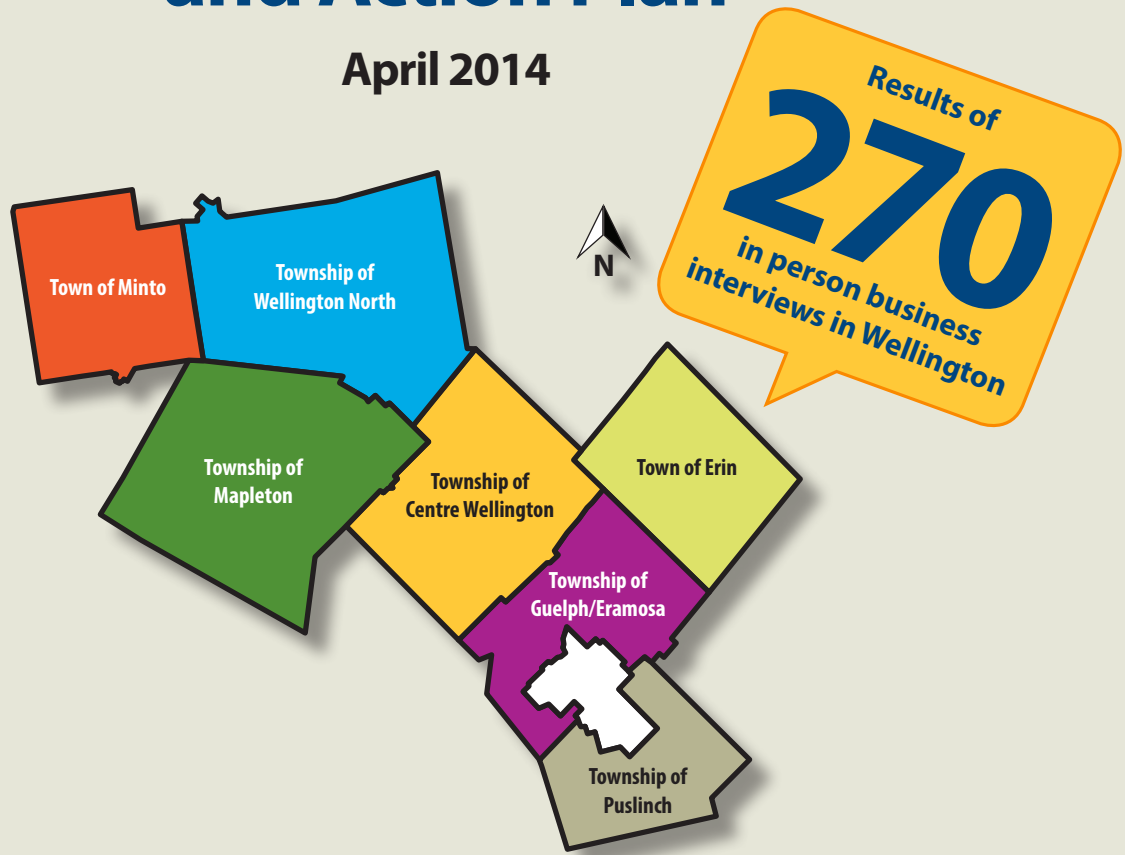
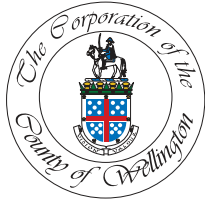


# County of Wellington BR+E Project Business Interview Findings and Action Plan

April 2014





## COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

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April 4, 2014



The County of Wellington is pleased to announce Wellington's first ever Business Retention and Expansion project.

Businesses and the jobs they create form the basis of all strong economies. Our Council recognizes that supporting the businesses that have already invested in Wellington provides the greatest return for future growth. Through the BR+E, we were able to meet with over 270 of our employers, learning about what they do, what their plans are and what challenges they face.

We have moved swiftly since having completed our first ever Economic Development Strategy just over one year ago. The County is proud of our strong partnerships and will continue to develop effective programming oriented at growing the economic potential of all of our communities. To assist our communities in the next phase of the BR+E project, Council has approved a \$175,000 BR+E Local Implementation Fund in the 2014 budget, designed to help execute local business support activities.

Wellington business owners provided us with a lot of valuable information and an impression of what Wellington is like as a place to do business. We are grateful for that. The prioritization exercise then narrowed the results into themes and showed us where to focus our efforts for the next year. The results are excellent and are in line with the County's commitment to ensuring our employers, newcomers and investors have all of the information they need to make the right decisions.

We know Wellington is an excellent place to live and run a business and that now is time for a coordinated approach to communicating these opportunities with the world. The County is genuinely proud of our communities and the opportunities we have for creating jobs and enhancing our quality of place.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "CW".

Chris White

Warden 2011-2014

County of Wellington

## **Acknowledgements**

### **The leaders!**

We would like to thank the County of Wellington Economic Development Committee, for their vision and leadership in this project. They are:

- Warden Chris White, Mayor, Township of Guelph Eramosa
- Chair George Bridge, Mayor, Town of Minto
- Councillor Don McKay, Township of Puslinch
- Councillor Raymond Tout, Mayor, Township of Wellington North
- Councillor Shawn Watters, Township of Centre Wellington

Thank you to the Council members of the seven municipalities for their vision to approve this project in their community.

