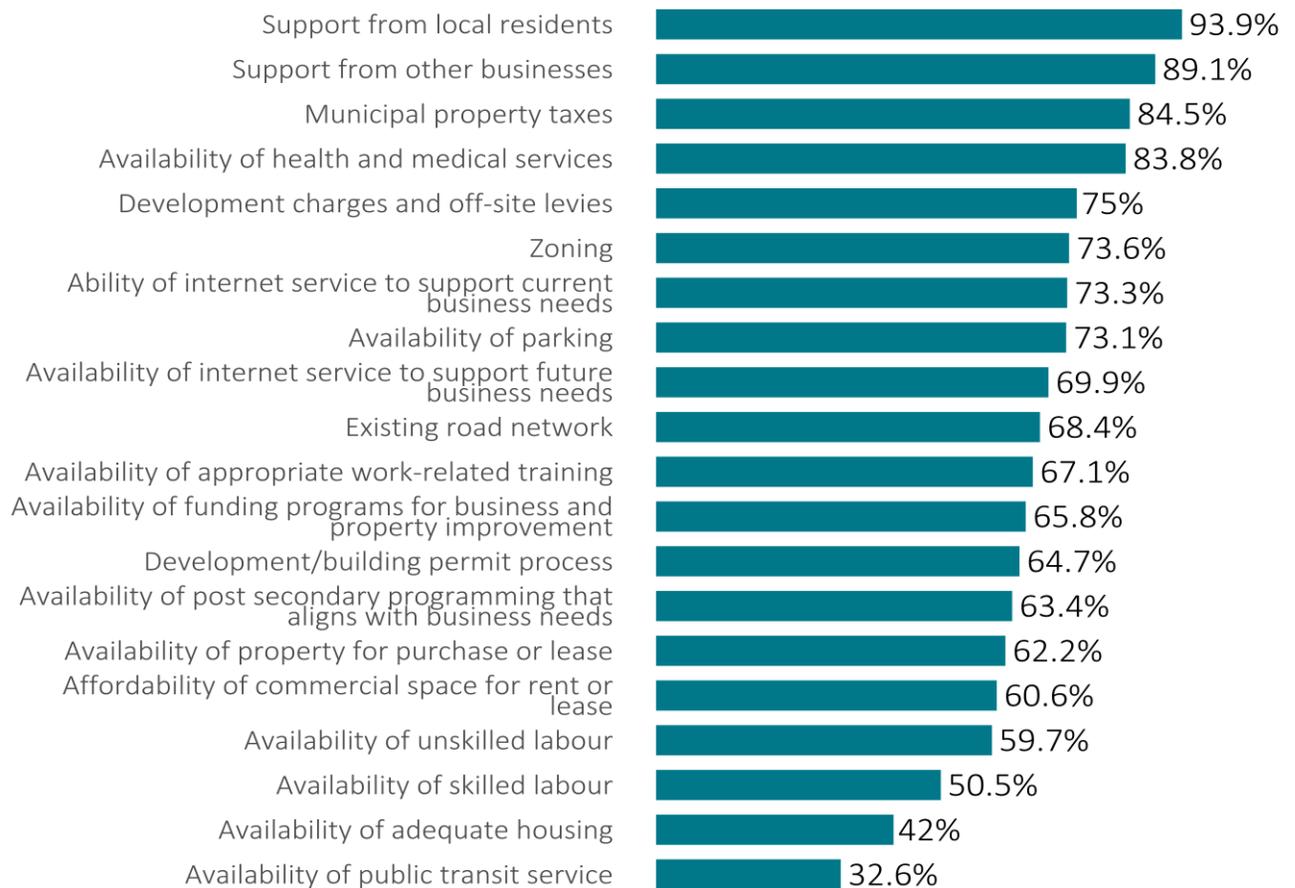
## 3.2 Key Findings

Finding	Commentary
<p>Overall business satisfaction in Kingsville is strong at 90.8% with 64.2% very satisfied and 26.7% somewhat satisfied.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This level of satisfaction is particularly high, compared with other communities where Triage BR+E process has been deployed. At 64.2%, the level of very satisfied businesses is extremely strong.</li> </ul>
<p>41.7% indicate their level of satisfaction is more positive than 12 months ago, compared to 9.2% indicating more negative; representing a net improvement of 32.5%.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ These results suggest that, before COVID-19, optimism around doing business in Kingsville was high.</li> </ul>
<p>Businesses were asked to rate their satisfaction on 20 different factors affecting their business performance. Only 2 of these factors had a satisfaction level of less than 50% satisfaction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Businesses generally are satisfied with many factors of doing business in Kingsville. That said, many factors were in the 60% range. This means that 1 in 3 businesses are dissatisfied with many elements of doing business in Kingsville, which points to areas where improvements could be made.</li> </ul>
<p>The factors with the lowest levels of satisfaction were: Availability of adequate housing, Availability of public transit service, Availability of skilled labour, Availability of unskilled labour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Based on follow-up engagement, it was determined that the dissatisfaction with adequate housing supply was primarily a discussion around the need for more affordable housing, as real estate prices in Kingsville are becoming inaccessible to those of lower incomes.</li> <li>▪ Follow-up engagement revealed that public transit access is a significant challenge for businesses' ability to recruit employees. While some cabs are available, there is a need for better transportation access throughout Essex County to benefit from the surrounding talent pool. This spoke to the challenges associated with the availability of skilled and unskilled labour.</li> </ul>



### 3.3 Performance of Business Factors

Performance represents the combination of somewhat satisfied and very satisfied responses to questions about specific business factors within the Town of Kingsville. The table below identifies overall performance for the 16 business factors that the survey asked businesses to rate as either very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.





