

**North Perth Economic Development Advisory Committee Meeting  
Agenda**

Date: September 11, 2024  
Time: 3:30 pm  
Location: North Perth Municipal Building  
Committee Room

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<b>1. Call to Order</b>	
<b>2. Land Acknowledgement Statement</b>	
<p>“We acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the Anishnaabe people. We wish to recognize the long history of Indigenous People of Canada and show our respect to them today. We recognize their stewardship of the land, may we all live with respect on this land and live in peace and friendship.”</p>	
<b>3. Approve Agenda / Additions to the Agenda</b>	
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<b>11. Adjournment</b>	

# North Perth Economic Development Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date:** May 21, 2024  
**Time:** 3:30 pm  
**Location:** North Perth Municipal Building  
Committee Room

## **Members Present:**

Lee Anne Andriessen, Chair  
Neil Anstett (Remote)  
Andrew Coghlin  
Alicia McClure (Remote)  
Tanya Terpstra

## **Staff Present:**

Kim Kowch, North Perth Economic Development Officer  
Grace Murakami, North Perth Economic Development Coordinator (Recording Secretary)  
Jessica McLean, Manager of Strategic Initiatives  
Kriss Snell, Chief Administrative Officer  
Matt Cardiff, North Perth Agricultural Specialist  
Justin Dias, Perth County Economic Development Officer  
Clara Leney, Perth County Tourism Officer  
Helen Golob, Perth County Economic Development Officer

## **Absent:**

Abha Dayal  
Todd Kasenberg  
David Meulensteen

### **1. Call to Order**

Chair Andriessen called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

### **2. Land Acknowledgement Statement**

Chair Andriessen read the land acknowledgement statement. “We acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the Anishnaabe people. We wish to recognize the long history of Indigenous People of Canada and show our respect to them today. We recognize their stewardship of the land; may we all live with respect on this land and live in peace and friendship.”

**3. Approve Agenda / Additions to the Agenda**

Round table introductions for Committee Members and newly hired Perth County Tourism Officer and Economic Development Officer.

**Moved by:** Andrew Coghlin **Seconded by:** Tanya Terpstra

THAT: The agenda be approved.

**CARRIED**

**4. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest**

There were none.

**5. Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

**Moved by:** Neil Anstett **Seconded by:** Andrew Coghlin

THAT: The minutes of the March 20th, 2024, North Perth Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting be approved.

**CARRIED.**

**6. Tourism / Destination Animation**

The Chair reintroduced the topic of Tourism/Destination Animation. The committee expressed interest in implementing public art across the municipality as Tourism/Destination Animation initiative.

The Perth County Tourism Officer began by sharing some of their tourism and destination animation projects, such as announcing the release of the 2024 Discover More Tourism Brochure and Apple Bottom Orchards joining as a Discover More Adventures: Signature Experience. The Perth County Tourism Officer shared that they would have a RTO4-funded Economic Impact and Visitor Analysis study that will run from June to December. The results of which the NPEDAC committee will have access to aid in evaluating local statistics.

The following discussion touched on considerations of which types of public art or installations would best suit the public spaces in North Perth. The committee agreed that a public survey would be essential in collecting the necessary input from the public and aimed to have survey results prepared for the next meeting. Discussions included the guiding principles for the project, incorporating agricultural excellence, and other strategic priorities,

and considering locations like public trails and parks, as well as private property. Suggestions included interchangeable murals, involving businesses and local artists. A long-term goal for this project is to promote interregional travel across North Perth.

The North Perth Economic Development Officer also reported on the Listowel BIA extending the Summer Days program from July 29<sup>th</sup> – August 10<sup>th</sup>.

**7. Listowel Downtown Parkette**

The North Perth Economic Development Officer announced the completion of the Listowel Downtown Parkette and sought the committee's input on an official name for the space. Members supplied feedback on possible site name options. Plans for an official grand opening and naming announcement are in progress.

**8. North Perth Economic Development Update (Kim Kowch)**

**8.1 March 20th Update**

**8.2 May 21st Update**

The Economic Development Officer (EDO) for North Perth provided a summary of her report items such as involvement at the LDSS ICE Day/program, the progress of the Housing Action Plan, Set7 programming, The Agricultural Excellence Strategy, and the promotional platform Driftscape.

**9. Perth County Economic Development Update (Justin Dias)**

**9.1 March 20th Update**

**9.2 May 21st Update**

The Perth County Economic Development Officer provided a summary of his report including further introduction to new staff members, the conclusion of the Digital Service Squad program, upcoming PC Connect campaigns and an upcoming business tour to be hosted at Between The Lines in Listowel on July 15<sup>th</sup> 3:30pm.

**10. Sector / Citizen Contributions (Chair)**

Discussion by Committee members included inquiries about the North Perth Community Calendar, local business transitions, the Facade Improvement Program, Set7 and ESL programs. Discussion also touched on natural gas expansion, cell towers as well as internet infrastructure in the area.

**11. Adjournment**

The Chair confirmed that the next NPEDAC meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 11th at 3:30pm.

**Moved by:** Alicia McClure

**Seconded by:** Neil Anstett

THAT: The NPEDAC adjourns the meeting at 4:58 p.m.