### **The accomplisners!**

We would like to thank the BR+E Coordinators from each of the municipalities, as their diligence and their professionalism was key in getting the interviews completed. They are:

- Mary Venneman for the Town of Erin
- Patricia Rutter, Economic Development Officer, Township of Centre Wellington
- Dale Small, Business and Economic Manager, Township of Wellington North
- Mandy Jones, Business and Economic Development Coordinator, Town of Minto
- Crystal Ellis, Business Development & Marketing Coordinator, Township of Mapleton
- Genny Smith for the Township of Guelph Eramosa and the Township of Puslinch
- Mellissa Luymes, Wellington Federation of Agriculture

### **The project team!**

Thank you to the Wellington Economic Development Group, for their dedication to monthly meetings, for jumping in to assist with interviews and for their ideas and support. Excluding those already listed above, they also include:

- Stephen Morris and Gerry Horst, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF), and Ministry of Rural Affairs (OMRA)
- Doug Reddick and Mary Balfour, Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment (MEDTE)
- Alex Goss, Guelph Wellington Local Immigration Partnership
- Carol Simpson, Workforce Planning Board Wellington Waterloo Dufferin

- Scott Wilson, CAO, County of Wellington
- Andrea Ravensdale, Communications Manager, County of Wellington
- John Brennan, Councillor, Town of Erin
- Kathryn Ironmonger, CAO, Town of Erin
- Karen Landry, CAO, Township of Puslinch
- Patty Sinnamon, CAO, Township of Mapleton
- Alan Rawlins, ED Committee, Township of Wellington North
- April Marshall, Tourism, Marketing and Promotion Manager, Township of Wellington North
- Janice Sheppard and Kim Wingrove, CAO, Township of Guelph Eramosa
- Andrew Lennox, Wellington Federation of Agriculture
- Kirk McElwain, Councillor, Township of Centre Wellington
- Brad Dixon, Grand River Conservation Authority
- Jane Shaw, Wellington Waterloo Community Futures Development Corporation
- Scott Williams, Guelph Wellington Business Enterprise Centre

**Thank you for assistance with the interviews and/or the BR+E Data Retreat also goes to:**

- Rick Whittaker, General Manager, Wellington Waterloo Community Futures Development Corporation
- Michael Simon, Ontario Works, County of Wellington
- John Mohle, Mapleton Economic Development Committee
- Bill White, CAO, Town of Minto
- Janet Harrop, Wellington Federation of Agriculture
- Joanne Ross Zuj, Mayor, Andrew Goldie, CAO and Chantalle Pellizzari, Planning Coordinator, Township of Centre Wellington

We would also like to thank the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment for their financial assistance with this project, as Wellington was a successful recipient of the 2013 Communities in Transition programme.



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## **BR+E Background**

### **What is a BR+E project?**

Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) is a community-based economic development strategy with a focus on "taking care of, nurturing and supporting" businesses already existing in the community.

The BR+E programme was developed by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Rural Affairs and has been successfully utilized in 220 communities in Ontario since 1997. The programme uses an in depth, four stage process to assist communities in developing and implementing concrete action plans.

### **Stage 1 Project Planning and Business Survey Development**

This stage involves establishing project financing, gathering a leadership team and project coordinator(s) formulating a work plan, selecting businesses to be interviewed and fine-tuning the survey to gather the most relevant information for the community

### **Stage 2 Immediate Follow-up of Red Flag Issues**

This stage is about responding to specific business issues that may be critical to a business remaining or expanding in the community.

### **Stage 3 Data Analysis and Recommendations**

In stage three, communities utilize a secure and confidential BR+E web-based application (e-pulse) to record, store and aggregate the results from their community's business survey. The survey data is then analyzed by the community and forms the basis for development of recommended action plans.

### **Stage 4 Public Meeting and Implementation**

Stage four of the BR+E programme recommends hosting a public meeting to communicate the results of the project to the broader community. This meeting also acts as the "kick-off" to implementation of the recommended action plans that address the issues and opportunities. This stage also includes ongoing monitoring and tracking of action plans.

### **Why is it important?**

The health of communities relies on strong businesses that can sustain and create jobs. Supporting the development and growth of local businesses is fundamental in order to grow and sustain Wellington communities, the region and Ontario's rural economy. The BR+E programme combines both short-term and long-term objectives.

## Short-Term Objectives

- Build relationships with existing businesses
- Demonstrate and provide community support for local businesses
- Address urgent business concerns and issues
- Improve communication between the community and local businesses
- Retention of businesses and jobs where there is a risk of closure

## Long-Term Objectives

- Increase the competitiveness of local businesses
- Job creation and new business development
- Establish and implement strategic actions for local economic development
- Stronger viable local economy

## **BR+E in Wellington**

### **Why undertake a BR+E project in Wellington?**

In late 2012, The County of Wellington released a five year Economic Development Strategy. Council recognized the need to better support Wellington's economy and to build on many of its existing strengths. The County of Wellington Economic Development Implementation Plan was then completed in early 2013 and outlined important steps and processes to increase the economic activity within the County.

During the strategic planning process, consultations discovered that businesses prefer the County to act as a facilitator and advocate; promoting the existing range of business support services, connecting businesses with appropriate organizations and advocating for the reorientation of existing programming to areas of interest for the County of Wellington (i.e.: agri-tourism, health care).

The priorities identified in the Implementation Plan focused on the need for identifying economic contributors, deriving strategies for growing the employment base, better communicating with employers as well as developing and promoting an identity through four implementation activities:

1. County of Wellington - Economic Development Website
2. Business Retention and Expansion Strategy (BR+E)
3. Wellington Workforce Development and Attraction Initiative
4. Key Sector Profiles: Manufacturing, Agriculture, Health Care and Creative Economy

The four individual sector profiles will provide information on the current strengths and attractive features within those sectors. The BR+E project allows a deeper understanding of those four key sectors and it logically precedes the creation of sector profiles that will allow the County to identify opportunities to grow those sectors further. For example, the Economic Development Strategy showed that Wellington has a high number of small businesses in the creative economy (78% with less than 10

employees) but an insufficient number of medium sized businesses. Medium sized businesses are typically involved in greater export activity, implement new product lines quickly and are typically well positioned to expand and hire. If the County knew whether it was lack of available space (moving from a home based operation) or available labour for example, then strategies could be developed to resolve such hindrances. Understanding these factors through the BR+E and acquiring in depth information on the four sectors of Wellington’s economy will assist the County in further understanding the growth constraints of the local economy.