### 3.4 Priority Matrix

The priority matrix was developed utilizing the derived importance methodology. Derived importance gives insight into the services that drive re-investment and overall business satisfaction. Derived importance measures how well the community is performing on services by analyzing the correlation of business responses to questions of overall satisfaction and subsequent questions about satisfaction with individual business factors as well as the relation to the overall cohort of business responses. Each business factors importance is scored based on the calculation of derived importance.

Utilizing the ranking of the performance of business factors (shown above) and relative importance enables the Town of Kingsville to focus on the areas with the highest priority.

Variable	Level of Importance	Performance	Priority Rank
Availability of adequate housing	7.6	42%	1
Availability of public transit service	6.3	33%	2
Availability of skilled labour	7.2	51%	3
Availability of property for purchase or lease	8.2	62%	4
Availability of post-secondary programming that aligns with business needs	8.4	63%	5
Availability of unskilled labour	7.4	60%	6
Affordability of commercial space for rent or lease	7.0	61%	7
Development/building permit process	7.8	65%	8
Availability of appropriate work-related training	8.0	67%	9
Availability of funding programs for business and property improvement	7.2	66%	10
Zoning	7.8	74%	11
Existing road network	6.1	68%	12
Availability of internet service to support future business needs	6.3	70%	13
Ability of internet service to support current business needs	6.8	73%	14
Development charges and off-site levies	6.4	75%	15
Availability of parking	5.9	73%	16
Municipal property taxes	8.0	85%	17
Support from other businesses	8.7	89%	18
Availability of health and medical services	5.3	84%	19
Support from local residents	7.6	94%	20



## 3.5 Follow-Up Interview Findings

This project followed a phased approach to surveying businesses via telephone and in-person follow-up. Due to COVID-19, only one phase of telephone surveying resulted in in-person follow-up interviews by the Volunteer Task Force.

Follow-up interviews can often reveal the nuance behind a survey response. In cases where a business answered 'Very Satisfied' or 'Very Dissatisfied' on a business factor, follow-up interviews provide the Town with the opportunity to uncover what has contributed explicitly to that response and learn in essence, what is working or not working about that business factor in the Town of Kingsville. This type of qualitative follow-up is essential to building and maintaining relationships with the business community and can help the Town develop a targeted response to any areas of dissatisfaction while capturing what is working and continuing those efforts.