**CARRIED**

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CHAIR

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SECRETARY

## **Agricultural and Agri-Business Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

Date: August 21, 2024  
Time: 7:00 pm

Members Present           Christa Royce  
                                    Chelsea Steenbergen  
                                    Erin Doan  
                                    Keith Stoltz  
                                    Ralph Coneybeare  
                                    Tina Beirnes  
                                    Marc Noordam

Members Absent  
  
                                    Cameron Lago  
                                    Hernando Restrepo

Others Present  
  
                                    Matt Cardiff, Agricultural Specialist  
                                    Mackenzie Smith, Communications Coordinator  
                                    Sarah Carter, Clerk  
                                    Jessica McLean, Manager of Strategic Initiatives  
                                    Kim Kowch, Economic Development Officer

**1. Call to Order**

Agricultural Specialist Matt Cardiff called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. Land Acknowledgement**

“We acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the Anishinaabe people. We wish to recognize the long history of Indigenous People of Canada and show our respect to them today. We recognize their stewardship of the land, may we all live with respect on this land and live in peace and friendship.”

**3. Introduction of Members and Staff**

Staff and committee members provided brief introductions.

**4. Policy Training and Education**

**5. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Clerk Carter opened nominations for the position of Chairperson.

Keith Stoltz nominated Tina Beirnes.

There were no additional nominations after the third call.

Clerk Carter asked for a show of hands for Tina Beirnes as the Chairperson.

It was moved by Ralph Coneybeare and seconded by Christa Royce THAT Tina Beirnes is the Chairperson of the Agricultural and Agri-Business Advisory Committee.

**CARRIED**

Clerk Carter declared Tina Beirnes as the Chairperson of the Agricultural and Agri-Business Advisory Committee.

Clerk Carter opened nominations for the position of Vice Chairperson.

Tina Beirnes nominated Christa Royce for the position of Vice Chairperson.

There we no additional nominations after the third call.

It was moved by Marc Noordam and seconded by Keith Stoltz THAT Christa Royce is the Vice Chairperson of the Agriculture and Agri-Business Advisory Committee.

**CARRIED**

Clerk Carter declared Christa Royce as the Vice Chairperson of the Agricultural and Agri-Business Advisory Committee.

**6. Confirmation of Agenda**

It was moved by Marc Noordam and seconded by Chelsea Steenberggen THAT the agenda for tonight's meeting be approved, as presented.

**CARRIED**

**4. Policy Training and Education**

**4.4 Terms of Reference**

Staff briefly presented the Terms of Reference to the committee.

**7. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**

No declarations.

**8. Staff Report**

Staff presented the Agriculture Excellence Strategy and the implementation. Staff received questions from committee members.

**9. Roundtable**

Committee members shared items that they are currently experiencing in their sectors of agriculture. Committee members shared interest in having a member from the building department attend a future committee meeting to discuss MDS and zoning.

**10. Next Meeting Date**

Committee members discussed the next meeting date and the frequency of meetings. Suggested meeting dates for 2025 will be brought to the next meeting.

It was moved by Keith Stoltz and seconded by Marc Noordam THAT the next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.

**CARRIED**

**11. Adjournment**

It was moved by Chelsea Steenbergen and seconded by Erin Doan THAT the meeting adjourns at 8:51 p.m. to meet again on Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.

**CARRIED**

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Tina Beirnes – Chair

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Mackenzie Smith – Recording Secretary



<b>Section:</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b>
<b>Sub-section:</b> Standards of Conduct	<b>Effective Date:</b> February 2014
<b>Subject:</b> Respectful Workplace	<b>Revision Date:</b> January 2024
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## **RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY**

### **PURPOSE:**

This policy establishes rules and guidelines to ensure a positive, safe, and respectful environment for everyone. This policy outlines expectations for a supportive and respectful work environment and outlines measures taken to address inappropriate behaviour if it occurs.

### **SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all Municipality of North Perth employees, members of the public, council, committee members, and contractors. This policy applies to all in-person interactions and all forms of communication including social media, telephone, and written correspondence.

### **POLICY:**

The Municipality of North Perth is committed to fostering an environment where there is respect for yourself, respect for others, and responsibility for your actions (RZone). The municipality will work in partnership with the community to ensure everyone can enjoy a respectful and positive environment. All parties are encouraged to listen with intent, understand both perspectives, participate in respectful and open communication, and work together to find productive solutions. Employees are not expected to put themselves at risk or jeopardize anyone's safety when dealing with difficult situations.

### **Inappropriate Behaviour**

Inappropriate behaviour or actions include, but not limited to, the following:

- Attempts to incite anger in others
- Throwing articles in a deliberate or aggressive manner
- Unwanted physical contact/violence
- Theft of property
- Possession of weapons
- Illegal consumption of alcohol or drugs
- Contravention of Municipal by-laws, policies, or procedures
- Vandalism: the deliberate destruction, damage or defacing of property
- Harassment (any form)
- Targeted vulgarity and rudeness

<b>Section:</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b>
<b>Sub-section:</b> Standards of Conduct	<b>Effective Date:</b> February 2014
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- Use of profanity and obscene language that is derogatory or insensitive such as racial slurs
- Yelling and shouting in anger or frustration
- Causing distress to municipal employees. This could include use of hostile, abusive, or offensive language, or unreasonable fixation on an employee causing fear.
- Criticism that frightens, belittles, or demeans people
- Persistent threats of retaliation
- The use of all cell phones, cameras, video recording devices, personal digital devices, or any other equipment with video or photographic abilities in public change rooms or public washrooms

### **Action Taken in response to Inappropriate Behaviour**

When inappropriate behaviour/actions occur, the following steps are encouraged:

1. Employees will make reasonable efforts to resolve issues in a professional manner for everyone's dignity.
2. Without jeopardizing anyone's safety, attempt to de-escalate the situation in a calm and collected manner. Employees are not expected to respond to occurrences if they feel unsafe or threatened.
3. Empathize with the individual and let them know their behaviour is unacceptable and if it continues, they will be asked to leave (ex. I understand you're frustrated, but we will only continue this conversation if it's in a respectful manner. If not, you will be asked to leave.)
4. If the individual does not cooperate, respectfully ask them to leave. If needed, call for your Leader to support.
5. As a last resort, if the individual refuses to leave, do not engage in an argument or physical confrontation. Call the police and wait for them to arrive while ensuring that you and any others in jeopardy, are in a safe location. (**OPP non-emergency contact: 1-888-310-1122**)
6. Notify your Leader who will then initiate appropriate next steps with HR. If the incident warrants an incident report, the employee will be asked to complete an Incident Report within 24 hours of the incident.



<b>Section:</b>	<b>Policy Number:</b>
<b>Sub-section:</b> Standards of Conduct	<b>Effective Date:</b> February 2014
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## Incident Reporting Measures

When an incident report is initiated, the following steps will be taken:

1. The CAO, in consultation with HR, will thoroughly investigate to understand if communication with the alleged offender has been adequate and fair. Following those steps, the situation may be deemed as either disrespectful/inappropriate and/or further employee training/support is required.
2. Incident reports will be investigated on an individual case-by-case basis and the CAO may seek external legal advice, where appropriate.
3. If the incident has been deemed disrespectful and inappropriate by the CAO, the applicable Department Head will collaborate with HR to provide appropriate notice to the identified individual of action to be taken, within 14 days of the incident.
4. Depending on severity and circumstances of the incident, the following notice measures may apply, but not limited to:
  - Verbal Warning from the applicable Department Head
  - Written warning Letter outlining incident and further consequences if behaviour continues
  - Specified length of ban from a facility depending on severity and further consequences may apply (OPP involvement/measures)
  - Pursuing legal action, including the issuance of a Notice of Trespass, or pursuing cost recovery
  - Limiting the individual to one method of contact or limiting to one Municipal point of contact
5. Applicable employees will be notified of any individual who have been subject to remedial action for their awareness
6. Incident reports will be retained in HR in a confidential and secure manner.

\*If members of the public want to report acts of inappropriate behaviour from Municipal employees, they are encouraged to speak to the applicable Supervisor to review the situation and find a solution. If they are wanting to pursue further action, they are encouraged to submit an incident report on the Request Portal through the Municipal Website and the above incident report measures will apply.

(Link: <https://v4.citywidesolutions.com/csr/northperth/>)

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## Appeal Process

If an individual wishes to appeal any action taken by the Municipality in response to inappropriate behaviour, the individual can complete the following steps:

1. Address concerns in writing to the Council of the Municipality of North Perth, within 14 days of the decision. The appeal will be reviewed by North Perth Council and a response will be given. Any decision made is final.
2. If the individual doesn't agree with Council's decision, all further concerns regarding the incident can be referred to the Ontario Ombudsman.

## EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Applicable Training for departments and policy review will be provided to employees during orientation to support a positive customer service relationship and service delivery. HR is responsible for monitoring violations of this policy and following up with appropriate employees, as necessary.

All employees agree to report to their Direct Supervisor with any known violation of this Policy. Failure to comply with all components of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

## POLICY REVIEW:

This Policy may be amended as deemed necessary and appropriate and aligns with North Perth's workplace violence and harassment policies. Also, this policy complies with the Ontario Employment Standards Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Human Rights Code, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and all other applicable law and regulations.

## REVISION HISTORY:

Revision	Date	By-Law/Resolution	Comments
1	February 2014	93.02/14	Issue Date (RZone Policy)
2	January 2024	401.08.23	Policy Overhaul, updated incident reporting measures and steps

# North Perth Economic Development Advisory Committee (NPEDAC)

Strategic Initiatives Department – Economic Development Division

Economic Development Report – Sept 11, 2024

## **Community Improvement Plan (CIP) - Streetscape**

### Listowel Downtown Parkette and Downtown Enhancements

The official Grand Opening of the Listowel Downtown Parkette was held on July 3, 2024 and the official name of “Character Square” was announced. The new name will acknowledge and foster the role of this gathering space and character qualities in building belonging and welcoming to visitors and residents. Upcoming initiatives, including public art and signage, will utilize this name to guide the vision and use of the space. Stakeholders, dignitaries, staff and media were in attendance. Official signage and Character Square public art and decorative elements are included in 2024 and 2025 Capital budget plans.

Façade concepts for 104 Wallace Ave to enhance the downtown core and building façade are nearing completion and Council consideration. The designs will integrate downtown commercial design guidelines and workforce attraction place branding to support youth and workforce attraction. The facade updates are a component of the RED application focused on innovation and business development – details below.

### Façade Improvement Program (FIP)

The Façade Improvement Program (FIP) is steadily progressing with a focus on increasing engagement. To achieve this, staff have been conducting door-to-door outreach to businesses in Listowel, which has generated positive feedback. Nine businesses have expressed interest in the program and requested further information, with about half having prior involvement with the program in previous years. Several businesses expressed their interest in applying in 2024, aiming to complete their projects by 2025. The most sought-after improvements include signage, lighting, and accessibility upgrades. Recently, the FIP saw the completion of its first project from the 2024 intake cycle. Additionally, two projects in Listowel and one in Atwood are set to begin facade improvements in the coming weeks, with expected completion within the next month or two.