The intent of the BR+E is also to identify our regional business contributors and make sure they feel recognized and heard. This activity is dear to all of our economic development partners, as it would help us to understand where our markets are going, where business growth constraints exist and whether we need to focus on developing and/or attracting a specific skillset. Understanding the growth potential of top employers might also assist in considering the supply chain implications for a sector, knowing what might be under-represented or what industries can and should be proactively pursued.

With the number of business owners estimated to retire in the next five years, it is important that the County understand the economic implications and be ready for such changes in the local economy. Specifically, the BR+E would assist the County to plan for the future by knowing about ownership succession plans and partnership opportunities. The County wants to keep the jobs in Wellington, even after the current owners approach their retirement years.





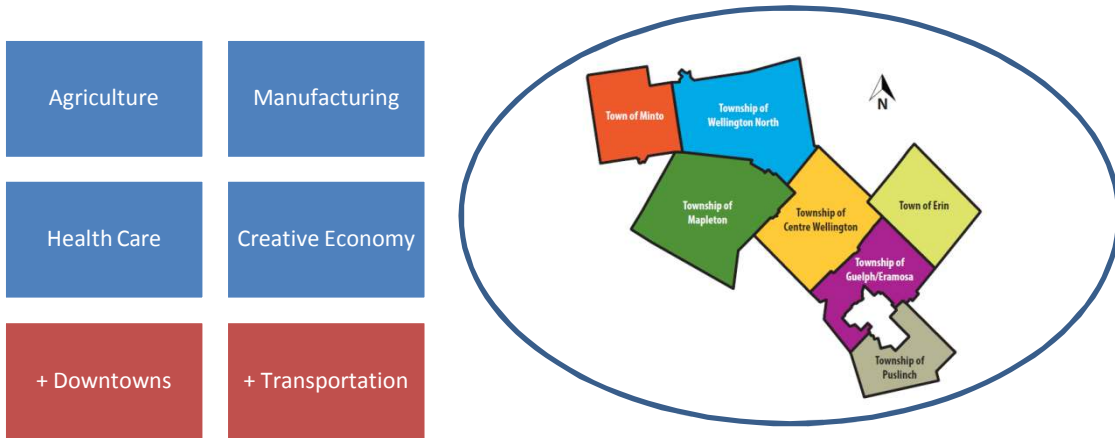
## Who was involved in the study?

From a project advisory perspective Wellington's BR+E project relied heavily on the direction and support of the Wellington Municipal Economic Development Group, an active group representing the County, each of the 7 municipalities and key agencies involved in economic development activities in the County. Specifically:

- County of Wellington
- Town of Minto
- Township of Mapleton
- Township of Wellington North
- Township of Centre Wellington
- Town of Erin
- Township of Guelph Eramosa
- Township of Puslinch
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs
- Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment
- Wellington Federation of Agriculture
- Workforce Planning Board Wellington Waterloo Dufferin
- Wellington Waterloo Community Futures Development Corporation
- Guelph Wellington Business Enterprise Centre
- Guelph Wellington Local Immigration Partnership
- Grand River Conservation Authority

## Wellington's BR+E Project Scope

Wellington's BR+E project was multidimensional as it included its seven municipalities as well as a particular focus on four key sectors; agriculture, health care, manufacturing and the creative economy. Two municipalities completed additional downtown interviews, recognizing the importance that their downtowns play in their local economies. As Puslinch relies heavily on the transportation sector they interviewed ten transport businesses. The Local Immigration Partnership assisted in the interview process and conducted eight interviews to understand a newcomer's perspective.



## How did we engage Wellington's businesses?

At the onset of the Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) exercise the County of Wellington provided council delegations to each of the seven municipalities who had previously given their support. The purpose of the presentations was to reiterate the goals and timelines and the important role that each of the municipalities would play. While the County provided overall project coordination, administrative functions, media relations and training, each of the seven municipalities in Wellington were instrumental in engaging their local businesses. Each was responsible to select a cross section of 7-10 businesses within each of the four key sectors (agriculture, health care, manufacturing and the creative economy). The business lists were derived from the County of Wellington's list of over 2,900 businesses. All of the selected businesses were then contacted initially by mail and then with a follow-up telephone call to introduce the project and request their involvement.

Each municipality coordinated their interviews during the fall of 2013. All interviewers had previously completed a BR+E training session provided by the County of Wellington and the Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs (OMRA) in August 2013. Prior to conducting any interviews each interviewer and members of the Wellington Municipal Economic Development Group (WMEDG) who acted as the project advisory group signed a confidentiality agreement.

Completed business surveys were entered into the Ontario BR+E database. A red flag process allowed for immediate follow-up of any urgent issues. During the project 13 of these were identified and followed up by the County and appropriate municipality. There were several questions in the survey that allowed businesses to request information or assistance such as whether they would like information on provincial or federal programmes or apprenticeship programmes that are related to their industry. Information for these businesses is being assembled and will be provided by June 2014.

In January 2014 with the completion of 235 business surveys the County pulled the aggregate data as a whole and also by key sector and municipality. The results that are identified in this report reflect the aggregate response of those 235 interviews. An additional 35 interviews were completed after that date and will be included in the individual municipality data assessments.

The entire data set and sector data was presented in a summary report prepared by the County Economic Development department and provided to the WMEDG in advance of a day long BR+E retreat. The retreat was facilitated in February, 2014 and allowed participants to further understand what businesses had shared anecdotally through the surveys. The group then was able to identify the significant challenges and opportunities that would lead to the development of an action plan. The action plan was then completed in mid-March at a follow up session with the WMEDG.