The follow-up interviews that occurred revealed the following common themes:

- **Businesses welcomed BR+E outreach:** Overall, business owners were pleased to have received engagement from the Town via survey and were happy to have follow-up contact. Many felt that this type of formalized business communication had been lacking in the past and hoped it would continue.
- **Desire for a consistent relationship with the Town:** Many businesses had a connection with the Town, though there was inconsistency as to who the point-person to assist them with business needs was, and multiple identified that they felt the Town needed a consistent person to which they could reach out. Some businesses expressed that the Town should take more of a leadership role in economic development and should be solutions-oriented when dealing with business inquiries.
- **Development process, zoning assistance, and cutting through red tape:** Businesses feel they would benefit from assistance navigating building permit processes and zoning bylaws. There is insufficient data to determine if those processes require simplification internally, but businesses did reflect that there was a need for help navigating those processes.
- **Supportive community:** The two business factors with the highest satisfaction levels, 'Support from residents' and 'Support from other businesses,' were strengthened during interviews. Businesses felt that support from the community overall was very strong.
- **Affordability:** Businesses noted that they appreciated how affordable it was to start their business in Kingsville, but did lament that that affordability seemed to be at risk when looking at real estate prices. This was reflected in the discussion around the lack of access to affordable housing.
- **Successful programs:** The Facelift program with the BIA has been beneficial, and businesses were pleased with it. The Cottam CIP was also identified as successful.
- **Supportive BIA:** Many businesses identified that they felt their BIA was incredibly supportive.
- **Favourable attitude toward tourism:** Businesses reflected that tourism growth in the community had been beneficial to their business, even if they were not directly impacted by tourism spending.
- **Need for better internet connection:** Many businesses noted that internet service was unreliable and insufficient. COVID-19 has highlighted the need to upgrade internet service across the board, as businesses have shifted to digital platforms. This should be carried forward as an action item.



## 3.6 Workshop Findings

After the final telephone survey interviews in March 2020, the measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 had unprecedented impacts on the business community globally, nationally, and locally. These measures limited the Volunteer Taskforce's ability to conduct the remaining one-on-one follow-up interviews as initially planned. As COVID-19 had a significant impact on businesses, this project would have been remiss not to incorporate those challenges.

In place of in-person follow-up interviews, an online workshop was held on April 28, 2020, with an open invitation to the business community. Businesses were asked about the impacts they'd experienced to date from COVID-19 measures, changes to their operations, and actions the Town could take to support them through this unprecedented time.

The workshop revealed the following common themes:

- **Impacts on Tourism, Retail, and Restaurants:** Business owners offered that their losses were significant: some reported approximately 20% of usual monthly sales, having to lay off workers. Projections were that the economy would be slow to start up again, and that much of that revenue would be lost. Businesses called for the Town to find ways to support brick and mortar and tourism businesses as they would be most heavily impacted by COVID-19.
- **Government Support was Welcome:** Overall, respondents felt that government support has been adequate. Wage subsidies and loans, tax reductions, payment delays have been helpful measures. That said, some noted that government programs were difficult to navigate.
- **Digital Capacity:** Reinventing or pivoting business models to include virtual offerings, and remote or digital communication was common. A need to increase social media literacy (online newsletters, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) throughout the community was identified, especially since the closure of the weekly paper. Businesses also called for mutual sharing of social media posts online. Businesses were optimistic about solutions in this area and suspected that hybrid offerings of digital and in-person services were likely to continue beyond the pandemic. Workshops to encourage digital literacy were identified as an action the Town could take or support to this end.
- **Communication Channels & Weekly Paper Closure:** After 144 years, the weekly paper in Kingsville closed as a result of COVID-19 as it was unable to work with community businesses for advertising, community events or news. This signalled a need for increased communication among the business community and residents to fill the gap.
- **Positive Attitudes:** Overall, businesses that participated in the workshop had a positive attitude toward finding solutions, and that Kingsville's tightly knit business community could get through these challenges. "All complaints seem to have solutions," was one optimistic quote from the session. Businesses were doing their research on PPE requirements and pivots to stay afloat.
- **Need for central advocacy:** In some cases, businesses that struggled with financial challenges or landlord issues called for central advocacy or support on those issues. One example was that the rent assistance program did not qualify for many of the properties that existed in downtown Kingsville and advocating for residential-above-commercial inclusion would be an area that the Town could take the lead on.