## **Workforce / Youth Attraction and Retention**

### Driftscape App

Promotions for the Driftscape app have increased with outreach through multiple channels, including prerecorded radio ads, a live on-location featurette with 101.7 The One, and digital billboard features from both the Chamber of Commerce and the Inkerman St. screen. Printed flyers with deep-link QR codes have been distributed, as well as revisions to allow users to submit events or listings directly on the app, through a digital form.

With the help and collaboration of Perth County, the North Perth Farm Gate Tour was launched on Driftscape, highlighting 14 farm gates, shops, and stores across the region. The tour, live since August 13th and running through the end of October, is currently the most popular Point of Interest (POI) on the app in the past three months with over 75 interactions. The Farm Gate Tour will be featured on the Inkerman St. Digital billboard for the month of September. Search **#FarmGateTour** in the app to find the tour.

# North Perth Economic Development Advisory Committee (NPEDAC)

## Strategic Initiatives Department – Economic Development Division

### Economic Development Report – Sept 11, 2024

To further promote Driftscape as a whole, obtained promotional materials, which will be distributed at local high schools and other promotional events.

Upcoming Driftscape events include: the Listowel Farm & Makers Market on Saturdays (September 7th, 21st, and October 5th), the Crafter's Yard Sale on September 14th, the 2024 Kinsmen Charity Golf Classic on September 28th, and ongoing drop-in activities like pickleball (Mondays & Wednesdays) and outdoor soccer for ages 20+ on Wednesdays at the Steve Kerr Complex Field. Use **#exploreNP** in the Driftscape app to find all North Perth Content.

### North Perth Workforce Attraction Employment Branding project

The North Perth Workforce Attraction Employment Branding implementation continues and will be entering the public phase in September and October 2024. This employment landscape brand for North Perth will stimulate employer branding and workforce attraction and retention across the businesses of North Perth with training, mentorship, tools and resources. Re-allocation of RED funding enabled additional focus on photography, video, digital and marketing resources build sustainability into successful integration of the brand. Over 8 days of photography shoots capturing businesses, community, schools, agriculture, lifestyles and landscape in North Perth were coordinated by staff resulting in a comprehensive gallery of high-resolution images for employers use and future municipal projects and marketing. Student outreach initiatives are a key element in brand promotion for the remainder of 2024 and 2025.

Workforce attraction branding tools available to all business will include: 1) Photography library; 2) Dedicated webpage with downloadable content, assets, and tools; 3) Promotional videos 4) Shareable social tools and templates; 5) Banners to borrow (pillar, map, and sector specific); 6) Signature placemaking collateral and swag; 7) Other marketing support : web copy, digital screen animations etc. 7) Printed and pdf documents for employers to use on websites and during on-boarding 8) Story-making kits to promote careers, sectors and businesses.

North Perth's 4 brand pillars that tell North Perth's place brand story in an authentic, relevant and compelling way for workforce attraction and attention are:

**1) Cultivating Careers** – We grow great careers here from leading Ag tech and food producers to next gen business builders ready to make their mark. Tap into powerful career supports including reskilling & upskilling programs.

**2) Well-connected advantages-** All the comforts of county living with easy access to shopping, dining, learning and healthcare...well connected for business and pleasure with trails, lakes and ski hills close by.

**3) Hometown belonging** - A hometown to call your own – with neighbours from down the road and around the globe – where community celebrations and collaborations build belonging.

**4) Champions of opportunity** - Committed to creating sustainable futures for our youth, residents and businesses with do - things -differently ingenuity.

### Set7 Skills and Technology North Perth and Region:

The Set7 learning space at the Elma Memorial Community Centre has been completed, the classroom space will be available for rentals beginning in the fall. Employers, business owners and community groups will be able to use the space and technology for meetings, presentations and virtual/hybrid style training sessions.

Updates and enhancements are complete for level 0-2 ESL curriculum and are in progress for the Home Daycare Course.



# North Perth Economic Development Advisory Committee (NPEDAC)

## Strategic Initiatives Department – Economic Development Division

### Economic Development Report – Sept 11, 2024

Set7 launched a survey in July to seek input from community members, local employers and community organizations regarding future training opportunities. The survey was divided into two sections, the first section had employer specific questions, and the second section was geared towards the general public. There were a total 27 survey respondents, common themes included more courses in English language training, leadership and entrepreneurial training, smart skills training, computer skills and skilled trades. Training related challenges identified included cost and time, keeping certifications up to date, finding training that is close to work/home, and employee motivation to pursue training.

An additional round of SDF funding was announced with an application deadline of October 4, 2024. Staff are discussing the most strategic approach to an application.

Set7 has partnered with North Perth Public Library to host drop-in conversation circles on Thursday evenings beginning in October. The program will be supported by Set7, library staff and community volunteers.

#### Upcoming Courses:

- ESL classes begin in early October at the Steve Kerr Memorial Complex on Saturdays. Set7 will be offering 2 levels of classes to meet the needs of the community.
- ESL classes continue in Palmerston, in partnership with the Town of Minto and Wellington County.
- A Safe Food Handling Course is scheduled for October 3, 2024.
- The Home Daycare course, Working at Heights and Forklift training is anticipated to be offered in the fall.