As a supplement to the countywide retreat each municipality was provided with their own data set that would allow them to understand challenges and opportunities unique to them. By completing the countywide report and action plan first it allows the municipalities to understand their collaborative involvements with the County, neighbouring municipalities and support agencies prior to identifying their own specific and unique needs.

On April 4, 2014 a BR+E End of Project Celebration was hosted by the County and provided the opportunity to share the aggregate survey results, opportunities and actions with the business community.

### Who Did We Talk to?

The Wellington County BR+E project was well received with 270 businesses participating. Those businesses represented a cross section of municipalities and the four key sectors. A snapshot of the participating businesses by sector is shown in figure 1.

All information to follow reflects the data from the 235 surveys that were available and analyzed as of February 20, 2014.

**Total Interviews (Number of businesses per sector)**

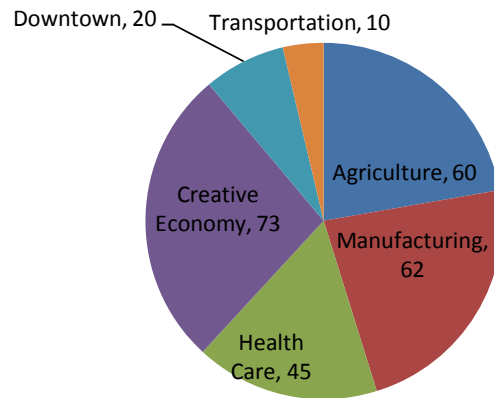


Figure 1

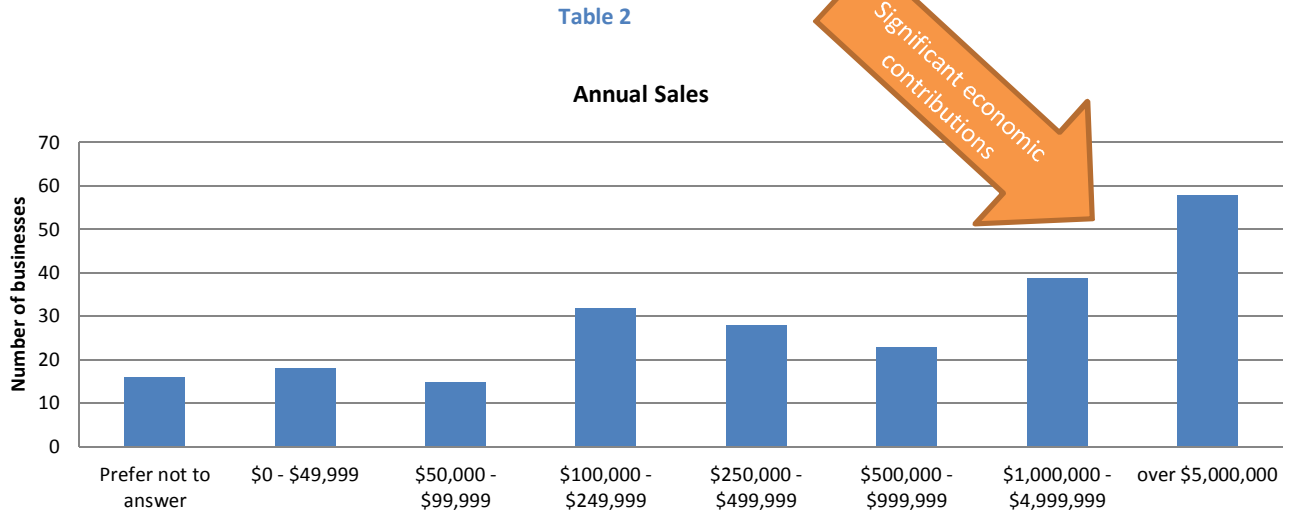
The majority of participating businesses are locally owned and operated with 1 location (62%) followed by locally owned and operated with more than one location (25%), branches (12%) and franchises (1%).

Of these businesses 87% of owner operators are involved in the day to day operations and 75% of owners live in the community. Many of the businesses have been in operation in Wellington for over 10 years as shown below in Table 1.

Table 1

Years in Business	Total	Total (%)
Less than 1 year	5	2%
1 to 3 years	18	8%
4 to 10 years	61	26%
11 to 25 years	73	31%
26 to 35 years	25	11%
Over 35 years	53	23%

The participating businesses ranged in size in terms of annual sales as well as workforce, with the majority being small to medium sized (Table 2 and 3).



**Table 3**

# of Employees	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Health	Creative
1 - 4	27%	8%	36%	61%
5 - 9	27%	22%	27%	25%
10 - 19	14%	24%	9%	7%
20 - 29	7%	12%	2%	2%
30 - 49	7%	16%	9%	4%
50 - 99	15%	6%	5%	0%
100 - 299	2%	10%	11%	2%
300 +	2%	2%	0%	0%

Participating businesses have a strong reliance on their local and regional markets, however, there is national and international market activity occurring, primarily in the manufacturing sector (Table 4).