- **Business Leadership:** Business owners that participated in the workshop noted that they felt a responsibility as community leaders to make customers feel safe and included moving forward.
- **Workforce challenges are based on accessibility:** These challenges include public transit access and access to affordable housing. The County bus service was referenced as a successful way to access labour from nearby towns and Windsor, and businesses were hopeful it would expand.
- **Funding Programs:** The Facelift grant program funded in partnership with the Town/BIA has been working well and will be continuing, and the CIP in Cottam was also commended.
- **PPE Needs:** The BIA noted that there were some discussions around PPE procurement to assist businesses with COVID-19 requirements and that contributions of funding to this end would be welcome.
- **Supporting Culture:** Discussions around the need to maintain Kingsville’s arts and cultural scene were frequent. Moving forward on festivals and events will be difficult, and businesses called for support of arts and culture to ensure Kingsville’s distinct flavour is not lost. Service clubs that hold fundraisers were also referenced as at risk.



## 4. Action Plan

The Action Plan follows three logical phases:

- 1. Immediate COVID-19 Recovery Response** – Responding to COVID-19 economic challenges will be required in short-order, and these actions will take priority over longer-term BR+E actions, such as continued business follow-up.
- 2. Outreach and Community Ties** – This phase involves getting business visits back on track, whether led by a recruited Economic Development staff person or the Volunteer Task Force. The data that was collected through the Triage BR+E process before COVID-19 is invaluable and can be leveraged to follow up on business health as the economy begins to normalize after the pandemic crisis.
- 3. Long-Term Action: Advocacy and Partnerships** – These actions are long-term in nature, but are critical to creating solutions to the challenges of doing business in Kingsville that were identified in the Triage BR+E survey process. These actions address the need to address affordable housing gaps, transportation needs, and skilled/unskilled labour challenges, among others.

### Phase 1: Immediate COVID-19 Recovery Response

- Prioritizing digital marketing capacity building, and supporting downtown and the tourism sector are all issues that require action and support in short order for COVID-19 recovery.

### Phase 2: Outreach and Community Ties

- Critical path: central economic development efforts in the Town of Kingsville
- Focus on supporting expanding businesses through follow up and identification of potential barriers. Work with these businesses to ensure expansions are as on-track as possible with pandemic considerations.

### Long-Term Action: Advocacy and Partnerships

- Prioritize fibre internet connectivity in Kingsville. This is a long-term project that has been highlighted by COVID-19.
- Partnerships with University of Windsor, St. Clair College, and secondary schools to address labour shortages.
- Expand County bus service.

Figure 1 Action Plan Summary



## 4.1 Prioritizing Economic Development for BR+E

The Town of Kingsville benefits from a uniquely tight-knit and supportive business community and resident base. Its community partners like the BIA and the Windsor Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce are effective in supporting the business community, and workshop engagement for this project revealed that these organizations have been incredibly useful in helping Kingsville businesses in responding to COVID-19. Survey results and follow-up discussions conducted throughout this project suggest that Kingsville enjoys a thriving ecosystem of business supports. That said, all forms of engagement suggested that businesses did not necessarily know who to deliver concerns to at the Town. When asked their agreement with the statement ‘I know who to speak to at the Town if I have a problem with my business or a business concern I’d like to share,’ 23% either somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed. The majority, 46.9% chose ‘somewhat agree.’ Follow-up interviews by the Volunteer Taskforce conducted in the first phase of this project unearthed that businesses were grateful to receive direct outreach from the Town through this effort, and desired for there to be a centralized and consistent point-person they could reach. Some also noted that they would welcome further BR+E outreach or formalized ‘check-in’ by the Town annually.

Kingsville’s recent growth, notwithstanding COVID-19 challenges, should not be taken for granted. It should be captured and formalized to ensure sustained success. Consistent engagement with the business community, responding to inquiries, and keeping a close link with the local economy is a full-time effort and the Town of Kingsville must keep its figurative seat at the table.