#### **Agriculture Excellence Strategy Implementation**

The Agricultural Specialist assisted the Perth County Federation of Agriculture's Councillor & Staff Agriculture Education Day in August. A Perth County Food Processors map was developed to help visualize and quantify the extent of the direct and indirect impact Agriculture has on the County's economy. Staff continues to work implementing the Agriculture Excellence Strategy, working with other departments and external stakeholders on key initiatives such as:

- Farm safety
- Further processing opportunities
- On-farm diversified uses
- Integrating agricultural impact mitigation measures into development approval processes
- Connecting farmers with conservation & stewardship resources
- Sharing funding incentives with relevant farms & agri-businesses

The first meeting of the North Perth Agricultural & Agri-Business Advisory Committee (NPAAAC) was held on August 21. The meeting consisted of committee orientation, elections, and a review of the Agriculture Excellence Strategy and RED funding. Tina Beirnes was elected as Chair, and Christa Royce was elected as vice chair. Staff and the committee look forward to working alongside NPEDAC strategically to help North Perth prosper. Minutes for NPAAAC and NPEDAC will be supplied in corresponding agenda packages and staff will attend both meetings.

#### **Housing Action Plan**

In July 2024, the Federal Government announced Round 2 of the Housing Accelerator Fund. Eligible applicants include only those that applied to Round 1 and were unsuccessful

# North Perth Economic Development Advisory Committee (NPEDAC)

## Strategic Initiatives Department – Economic Development Division

### Economic Development Report – Sept 11, 2024

(approximately 360 local governments across Canada). Total funding available in Round 2 is \$400 million. North Perth is in the process of completing an application for submission by the September 13th deadline.

The North Perth Attainable Housing Community Improvement Plan was adopted by North Perth Council at the August 12th Council meeting. The 2024 CIP Implementation Policy was approved by Council at the August 26th Council meeting.

The CIP Financial Incentive Programs available in 2024 are the Planning and Building Permit Fee Grant, Additional Residential Dwelling Unit Grant, and Tax Increment Equivalent Grant. The application intake window opened on August 28th and will close on December 2, 2024. Applications will be evaluated on a first come, first serve basis. The implementation program budget for 2024 is \$75,000. More details on the Attainable Housing CIP and Financial Incentive Programs are available at [www.northperth.ca/housingCIP](http://www.northperth.ca/housingCIP).

North Perth Mayor Kasenberg and CAO Snell participated in a delegation to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing at the 2024 AMO Conference in August. The topic of the delegation was the need for provincial support in housing needs for rural and small communities in Ontario.

### **Rural Economic Development (RED) Project Approval**

Earlier this year, staff submitted a RED funding application focused on strategic economic infrastructure. The Municipality was notified in late spring that the funding application was successful. The successful project is the “North Perth Innovation and Business Centre”. The project objective is to develop under-utilized space in a municipal building located in downtown Listowel. In the future, the space will be used to offer business support and enhance the networking capacity of local entrepreneurs and business owners. This project aligns with the Corporate Strategic Plan goal of Growth and Economic Development, and specifically the strategic action item to create a climate that supports the growth of entrepreneurial start-ups in North Perth. The provincial cost-share funding percentage is 30% of incurred paid eligible costs up to the maximum awarded funds of \$17,350.00. The project and municipal contribution will be brought forward for consideration and approval in the 2025 budget process.

### **North Perth Corporate Strategic Plan Update**

A revised version of the 2023-2026 North Perth Corporate Strategic Plan was adopted by Council on January 8, 2024. The Strategic Plan (originally adopted in November 2023) was updated to include a strategic priority specific to health care recruitment and improving local health care access. The Strategic Plan can be viewed on the [North Perth website](#).

### **Newcomer and Settlement Services**

The Perth County Settlement Worker now has regular hours 1 Friday per month at the North Perth Public Library- Listowel Branch for drop-ins. The worker continues to be available as needed to meet and assess the needs of new immigrants in North Perth. Services are provided by the YMCA Three Rivers for Perth County including North Perth. *Appointments can be made with the Perth County Settlement Worker by calling 548-255-1239 or emailing [lily.yin@ytr.ymca.ca](mailto:lily.yin@ytr.ymca.ca).* *\*\*note recent change to contact info.*



**To:** Chair Andriessen and Members of NPEDAC

**Meeting Date:** September 11, 2024

**Prepared By:** Perth County Economic Development, Tourism & Transportation Staff

**Subject:** Economic Development, Tourism and Transportation Q3 Update (September 2024)

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides an overview of recent developments and accomplishments within Perth County's Economic Development and Tourism programs, highlighting the continued growth and success of key initiatives.

Our BR&E program has seen significant growth, with increased business tours, features (Planted in Perth County), and ongoing support for local businesses. Staff have been instrumental in assisting businesses with funding applications, facilitating connections with ministry staff, and acting as a primary contact for updates and outstanding inquiries. A notable achievement was the successful Employer/Educator Roundtable held in June, which brought together over 30 educators, 13 businesses, and several industry staff to discuss workforce development—a top priority for our department.

Workforce development remains a critical focus, with ongoing promotion of the Workforce Attraction and Retention Employer Toolkit (WARET) and our free Welcoming Communities training program for businesses. Additionally, the "People of Perth County" series is a spin off from our Perth4Youth profiles and will continue to highlight stories of local youth and other demographics who have found their place in the community. The People of Perth County series further showcases the vibrant life that can be cultivated in our communities. This campaign is programed to officially launch in the fall.

