

In November 2019, the Economic Development Office launched the process of updating the *County of Simcoe Economic Development Strategy*. The Strategy was undertaken in-house with the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs with the overall goal of creating a “Made in Simcoe County” plan. The final Economic Development Strategy was approved by County Council in March 2021.

To create a fulsome strategy that encompassed all aspects of the County’s economy significant stakeholder engagement was undertaken, including a business survey, key stakeholder one-on-one interviews, and key sector focus groups. Additionally, an economic trends analysis, an economic literature review, and an assessment of key economic development assets was undertaken.

A number of challenges and opportunities facing economic development in the County were identified.

Goals, objectives and action plans recommended to address these challenges and leverage opportunities were developed and provide a five-year path forward for the County Simcoe to follow.

The overall goals and objectives of the strategy are:

GOAL 1

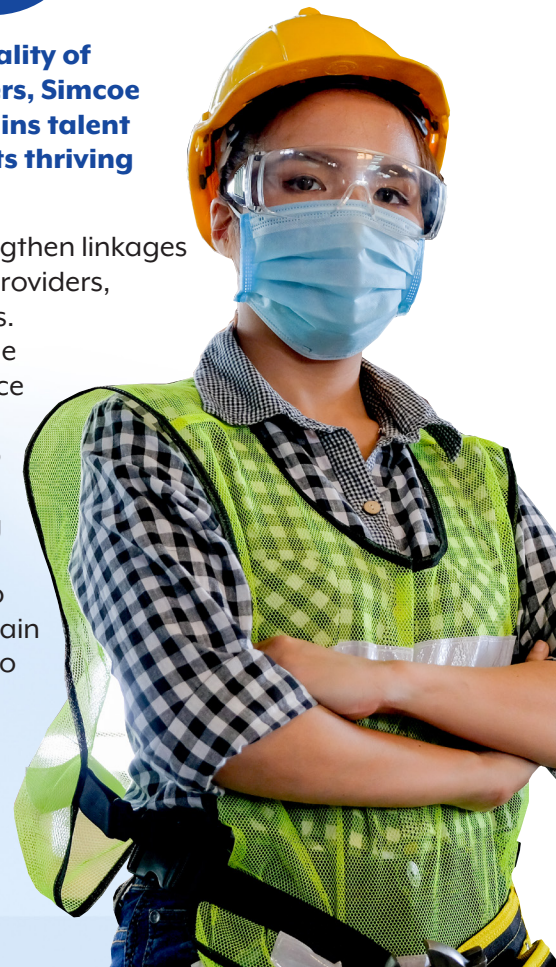
Simcoe County will be recognized as a premier destination for investment in Ontario

- A. Build awareness of Simcoe County’s value proposition to investment prospects.
- B. Be a leader in coordinating regional attraction activities and events.
- C. Work with partners to promote and leverage key regional assets and opportunities.

GOAL 2

Through an excellent quality of life, education and careers, Simcoe County attracts and retains talent to support the needs of its thriving business community.

- A. Actively work to strengthen linkages between education providers, industry and students.
- B. Build awareness of the region as a great place to live and build a career to people who are skilled in sectors that are experiencing key shortages.
- C. Support employers to better attract and retain the talent they need to stay in business and grow.
- D. Strive to create a welcoming community that can attract and retain newcomer talent.



GOAL 3

Businesses stay and grow in the region, supported by a strong and innovative business development environment.

- A. Assist local businesses by providing supports to help businesses remain competitive and grow in today's evolving global marketplace.
- B. Enhance communication regarding the resources, events and education available to support the business community.
- C. Strengthen and support the entrepreneurship ecosystem.
- D. Working in partnership with regional stakeholders, determine the needs of the regional of the regional business community and address critical issues and opportunities.
- E. In partnership with Tourism Simcoe County, ensure the spectrum of business support available for tourism sector businesses is understood by Economic Development partners and the business community.
- F. Support the local economy through the COVID-19 pandemic and its post recovery in partnership with Tourism Simcoe County.

GOAL 4

The County of Simcoe's Economic Development Office is a leader in facilitating and building effective and collaborative relationships that creates a strong ecosystem for regional economic development.

- A. The County's Economic Development Office will facilitate strong communications, connections and relationships with and between stakeholders in the region to support the delivery of economic development goals.
- B. Play a leadership role in facilitating cross-departmental and cross-regional solutions related to policy development where there are direct links to barriers and opportunities in economic development.
- C. Strengthen engagement and collaboration with the regional economic development network to expand knowledge and skills and foster alignment and strategic value.
- D. Assist partners in capacity building through providing funding or other supports to undertake and implement projects that directly align with and benefit the desired outcomes of the County's economic development strategy.



GOAL 5

Advocate for and support the delivery of infrastructure to meet the needs of a competitive business community.

- A. Expand the capacity and connectivity of the Lake Simcoe Regional Airport.
- B. Increase the supply of shovel-ready employment lands.
- C. Play a significant role working with stakeholders and advocating to other levels of government regarding the need to support and enhance infrastructure and transportation networks to facilitate development.

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County of Simcoe Economic Development