Many of the actions herein would greatly benefit from the recruitment of an Economic Development staff person within the Town of Kingsville to undertake them in a coordinated and directed manner, prioritized during Phase 2 of the action plan, once things have stabilized from COVID-19. The findings of this project have shown that that individual would have many priorities in the short, medium, and long term that would improve business satisfaction in the Town of Kingsville and assist with growing and diversifying the economy. This project utilized an engaged Volunteer Taskforce, whose engagement could be mobilized in the future, though central leadership is required for consistency and direction. Businesses’ concerns are often within the scope of the municipality’s jurisdiction. However, some are more complex and may take a long-term effort, like working with post-secondary institutions on workforce alignment efforts. Having a dedicated individual to take the lead on immediate business follow up with Triage cases, respond to concerns and take on long-term projects will allow the Town of Kingsville to maintain its economic successes.



## COVID-19 Recovery Response

Timeline: Immediate

Action	Partners/Budget (\$, \$\$, \$\$\$)	Justification & Outcomes
<p>Redirect any available tourism funds to “shop local” or local pride marketing efforts. Work with community partners to launch this local marketing campaign.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use social media channels to celebrate Kingsville, work with community partners and businesses to share posts and coordinate messaging</li> <li>▪ Encourage businesses to decorate storefronts in support of local shopping</li> </ul>	BIA (\$\$)	Local retailers are severely affected by COVID-19. Best practices so far include using marketing capacity to support local retailers and generate local pride. This action in the short-term will have long-term impacts, as shopping habits will likely continue to remain local. Also, as consumers choose to avoid shopping in nearby urban centres like Windsor/Detroit due to physical distancing, Kingsville has the opportunity to capture some of that spending and instil local shopping habits.
<p>Conduct follow up telephone outreach with any Red Flag businesses identified by the survey (see accompanying excel files). Volunteer taskforce members should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be prepared for these meetings with any contact information to appropriate sources of further support or funding. e.g. Essex Community Futures Development Corporation may have information on grant or loan opportunities; staff from the Chamber or Windsor Essex Economic Development Corporation may be available to assist businesses with navigating government programs, or workshops.</li> </ul>	<p>Volunteer taskforce. <b>Potential partners to provide resources or more information to assist businesses:</b> BIA, Chamber of Commerce, Windsor Essex Economic Development, Essex Community Futures Development Corporation</p>	These businesses will likely have been severely impacted by COVID-19 measures and may need immediate support. Outcomes may be that these businesses are not forced to close or downsize as a result of COVID-19.
<p>Profile and highlight businesses that have adapted their operations to minimize the impact of COVID-19. Connect innovators with businesspeople who are struggling to adapt to e-commerce and alternative forms of delivering products and services. Create a digital business mentorship program to encourage skill-sharing.</p>	BIA, Chamber of Commerce (\$)	Businesses that are struggling to adapt will see that adaptation and revenue generation is possible throughout the pandemic.



Action	Partners/Budget (\$, \$\$, \$\$\$)	Justification & Outcomes
<p>Assist retailers with their digital capacity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the BIA to support digitization workshops that can be made available to all retailers in Kingsville.</li> <li>▪ Communicate the benefits of Digital Mainstreet<sup>2</sup> service among Kingsville’s retailers (downtown and elsewhere).</li> <li>▪ Commit to the creation of a funding program to assist with any costs retailers incur to use tools or services accessed through Digital Mainstreet.</li> </ul> <p>Explore whether WEEDC or Windsor Essex Community Development Corporation has any grants or available funding to this end.</p>	<p>BIA, WindsorEssex Community Development Corporation (\$\$)</p>	<p>Kingsville’s retailers have access to needed toolkits and resources to digitize their operations and reach their customers through social media, apps, and e-commerce applications. These digitization upgrades will be useful in the short-term, but will likely contribute to long-term success. Since the loss of the weekly paper in Kingsville, digital literacy amongst the business community will be imperative to businesses’ ability to communicate with residents.</p>
<p>Ensure businesses have access to financial support and recovery program information from governments and financial institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with WEEDC, Community Development Corporation to determine what supports may be available.</li> <li>▪ Work with the Chamber and BIA to determine who should take the lead on translating government programs to the business community.</li> </ul>	<p>Chamber, BIA (\$)</p>	<p>Recovery and financial support resources will be better communicated and more readily available to Kingsville’s business community.</p> <p>Long term, this knowledge of business funding resources will be invaluable to support growing business in Kingsville.</p>