Tourism promotion efforts have been robust, with nearly 44,000 Tourism Brochures, 1,000 Farm Gate Maps, and 600 Cycle Maps distributed. The Tourism Economic Impact/Visitation Data Analysis project, funded by RTO4, is currently in its first phase and will provide essential insights into the economic contributions of tourism to Perth County. This study will analyze tourism

expenditures by sector and community, offering a comprehensive understanding of its impact on employment, revenue generation, and the overall economic multiplier effect.

Our tourism offerings continue to expand with the launch of our 16th Signature Experience, featuring Apple Picking at Applebottom Orchards in North Perth. Additionally, four new farm gate itineraries have been developed, promoting participating farm gates and experiences across each municipality. The digital farm gate map has been enhanced with two new filters—allowing users to search by municipality and product type—offering a more personalized shopping experience. The upcoming "Shareworthy Moments" initiative will further enrich our Discover More Adventures Signature Experiences Program by encouraging local tourism businesses to create or enhance visually appealing, culturally significant, and emotionally engaging experiences that visitors will want to share online.

PC Connect has been actively promoted through targeted marketing campaigns, highlighting the affordability and convenience of the service. This includes a locally focused campaign during the summer and another targeting larger urban centers, emphasizing the cost-effective transportation options available. Outreach efforts to employers and organizations have identified potential modifications to routes and timings that could better meet community needs. Additionally, a PC Connect insert was included in the quarterly HPPH newsletter, a vital communication tool for the Mennonite and Anabaptist communities.

These initiatives collectively underscore our department's commitment to fostering economic growth, enhancing workforce development, and promoting Perth County as an exceptional place to live, work, and visit.

## **UPDATES:**

### ***Business Retention Expansion and Attraction***

#### **Business Retention and Expansion Survey Follow-Up**

Follow-up continues with businesses who completed the 2023 BR+E mail-out and online survey. Businesses identified the need for marketing and promotion assistance, networking opportunities and information on grants/funding and business supports. Individual businesses are being supported with their needs as they relate to workforce, commercial/industrial space, funding programs, etc. Some immediate insights/outcomes from the survey responses include:

- 4 business tours completed
- 1 upcoming Business Tour
- 31 Business Features Completed (*Planted in Perth County*)

- Upcoming Breakfast Before Business Networking Event

## **Business Tours**

Business tours are an important tool for economic development staff and council members, offering several benefits that contribute to local economic growth and community development. Participants receive first hand understanding of the local business, insight into operations, connection to economic trends, fostering open communication between the municipality and business, which helps with collaborative problem solving. Recent business tours include D&S Downham Equipment, Woodcock Transportation Group, Feeney Design Build and two North Perth businesses, Between the Lines and LTI.

## **Business Features (*Planted in Perth County*)**

The development of Perth County Business Features is an initiative that supports the marketing and promotion needs of businesses identified through the BR+E and helps showcase businesses that may not otherwise be highlighted on our tourism pages, a business tour and/or other initiatives. Sharing and posting business features promote local economic growth, attracts new investments, and enhances community engagement. By highlighting successful businesses, we can strengthen the local brand, foster pride, and encourage residents to support local.

## **Business Development and Business Supports**

Staff continue to support a number of business development projects across Perth County. This includes existing businesses looking to expand their footprint, add staff, and expand their product offerings. Support for these business development projects range from facilitating applications to upper levels of government funding programs (ex. Southwestern Ontario Development Fund), connections with ministry staff, and acting as a point of contact for updates and outstanding inquiries. A comprehensive review of Perth County's online Business Directory was completed during Q2 with 259 businesses added and 309 businesses updated. The updated Business Directory assists staff with business support and development through integration with our CRM and Constant Contact email application to share our Perth County newsletters and targeted communication on available funding & programs. The updated Business Directory listings are also critical as they serve as the first result on Google and other search engines for businesses that do not maintain their own website.

## **Entrepreneurship Programs and Training**

Foodpreneur Advantage Program – This is an ongoing 10-week training program for food entrepreneurs and food manufacturers looking to grow their business offered in partnership with the Stratford Perth Centre for Business and through the London Small Business Centre. Participants are able to take part in all or

selected training seminars that relate to their business need. The first intake of the program included seven Perth County food entrepreneurs with a second intake and round of training that started on August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Employer/Educator Roundtable**

The Employer Educator Roundtable was held on June 7<sup>th</sup>. The event provided an opportunity for local employers and educators from the AMDSB and Mitchell District High School to connect for a facilitated discussion about fostering connections and increasing collaboration to support student outcomes. In attendance were 13 local employers, over 30 educators and a number of industry representatives. Some of the outcomes from the discussion included improved communications through sharing contacts, student placement opportunities and an opportunity to engage students, parents and employers through a career-fair event.

### **Investment Attraction**

Staff continue to pursue new investments to support a diverse and growing local economy that supports a healthy industrial tax base, local employment and replacement of exiting industries/employers. Membership with the Southwestern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA) continues to be staff's primary vehicle for outbound FDI through cost-shared lead generation activities and tradeshow, leveraged through funding from the Invest Canada Communities Initiatives program. The 2024 tradeshow to date include NPE (Plastics) and Hannover Messe (Industry & Technology), as well as JSAE (Automotive) with 50+ meetings completed. Staff continue to support a number of inbound investment inquiries through MEDJCT, real estate agents and site selection professionals to facilitate a match with suitable available lands, landowners and private developers.