**Table 4**

Primary Market	Total	Total	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Health	Creative
Local	98	42%	42%	10%	82%	32%
Regional	81	35%	46%	33%	16%	46%
National	33	14%	8%	33%	2%	18%
International	20	9%	3%	24%	0%	5%

## Survey Results

The BR+E survey was divided into 6 key areas that guided the interviewer and participating business through a series of questions related to:

- Business Climate
- Future Plans
- Business Development
- Workforce Development
- Community Development
- Wellington County Specific Questions

As well, sector surveys were completed within the agriculture and manufacturing sector with specific questions that were created by OMAF, OMRA included in the following:

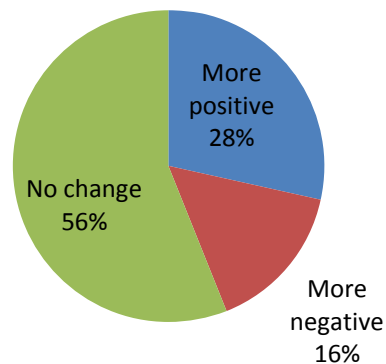
- Farm Survey
- Manufacturing Survey

### Business Climate

The overall business climate in the County is very positive, with 77% of participating businesses stating that the community was good or excellent as a place to do business. Over the past 3 years, the attitudes of most businesses have remained the same (54%), while 28% have become more positive and 16% have become more negative (Figure 2). Reasons for positive changes in attitude were due to support from the municipality and the local community, the improved economy, and their overall quality of life. Those who stated a more negative attitude cited such issues as permit processes and fees, utility costs, difficulty hiring, and lack of government and business relationships.

Figure 2

### Attitudinal Changes in Past 3 Years



Each business was asked to score a variety of factors in doing business using the following scale:

1 = poor

2 = fair

3 = good

4 = excellent

Participants were also given the option to indicate not applicable, or no response. At the end of each section businesses were also able to add any open ended comments. These comments were included in the data retreat package to provide a full understanding of the challenges and opportunities stated by businesses.

In order to understand the overall results each response for poor was given a numerical score as shown above where poor =1. The scores were then tallied and divided by the number of responses to provide an overall percentage where 100% would be a perfect score of excellent, 75% would indicate good, 50% would be fair and 25% would be poor. Figure 3 shows the factors in doing business related to current business operations as well as factors that would be of consideration to those looking to invest in Wellington.

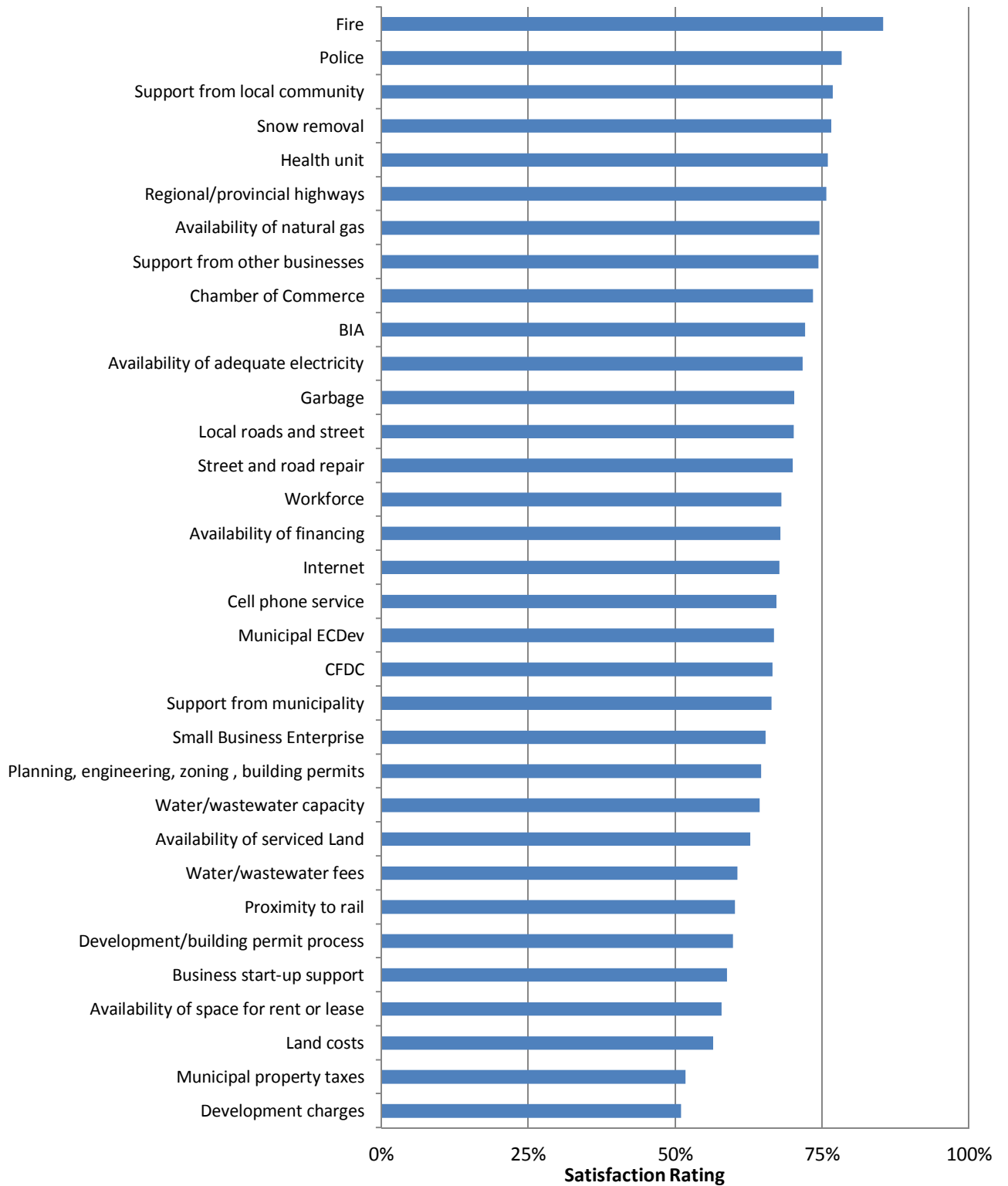
Quality of life was the highest scoring factor at 88%.

Not one respondent reported quality of life in Wellington as poor.