<sup>2</sup> Digital Mainstreet is a program and service that helps main street businesses achieve digital transformation. The program is built around an online learning platform, structured training programs, and support staff that assist main street businesses grow and manage their business through the adoption of digital tools and technology. <https://digitalmainstreet.ca/>



Action	Partners/Budget (\$, \$\$, \$\$\$)	Justification & Outcomes
<p>Focus on tourism recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allow for increased outdoor seating at restaurants; close streets if need be so patrons can social distance.</li> <li>▪ Direct any tourism marketing locally and regionally – tourism trends suggest that local trips will be the first to pick up again. Encouraging visitors from Windsor to take a rural vacation will be a relevant tourism offering when it is safe to travel again.</li> <li>▪ Explore “staycation” packages that can be coordinated with local businesses to encourage residents to engage with tourism products at home.</li> <li>▪ Work with Kingsville Folk Festival and other cultural festivals and events organizers to encourage online “live” social media offerings instead of holding events. See VisitKingston Facebook and Instagram livestreams “Together at Home”<sup>3</sup>. To do this, create a grant that supports virtual events. See Lethbridge Virtual Activity Grant<sup>4</sup></li> <li>▪ Work with the BIA to identify vacant storefronts downtown that could act as venues for pop-up cultural events when smaller-scale gatherings are permitted, in place of large festivals.</li> </ul>	<p>BIA, Kingsville Folk Festival, Other event organizers (\$)</p>	<p>Tourism draw efforts are aligned and focused on the common goal of ensuring that Kingsville’s tourism industry is recovered.</p>
<p>Determine infrastructure improvements that could benefit from potential government stimulus.</p>	<p>N/A (\$)</p>	<p>‘Existing road network’ had a satisfaction rating of 68%, which leaves room for improvement. This is an example of infrastructure improvements that could be prioritized to take advantage of likely government stimulus following COVID-19.</p>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.visitkingston.ca/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://getinvolvedlethbridge.ca/our-downtown/news\\_feed/heart-of-our-city-committee-creates-new-virtual-activity-grant](https://getinvolvedlethbridge.ca/our-downtown/news_feed/heart-of-our-city-committee-creates-new-virtual-activity-grant)



## Outreach and Community Ties

Timeline: Mid-Range; Activities should begin once shocks of COVID-19 have settled into a stable “new normal”.

Action	Partners/Budget (\$, \$\$, \$\$\$)	Justification & Outcomes
<p>Undertake Triage specific actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Carry on BRE outreach on an annual basis.</li> <li>▪ Track all future BRE results against the data generated from this project; if funding exists, undertake a Triage BR+E survey annually or biannually to compare business health.</li> </ul>	N/A	<p>Green and red flag businesses that were missed for one-on-one follow-up will still require outreach. Many red flag concerns may have been heightened as a result of COVID-19, and expansions may have been delayed. It will be essential to reach out to those businesses as soon as it is safe to do so and the path forward is more apparent.</p> <p>The survey results from this project are unique in that they were captured just before the global pandemic. Thus, the data captured during surveying set ‘recovery benchmarks’ that can be referenced as the point to return to in recovering the local economy. It will be illuminating to see how businesses have recovered in a year. These results can also be used in future funding requests from upper levels of government.</p>
<p>Work toward streamlined and better communication of the development permit approval process and other zoning bylaws in Kingsville.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Follow up with businesses that identified this as a challenge and determine their experience behind this satisfaction factor.</li> </ul>	N/A (\$)	<p>The development/building approval process was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> on the priority ranking and had a satisfaction rate of 64.7%. Follow up interviews revealed that businesses did not always feel supported while navigating these processes. Best practices in economic development involve streamlined processes that are well-communicated and welcoming to new investment.</p>
<p>Develop an inventory of commercial properties for sale, purchase, or lease. Coordinate with the BIA to keep track of downtown properties, and the Town should take the lead on identifying properties outside the BIA area.</p>	BIA (\$)	<p>‘Availability of property for purchase or lease’ ranked 4<sup>th</sup> on the priority matrix, with a satisfaction ranking of 62%. As a first step to stemming this challenge, the Town should take inventory of available properties in Kingsville to direct any development inquiries effectively. This should be a priority for the economic development staff person.</p>



## Advocacy and Partnerships

Timeline: Long-term; activities are long-range in nature, but may require some relationship building or preparation in the short-term to work toward larger goals.