### ***People and Workforce Development Programming & Activities***

#### **Workforce Attraction and Retention Employer Toolkit (WARET)**

WARET is a collection of free resources for local employers and includes templates, sample policies, checklists and how-to guides developed from best practices from across the country on topics such as flexible work arrangements, co-housing arrangements, health & wellness programs, employee recognition programs and more. This online resource helps alleviate some of the local workforce challenges by providing a single source for implementable tools that can be used or easily adapted by businesses of any size or industry. To date, a total of 113 users have registered for access to the online portal which houses the toolkit, and staff continue to look for opportunities to leverage and share the toolkit, including an application to speak at the Rural Talks to Rural Summit.

#### **Welcoming Communities Training**

Staff continue to promote this free training offering to local businesses. The training includes online modules developed in partnership with Fanshawe's Corporate Training Solutions and Intercultural Competency Advantage Program. Training modules include:

1. Essentials of Intercultural Competency.
2. Effective Intercultural Communications.
3. Power Dynamics and Systemic Discrimination.

### **Employment Engagement Profiles (*People of Perth County*)**

This project is a spin off from our previously developed Prosper in Perth County youth profiles showcasing career opportunities available across a variety of industries to support youth retention. The campaign was used to highlight stories of Perth County youth/young professionals who had built their careers in Perth County. This included those who had left to pursue post-secondary education or other career opportunities and returned, those who had built a successful career from within Perth County, and all of the lifestyle, economic and social factors that factored into their decisions. The People of Perth County series has been developed to continue telling the stories of Perth County youth and other demographics who have found their place in Perth County. The Planted in Perth County Series serves as an example of the great life that can be developed in our communities.

### **Job Fairs and Workforce Engagement**

Staff supported the iFarm event in Stratford on June 11, this event saw 628 students from across the AMDSB. During the community BBQ staff took the opportunity to promote careers in agriculture and the impact of agriculture in Perth County to 800 attendees. Staff continue to offer job fair partnership opportunities to local employers through Job Fairs Canada.

### **University of Waterloo Economic Development/Tourism Projects- Year 2**

Perth County regularly participates in the University of Waterloo Economic Development Program (EDP) as a host community for their Year 1 and Year 2 case study projects. The University of Waterloo EDP provides economic development professionals from across Canada with an immersive, week-long educational opportunity to engage in courses offered by leading economic development academics and practitioners, and includes a case study component. Professionals in the program visit their assigned community and bring their expertise & experience to help solve case study projects for host communities. Perth County submitted two case studies and hosted two groups on June 6th from the Year 2 Tourism cohort. Students completed research and did an analysis for a stand-alone tourism website as well as best practices for tourism promotion marketing amalgamation.

## ***Destination Development and Destination Marketing Programming & Activities***

### **Media & Advertising**

Division staff continue to market Perth County as a top tourism destination in Ontario through various strategic media partnerships and advertising opportunities. To date, staff have booked and/or submitted advertisements, advertorials, blogs, social posts, and more in the following locations:

- Canadian Cycling Magazine
- Stratford Festival Visitor Guide
- 401 ONRoute Summer Fun Guide
- Globe and Mail Explore Ontario Summer Edition
- Culinary Tourism Alliance (Ontario Culinary)
- CGLCC Rainbow Registered Guide
- North Perth Summer Guide
- Globe and Mail Explore Ontario Fall Edition

### **Discover More Tourism Brochure**

In addition to our initial distribution of Discover More Tourism Brochures to 34,132 local and surrounding households, and 150 local locations (including municipal offices, libraries, and featured businesses), promotional materials have been continuously distributed throughout Perth County and beyond.

In total, we distributed just under 44,000 Tourism Brochures, 1,000 Farm Gate Maps and 600 Cycle Maps. Promotional assets were mailed to targeted Ontario Travel Information Centres.

### **Social Media Promotion**

Traffic to our social media pages has increased since the last quarter:

- Perth County Tourism has visited and promoted 68 unique businesses on our social channels since May
- Perth County Tourism Facebook page visits have increased 15%
- Perth County Tourism Instagram page visits have increased 39%
- Perth County Tourism Instagram reach has increased 294%
- Our social channels have gained 500 new followers

This growth can be partially accredited to our most recent social media influencer collaboration with CuratedKW. This video, themed 'Girls Day in Perth County' saw:

- 48,000 views
- 1,756 post interactions, and
- Reached 29,144 unique accounts

In October, Explore Ontario – an account with 271K followers, will be visiting Perth County for a curated ‘Family Fall Fun’ influencer trip.

### **Economic Impact and Visitation Data Analysis Project**

Our County wide Tourism Economic Impact and Visitation Data Analysis Project with RTO4 is currently in its first phase. This project aims to collect Perth County-specific tourism visitation data to establish a baseline for informed decision making and sustainable development. The first phase includes conducting primary research across the County in the form of an intercept survey. RT04 and Perth County have hired Forum Research to manage this project. Forum Research collected 300+ survey responses over 10 locations between August 26<sup>th</sup> and September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Based on the data collected in the intercept survey, Forum Research will begin the data analysis and economic modeling. Forum Research has access to a number of different data sources, including geo-indicator data, expenditure reports, accommodation information, and visitor demographics.

The study will also provide a comprehensive understanding of the economic contribution of tourism to Perth County, including employment generation, revenue generation, and the overall economic multiplier effect. This research will provide vital data on tourism expenditures by sector and community, highlighting the aggregate impact.

### **Discover More Adventures Signature Experiences**

The Discover More Adventures Experiential Tourism Program remains a key element of Perth County Tourism’s destination development and destination marketing efforts, with 15 active Signature Experiences.

