

City of Kawartha Lakes

Economic Development Strategy



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Accessible formats available upon request.

Introduction

The City of Kawartha Lakes is a single tier municipality of small villages and rural gems connected by lakes, rivers and bountiful farmland. Formed in 2001 through the amalgamation of the County of Victoria and 16 townships, the City is home to approximately 75,000 year round residents, 30,000 seasonal residents, and 1.4 million tourists. The municipality is forecast to grow to over 100,000 year round residents by 2031.

In 2016, the City adopted a new Corporate Strategic Plan to establish a vision for the municipality, and guide corporate activities, programs and resources. The Corporate Strategic Plan identified three goals to achieve positive outcomes in the immediate future.

Economic Development is represented across all three goals, with a particular focus on **Goal 1: “A vibrant and growing economy”, and a directive to develop and execute a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.**

About the Strategy

An Economic Development Strategy provides a framework to guide direction and activities to gain an advantage and move beyond status quo. The City of Kawartha Lakes Economic Development Strategy includes goals and actions for the City as a whole, specific direction to the Economic Development division, and opportunities for the broader business community to work together to make a difference.

Drawing upon extensive background research, economic analysis and consultation with local businesses leaders, the Economic Development Strategy direction is a refined and focused approach to conducting economic development activities. It focuses on supporting existing assets and strengths to grow each to their fullest potential. It works towards a future in which there is a strong local economic base in Kawartha Lakes that offers opportunities and an active lifestyle with access to our unique natural assets; where our residents can shop locally for all of their needs and access to fresh local food; where our best and brightest young people will make Kawartha Lakes their family home with satisfying, well-paying jobs; where the villages and neighbourhoods that comprise Kawartha Lakes identify with and realize the benefits of the entire Kawartha Lakes region. It is a place with a vibrant cultural scene that attracts visitors who choose to re-locate here; a place that attracts professionals, creative people and educated entrepreneurs.

The Economic Development Strategy is about spending time and resources differently to drive better results. It is focused on attracting and empowering people because the right mix of engaged people and human resourcefulness is what makes an economy work. And it is focused on place-making – because a vibrant place attracts and retains the best and brightest people.

Background information on the Economic Development Strategy can be found in the document ***City of Kawartha Lakes Economic Development Strategic Plan- Economic Renewal and How to Achieve It.***



Strategic Plan Framework (Economic Development related)



City of Kawartha Lakes

Economic Development Strategy goals

1. Adopt a City-wide focus
2. Grow specific business sectors
3. Encourage a positive community business culture
4. Align and inspire City resources
5. Attract and retain a new generation of great entrepreneurs and workforce

Strategic goals, objectives and actions



Goal 1: Adopt a City-wide focus

A positive, differentiated awareness of Kawartha Lakes is important to focus activities and communications. This should be accomplished through unified marketing and developing City wide programs that leverage the advantage of being a City with a local approach to implementing in communities across the municipality. The following positioning statement should be the basis for this approach:

The City of Kawartha Lakes is a unique collection of villages and neighbourhoods connected by lakes, waterways and farms.

Objective	Actions	Timeline
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
	Create and implement a digital marketing campaign to promote existing programs and new opportunities.	2018
	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
	Develop and implement a City of Kawartha Lakes brand across all departments to align and integrate messaging across the municipality.	2020

Objective	Actions	Timeline
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
	Develop, fund and implement a Downtown Community Improvement Plan.	2018
	Develop a Kawartha Lakes Downtown Revitalization program based on the Ontario Downtown Revitalization Program.	2019
	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

Measurement:

- Advertising and marketing reach
- Number of Downtown Revitalization Action Plan activities complete
- Return on investment from Community Improvement Plan



Goal 2: Grow specific business sectors

The significant majority of new jobs in a community will come from the growth of existing businesses. There are five established or emerging clusters across Kawartha Lakes that should be the focus of economic development programs. These programs should firstly help existing businesses grow and new businesses enter the local market, and secondly work with these businesses to develop their respective clusters as a whole to grow the number of businesses and employment in Kawartha Lakes.

A **cluster** is a geographic concentration of businesses and associated institutions that strengthen each other because they are located in close proximity. Due to location and advantageous local conditions, they benefit from access to skilled labour, knowledge and information sharing, and solve problems in their peer network. The development of clusters is an effective economic development strategy to stimulate innovation, accelerate business growth and increase competitiveness.

The five clusters and objectives for each are listed below:

Clusters	Objectives
Agriculture and Food Including value-added food processing and agri-culinary.	<p>Grow the City of Kawartha Lakes agri-brand; begin with a focus on the existing livestock strength and build.</p> <p>Grow the food processing sector (expansion of existing processors, identify new opportunities for processing and distribution) to build employment around value added agriculture.</p> <p>Support the innovation and diversification of local agriculture to increase farm revenues. Grow agri-culinary participation among producers and connect the results to tourism.</p> <p>Increase businesses, employment and tourism.</p>