Figure 3

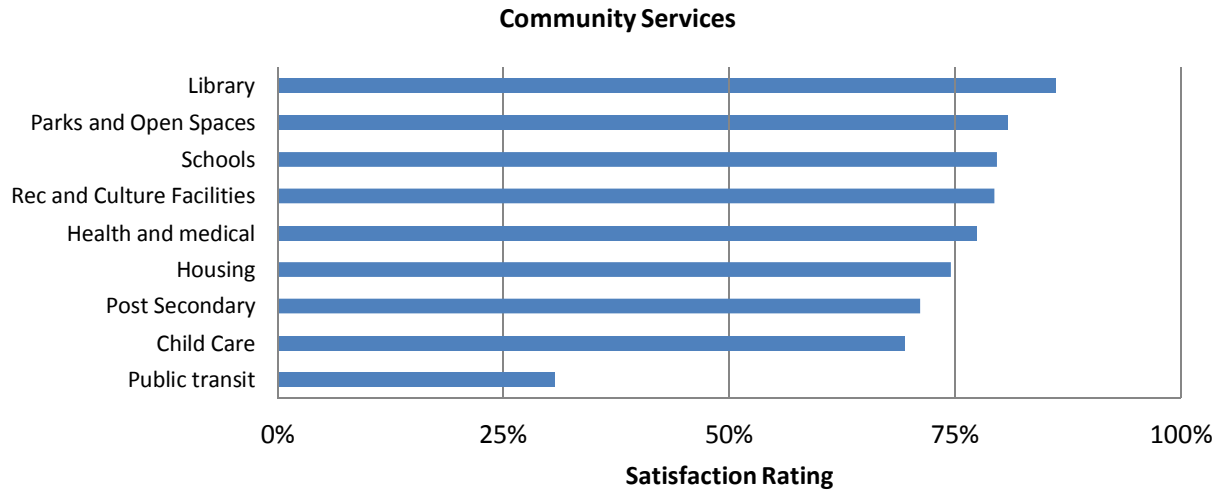
**Factors in Doing Business**





Businesses were also asked to rate a variety of community services. Results from the rating scale as well as the candid comments revealed that libraries and farmers markets are valued as places to find important information about the community. Figure 4 shows the high levels of satisfaction of these community services.

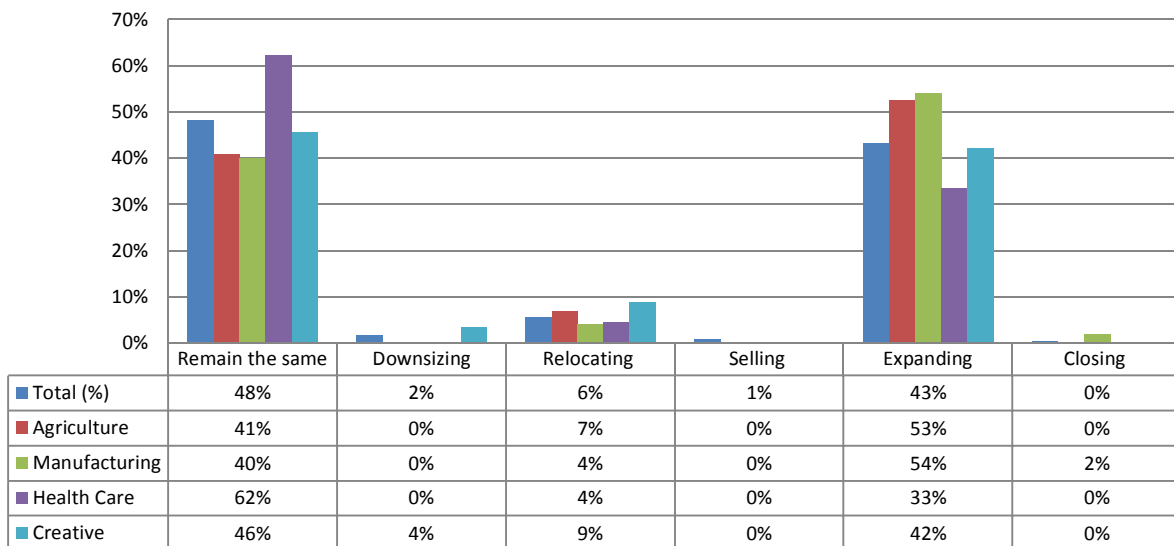
Figure 4



### Future Plans

The future plans questions provided an understanding of the short term plans that businesses have in Wellington within the next 18 months (Figure 5). While the majority (48%) are planning to remain the same there a large number (43%) that plan to expand.

Figure 5



Reasons cited for expansions include increasing business levels and the addition of new product lines. The planned expansions will also lead to increased demand in the workforce and space (Table 5).

Table 5

Responses	Total	Total (%)
An increase in workforce (total of 339 jobs)	78	22%
An increased need for employee training	53	15%
An increase in floor space (total of 360,000 sq. ft.)	56	16%
Additional product line(s)	46	13%
Additional services for customers	51	14%
Process improvements	62	17%
Other	15	4%

## Business Development

Business development questions asked participants to provide insights into the outlook of their industries, their own business projections, use of technology and interest in business to business or business to government collaborations.

Overall, businesses indicated expected industry growth (52%) and stability (29%), although there are some variances by sector with agriculture stating a high growth in the industry (64%) as shown in Table 6.

Projected sales were even more optimistic for business with many indicating growth (58%). In keeping with the industry outlook stated above, both the agriculture and manufacturing industries are projecting higher than average growth (64%), (70%) respectively.