Action	Partners/Budget (\$, \$\$, \$\$\$)	Justification & Outcomes
Secure fibre internet access in Kingsville. Be ready to take advantage of any funding or programs from upper levels of government as a response to COVID-19.	Upper levels of government, internet provider (\$\$\$)	After surveying, ‘availability of internet service to support current business needs’ was only ranked at 69.9%. Since then, COVID-19 has forced many businesses to go digital and has increased digital and remote working significantly. Communities that did not have fibre internet access before this crisis were already behind, but this has highlighted the need to work toward better connectivity.
Continue to work with the County on county-wide bus service.	Essex County (\$\$)	Expanding the county-wide bus service would provide needed public transit access to Kingsville, which was the second-highest ranked priority factor for business satisfaction and had the lowest satisfaction rating at 32%. This would also provide access to a wider labour pool, which would address skilled and unskilled labour challenges. While public modes of transportation may be considered unsafe at this juncture, it is fair to prioritize this once public health threats have subsided.
Explore partnerships with St. Clair College, University of Windsor to address labour needs.	UWindsor, St. Clair College (\$)	Availability of post-secondary programming that aligns with business needs was ranked 5 <sup>th</sup> on the priority ranking and had a 63% satisfaction rate. Strengthening partnerships with these institutions to address labour needs is a long-term action that would likely address challenges with the availability of skilled labour (priority rank 3).
Create affordable housing in Kingsville. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a housing needs analysis to determine the need and housing supply in Kingsville.</li> </ul>	Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation (\$\$)	‘Availability of adequate housing’ ranked #1 on the priority matrix and had a satisfaction level of 42%, the second-lowest satisfaction level across all factors. Approaching housing needs in a measured manner will involve a high-level needs and gap analysis, and partnerships with housing non-profits and developers will be essential to developing a more diverse housing mix in Kingsville.



## 4.2 Immediate Business Follow Up

The Triage BR+E Survey indicated 36% of businesses presented with either a red or green flag. Red flags indicate businesses considering relocating, downsizing, selling, or closing. A business that has a lease that is expiring within a year would also generate a red flag. These businesses are the place to start in the Business Retention and Expansion program and need to be contacted first with three key steps:

- Understand and prepare the supports that are available in the Town of Kingsville that could address the individual issues they face. This would require compiling information on potentially applicable supports or grants available through the BIA, the Essex Community Futures Development Corporation, or any others. Developing an inventory of these supports to communicate to businesses is a crucial undertaking to ensure productive outreach efforts.
- Coordinate outreach with other economic development and business support agencies to address region-wide challenges.
- Select and focus on key performance indicators to track progress.

The table below contains all Red Flag businesses located in the Town of Kingsville that allowed their contact information to be shared with local economic development staff. In total, 44 businesses presented red flags. Of the 44 red flag businesses that emerged, only three chose to remain anonymous, which indicates a desire for the majority of these business' concerns to be heard and addressed if possible. All business names are withheld in this document to maintain the confidentiality of business responses but were included in the accompanying data files.

As the initial phase of this project included one-on-one follow-up outreach by the Volunteer Taskforce, one of these businesses received follow-up during that period. Those that have are highlighted in grey, and any further follow-up should reference findings from that engagement.

Bus. ID #	Upcoming Lease Expiration	Plans for the Next 24 Months	Timeline for Downsizing	Timeline for Relocation	Timeframe for Selling	Timeline for Closing
42	Less than a year	Closing				Within the next six months
49	Less than a year	Closing				Within the next six months
55		Selling			More than six months from now	
62		Relocating		More than six months from now		
81		Selling			More than six months from now	
101		Downsizing	Within the next six months			