Clusters	Objectives
<p>Tourism</p> <p>Including specialized retail and downtowns as tourism hubs.</p>	<p>Increase the volume of year-round accommodations of all kinds, in all markets.</p> <p>Develop operator experiences to boost tourism traffic (cross-sector and cross promotion).</p> <p>Develop a guided touring sector (e.g. two wheels, snowmobiles, cross-country skiing, waterways).</p> <p>Expand visitation into the shoulder-season and winter and connect these off peak activities to culture.</p> <p>Identify and support unique or differentiated retail that either generates tourism visits or extends those visits on a community by community basis.</p>
<p>Specialized Manufacturing</p> <p>Including fabrication, assembly, and technology.</p>	<p>Cultivate a community of specialized manufacturers that raises the profile of the cluster across Kawartha Lakes.</p> <p>Support the innovation, growth and expansion of existing businesses to increase sustainability and employment.</p> <p>Create an active network of local manufacturing mentors.</p> <p>Develop a program to attract new manufacturers (start-up and relocating) to existing employment areas.</p> <p>Develop infrastructure to support the health of local industrial areas.</p>

Clusters	Objectives
<p>Culture</p> <p>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).</p> <p>Foster the development of cultural events and festivals (partnering with tourism).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Grow the craft/maker segment (number of small or micro businesses and sales per business due to increased tourism traffic).</p> <p>Action the Heritage and Cultural Implementation plans.</p>
<p>Engineered Products and Related Services</p> <p>Inventors and makers that improve processes and technology across clusters.</p>	<p>Develop opportunities with Fleming College, educational institutions and innovation organizations to expand business and employment opportunities in Kawartha Lakes (particular emphasis on environment and water engineering, and disruptive technology).</p> <p>Establish a network of existing business owners and leaders with ambitions to grow their cluster (to grow businesses and employment).</p>

Objective	Actions	Timeline
<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.</p>	<p>2017</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).</p>	<p>2017</p>
	<p>Align cluster activities and communications within the new City of Kawartha Lakes brand.</p>	<p>2018</p>

Measurement:

- Number of businesses participating in cluster networks
- Business growth and sector inquiries
- Number of tourists (based on Ministry reporting which lags current timelines)



Goal 3: Encourage a positive community business culture

Identify, nurture and expand a positive Kawartha Lakes business culture that crosses community boundaries and is aligned with the Nurture Clusters goal. This will lead to an increased ability for the municipality, local businesses, organizations, and communities to work together to build communities and support business growth.

Objective	Actions	Timeline
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
	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
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
	Support community based business organizations in local economic development activities.	ongoing

Measurement:

- Participation in annual cluster summits
- Number of ambassador program partnerships established
- Business community engagement (number of businesses and organization sharing messaging through social media)



Goal 4: Align and inspire City resources

Organizations that works together towards specific, common goals typically outperform organizations that operate in silos. Aligning internal resources that impact business development and attraction will improve the reputation of the municipality as a partner in economic development and encourage new investment.

Objective	Actions	Timeline
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
	Integrate new economic development programs around, and in support of, growth in the five clusters.	2018
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 the development process to encourage business growth and expansion.	2018
Improve municipal policies and procedures.	Integrate an economic development focus to projects City-wide (e.g. parks, trails, downtown redevelopment, infrastructure).	2017
	Complete the Comprehensive Zoning By-law and Official Plan updates.	2018 and beyond
	Continue to implement the Planning Approvals Task Force recommendations and update policies to facilitate leading edge development that is in the best interests of growing a vibrant community.	ongoing

Objective	Actions	Timeline
<p>Plan and execute critical infrastructure projects.</p>	<p>Fund and implement infrastructure projects to accommodate growth and investment in a competitive manner.</p>	<p>ongoing</p>

Measurement:

- Number of new and expanding businesses in the pilot program



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

People are the focus of this strategy. It is people who are owners, employees and leaders of business and community organizations. It is the ambition and decisions of these people that will create employment growth and contribute significantly to vibrant communities. Kawartha Lakes naturally attracts an older demographic, therefore, economic development programs will focus on retaining, repatriating and attracting a younger demographic to balance the population age and support a healthy, vibrant economy.

Objective	Actions	Timeline
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
	Promote Young Professionals Week annually and support young professional groups.	2018
	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
Repatriate Kawartha Lakes alumni.	Develop projects with Fleming College and local universities to connect with and keep alumni in the community.	2019
	Create an alumni Kawartha Lakes homecoming event in the Summer to communicate the new opportunities for relocating back to Kawartha Lakes.	2019

Measurement:

- Number of steering group participants under the age of 40
- Social media engagement
- Number of people at events

Implementation- Turning the Plan from Vision to Reality

The Economic Development Strategy is designed to focus and refine activities of the City and specifically the Economic Development division. It is focused on talent and community building within the municipality, and positioning and reputation building outside the municipality.

Working the strategy will:

- unite and amplify the strengths of our existing business owners;
- better serve the needs of business, support the creation of new jobs and businesses;
- engage younger business leaders;
- and improve the reputation and recognition of Kawartha Lakes as a desirable community for business and life.

To be successful, the plan must be implemented. To do this, this document will be used as the basis for developing operational plans at the division level. Staff will monitor and report on the results of this strategy on an annual basis. As was true for the development of the document, Staff will continue to work in partnership with the community to implement, refine and share results.

“Local Economic Development is a process by which public, business and non-governmental sector partners work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation. It’s about communities continually improving their investment climate and business enabling environment to enhance their competitiveness, retain jobs and improve incomes.”

World Bank & FCM