The opening of The Perth Farmhouse’s Sip and Graze Experience marked one of our most successful Signature Experience launches to date; garnering media attention from several local outlets including CTV News. The promotional video saw over 10K plays, with 367 unique engagements.

Our 16th Signature Experience launched in the first week of September, featuring Apple Picking at Applebottom Orchards. Their opening day was September 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Discover More Flavour Program**

Perth County Tourism continues to build on ongoing agritourism development and marketing efforts, including expanding and enhancing the Discover More Flavour Farm Gate Map program that currently has 85 active participants. New versions of the Bakery Trail and Farm Gate Itineraries have been updated and

published, including: Animal Encounters, Fruits and Flowers, Vegetable Exploration, Meat and Cheese Tour, Pick-Your-Own, and Syrup, Jam and Honey.

We have developed four farm gate itineraries, promoting participating farm gates and experiences within each municipality. In addition to adding four new farm gate program participants, our digital farm gate map has been updated to include two additional filters; users can now search by municipality and product type for a more tailored shopping experience.

### **Shareworthy Moments Initiative**

The Shareworthy Moments Initiative will be kicking off in the coming weeks. This project is intended to be an addition to our Discover More Adventures Signature Experiences Program. This project offers local tourism businesses and destinations the opportunity to implement or enhance 'shareable moments' at their locations. 'Shareable Moments' refers to experiences or attractions that are visually appealing, culturally significant, or emotionally engaging, prompting tourists to capture and share them online. In the first phase of this project, we'll be launching an online application form for local businesses to submit ideas. Adding these enhancements throughout Perth County will not only enhance marketing efforts, drive customer engagement, and contribute to the overall success and profitability of local destinations but also foster a sense of community pride and identity. These economic benefits extend beyond immediate revenue and encompass a holistic and sustainable approach to destination development and tourism growth.

By enhancing and diversifying local tourism offerings, Perth County is increasing their ability to attract urban tourists, attract tourists during shoulder seasons, and extend visitor stays - all benefiting the bottom line of local operators.

### ***Mobility 2.0 Programming & Activities***

#### **PC Connect Marketing & Advertising**

A locally targeted PC Connect campaign was conducted over the summer on social media to highlight the affordability of PC Connect to get to local points of interest for only \$6. A similar campaign targeting larger urban centres where PC Connect's intercommunity route services was also launched highlighting the \$12 rides. Titled 'Hop on Board' the campaign generated a significant number of views and engagement, introducing PC Connect to new potential riders. The campaign had a total reach of 49,338 and generated 1566 link clicks on the Rural Route ads alone.



Videos from the ‘People of PC Connect’ campaign continue to be rolled out across Perth County social media channels to encourage ridership and highlight how the service has supported residents with access to essential services, employment opportunities, education, healthcare, and social connections. In addition to showcasing the impact of PC Connect locally, the ‘People of PC Connect’ series can also support continued advocacy for funding.

Active outreach to employers and organizations who can benefit from partnerships with PC Connect continues to be a high priority in addition to public awareness marketing. Engagement and meetings with mobility service providers, long-term care facilities and other employers around PC Connect’s current service have identified some potential modifications to routes and timings that could better support their transportation needs. This outreach includes meetings, presentations and outreach with potential partners including the United Way Perth Huron, Knollcrest Lodge, Huron Perth Public Health, Mitchell & Area Community Transit, Perth County Information Network (Library Association), West Perth Community Connections and the Stratford & District Human Resource Professionals Association. A PC Connect insert was included in the quarterly HPPH newsletter which is a key source of information for members of the Mennonite and Anabaptist communities.

### **PC Connect Ridership**

PC Connect’s Rural Route continues to see ridership growth on both a monthly and annual basis having delivered 14,776 rides to date. Monthly ridership hit an all-time high in May 2024 with 767 rides and there were 747 rides in July, the second highest month to date. The three-month rolling average stands at 716.7 monthly rides at the end of July 2024, up from 514.7 monthly rides at the end of July 2023. At the current rate, PC Connect is projected to reach approx. 7968 rides for 2024, a 49.2% increase from 2023. A summary of 2024 ridership to date is shown below:

Month	# of Rides 2024	Change in Rides from 2023	# of Monthly Riders (3-Month Rolling Average)
January	542	+253 (87.5%)	488.0
February	641	+368 (134.8%)	544.0
March	637	+172 (37.0%)	606.7
April	678	+278 (69.5%)	652.0
May	767	+269 (54.0%)	694.0
June	636	+126 (24.7%)	693.7
July	747	+211 (39.4%)	716.7

### **PC Connect Sustainability and Financials**

The Community Transportation Steering Committee met on July 4<sup>th</sup> to receive an update and established a meeting date of September 19<sup>th</sup> to discuss project sustainability and potential recommendations for County Council consideration.

Advocacy efforts are ongoing for continued provincial funding for PC Connect by staff and SCT members. The SCT had requested delegation status with the Minister of Transportation and other ministers at the AMO Conference to advocate on behalf of CT recipients for continued funding beyond March 31, 2025, changes to the Gas Tax formula which disadvantages rural transit systems and more information on the previously announced Ontario Transit Investment Fund (OTIF).

The total provincial funding allocation for the PC Connect service is \$2,467,464.18. A deficit of approximately \$60,000 is being projected for the current operating year, which would be realized in early 2025 and could be funded through the transportation reserve established at the outset of the project.

### **Upcoming Business Events**

- Breakfast Before Business at Hoovers Maple Syrup – September 26, 2025  
7:30am-9:00am
- To Register: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/953925525927?aff=oddtcreator>