Table 6: Industry Outlook

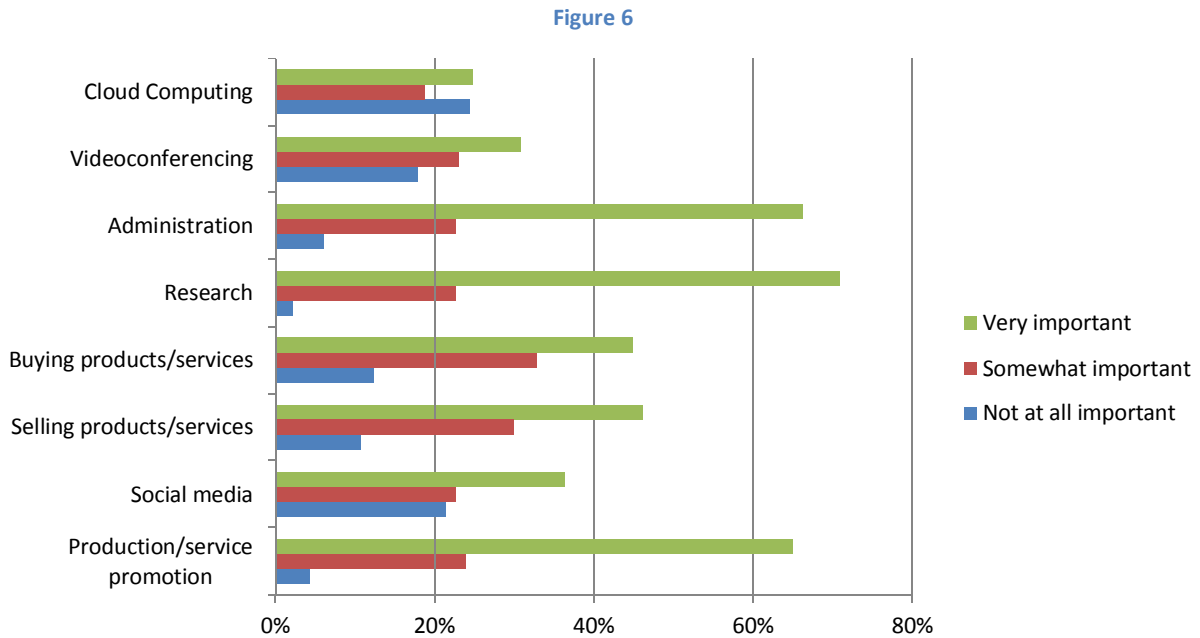
Outlook	County	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Health Care	Creative
Growing	52%	64%	54%	53%	47%
Declining	10%	8%	6%	13%	14%
Stable	29%	25%	28%	29%	26%
Not sure	8%	2%	12%	4%	12%

Table 7: Projected Sales

Projected Sales	County	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Health	Creative
Increase	58%	64%	70%	43%	57%
Decrease	7%	10%	4%	5%	7%
Remain the same	30%	22%	24%	45%	29%
Not sure	5%	3%	0%	7%	7%

## Reliance on the Internet

Businesses in Wellington are reliant on internet technology and infrastructure with over half indicating that they utilize the internet for administration, research and product and service promotion (Figure 6).



There are barriers for businesses related to internet with speed (23%), access (12%) and cost (12%) being stated as the top issues (Table 8).

**Table 8**

Barrier	Count	%
Speed	80	23%
Access	42	12%
Cost	41	12%
Hardware/software support	26	8%
Knowledge and training	34	10%

Overall, participating businesses expressed a desire to collaborate and network with 29% interested in networking and information sharing (Table 9).

**Table 9**

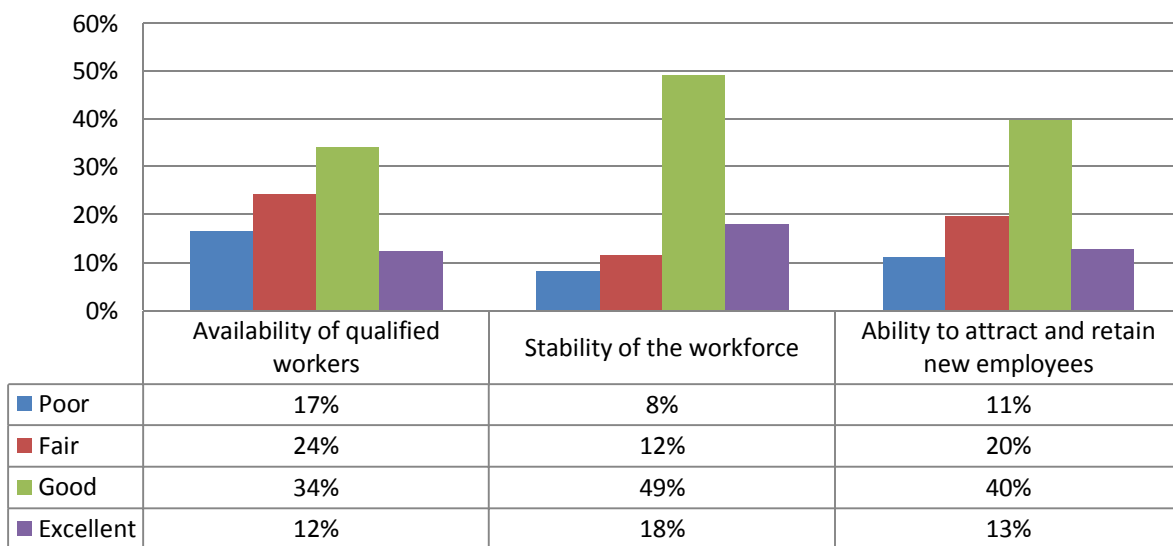
Interest	Count	%
Joint product purchasing	61	13%
Joint marketing	103	23%
Joint training	83	18%
Networking/information sharing	131	29%

## Workforce Development

Currently, 39% of the businesses have difficulty hiring due to both lack of skills as well as too few applicants for posted positions. Participants felt that these challenges were due to both industry factors (those affecting all businesses in those sectors in Ontario) as well community factors (those unique to Wellington or individual community). For example, lack of locally available training is a community factor.