Bus. ID #	Upcoming Lease Expiration	Plans for the Next 24 Months	Timeline for Downsizing	Timeline for Relocation	Timeframe for Selling	Timeline for Closing
105		Closing				More than six months from now
111	Less than a year	Maintaining Operations				
122	Less than a year	Maintaining Operations				
124		Relocating		Within the next six months		
136		Selling			Within the next six months	
182		Downsizing	More than six months from now			
216		Downsizing	More than six months from now			
255		Selling			Within the next six months	
265		Downsizing	Within the next six months			
267	Less than a year	Maintaining Operations				
279		Selling			More than six months from now	
284	Less than a year	Maintaining Operations				
18		Selling			Within the next six months	
54	Less than a year	Maintaining Operations				
135		Downsizing	More than six months from now			
228		Selling			More than six months from now	
209	Less than a year	Maintaining Operations				



The survey also indicated 13.0% of the businesses are Green Flags or businesses considering expanding within the next two years. These businesses present the greatest opportunity for an intervention to leverage a potential expansion and ensure that it moves forward. The steps involved with addressing green flag businesses are the same as red flags but will require different resources based upon individual follow up with businesses and answers to the following questions:

- Are you experiencing difficulties?
- Will your expansion require:
  - Additional land
  - Additional buildings
  - A building permit, rezoning application or other planning-related process
  - Increase in workforce/hiring
  - Access to financing that has not already been secured

The table below contains all Green Flag businesses located in the Town of Kingsville. In total, 18 businesses presented green flags. Only four businesses chose to remain anonymous, again indicating the desire of most businesses to make their plans known to the Town. All business names are withheld in this document to maintain the confidentiality of business responses but were included in the accompanying data files.

As the initial phase of this project included one-on-one follow-up outreach by the Volunteer Taskforce, one of these businesses received follow-up during that period. Those that have are highlighted in grey, and any further follow-up should reference findings from that engagement.

Bus. ID #	Plans for the next 24 Months	Timeline for Expansion
7	Expanding	More than six months from now
68	Expanding	More than six months from now
123	Expanding	More than six months from now
135	Expanding	More than six months from now
146	Expanding	Within the next six months
184	Expanding	More than six months from now
206	Expanding	More than six months from now
274	Expanding	More than six months from now
280	Expanding	More than six months from now
56	Expanding	More than six months from now
129	Expanding	More than six months from now
332	Expanding	More than six months from now
193	Expanding	More than six months from now
124	Expanding	Within the next six months



### 4.3 Triage Specific Actions

This group of actions involve those businesses that have presented either a Green Flag or Red Flag during the survey process. While each business will have individual needs, some broad-based actions can be taken to support businesses with similar challenges or opportunities.

Triage Specific Actions		
Data	Interpretation	Action
<p>18 businesses in the Town of Kingsville have planned expansions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business expansion may apply to buildings, land, personnel or other aspects and may involve direct contact with municipal services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct one-on-one follow-up with these businesses to understand and address any possible barriers to expansion.</li> <li>Highlight successful expansions in the community and local media.</li> <li>Prioritize reaching out to the two businesses planning to expand within the next 6 months. Determine if COVID-19 has impacted their expansion timeline and what can be done, if anything, to help get them back on track.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 businesses are planning to relocate out of Kingsville, 1 within the next 6 months and 1 in more than 6 months.</li> <li>8 businesses are planning to sell, 3 within the next 6 months, 5 in more than 6 months.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two businesses are looking at strategies to address issues related to their current location.</li> <li>The total number of businesses looking to sell is small, considering the overall sample size.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct one-on-one follow-up with local businesses to understand the motivations for relocating and whether it is location-specific (i.e. cost of rent, access to workers) or if a suitable alternative could be found locally.</li> <li>For businesses looking to sell, providing them with succession planning resources will help ensure these businesses remain in the community.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 businesses are planning to downsize, 3 within the next 6 months, 3 in more than 6 months from now.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned downsizing may be the result of immediate economic challenges or the first stage in a more substantial business plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify if businesses that are downsizing are doing so as a result of sales, workforce challenges or the first step in a larger plan to wind-down or sell the business. Follow-up interviews from Phase 1 of this project revealed that these might be retirements.</li> <li>Identify if downsizing businesses present an opportunity to connect workers with expanding businesses or create available space for another business.</li> <li>Identify if downsizing businesses are retirements; if so, determine if succession planning resources would assist with selling rather than downsizing or closing.</li> </ul>