Businesses were asked to provide insights into the stability of Wellington’s workforce, the availability of qualified workers and their ability to attract and retain employees (Figure 7).

Figure 7



Businesses are concerned about the availability of qualified workers. Responses to fair/poor per sector showed agriculture at 47%, manufacturing 46%, health care 40% and creative economy 35%. The specific jobs that were identified to be in short supply are show in Table 10.

Table 10

Agriculture	Health Care	Manufacturing	Creative Economy
Farm labourers	Accounting	General labourers	Managers
Management	Admin support	Engineers	Commercial artist, graphics
Sales	Clinical Psychologists	Welders	Sales
Technicians	Dental Assistants	Electricians	Telecommunications
Machinery operators	Personal Support Workers	Millwrights	Freelance editors
Research and Development	Housekeeping & Cooks	Sales	Glass Blower
Installers	Information Technology Professionals	Skilled Workers	Financial Planners
Office Support	Specialty doctor/surgeon	Machinists	Chefs

Currently, businesses are using a variety of methods to hire although most are relying on traditional methods (Table 11) which may not be a match for the new generation of workers.

Table 11

Responses	Total (%)
Through your personal network	56%
Employment centres and websites (job boards)	25%
Hiring sign on your premises	7%
Local media advertising	39%
Your own website	26%
Professional recruitment firm	14%
Referrals from friends or current employees	51%
Social Media applications such as LinkedIn or Facebook	14%
Unsolicited resumes	36%
Other (Specify)	16%

External training is used by 56% of businesses. Several businesses identified barriers to owner/operators and their employees in receiving the necessary training. Cost and relevant training available locally were the top issues (Table 12).

Table 12

Responses	Total (%)
Cost	20%
Awareness of existing training programmes	9%
Awareness of training support programmes	6%
Relevant training is not offered at local institutions	14%
Availability of training locally	12%
Unable to release employees	6%

When asked if there were training programmes that would benefit their business, 52% indicated yes. A wide range of needs were identified including those related to management (leadership, time management, and business development), sales and marketing (social media, web development, and general sales training), safety (WHMIS, first aid) as well as very specific skills training (equipment operators, food safety, culinary and technology).

## Community Development

Businesses provided valuable input when asked to identify the community's top three advantages and disadvantages as a place to do business. The following is a roll-up of those responses.

### **Wellington County's top advantages as a place to do business**

Location: 401 access, proximity to the GTA, airport

Community: A great place to live, affordable, friendly, artistic, local food

Business: Access to capital, electricity, access to input suppliers, collaboration with other professionals

Workforce: Diversified workforce, easy to retain, availability of educated people, good employees

Land: Affordable prices of lease and land, availability of industrial lands, availability of storefronts

Infrastructure: Good tax base, hospitals and schools, roads, internet

### **Wellington County's top disadvantages as a place to do business**

Location: Distance from major transportation route, access to markets and products -

Community: Aging population, availability of cultural assets, small community, lack of things for youth - to do, small customer base -

Workforce: Shortage of skilled workers, difficult to recruit to a small town, distance from educated and - qualified workforce, choice of staff and volunteers. -

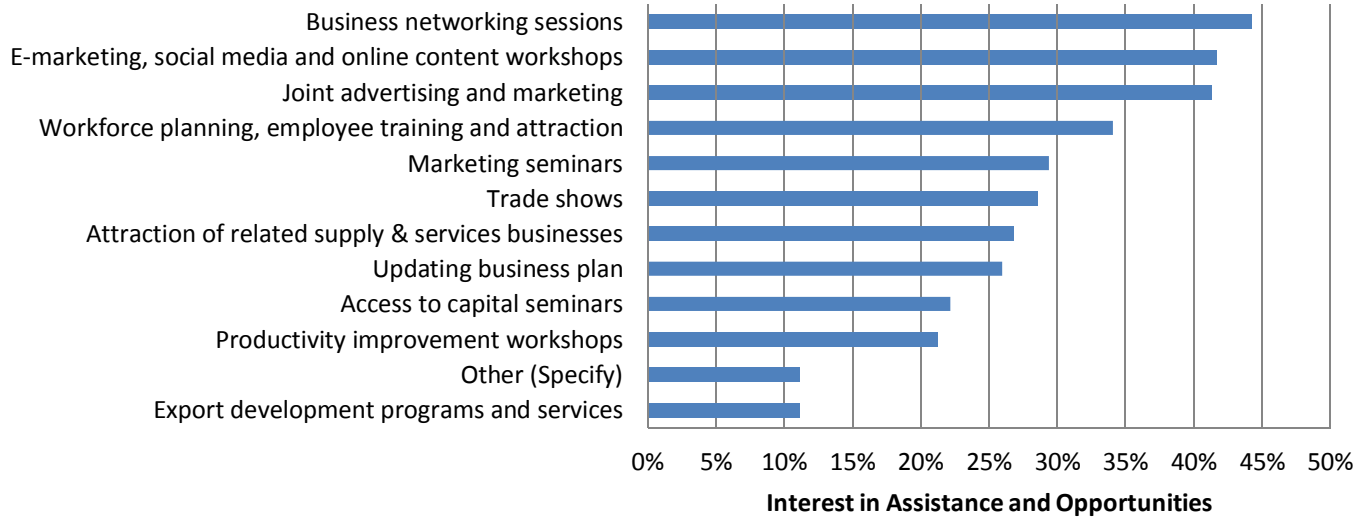
Land: Lack of availability and cost of farm land, lack of available places to build, rent or lease -

Infrastructure: Cell service, internet, utility costs, parking, lack of rail, lack of sewers, lack of natural gas, - unreliable electricity (power outages) -

Government: High property taxes, high traffic, red tape, zoning and planning, lack of municipal - resources -

Business expressed that assistance would be helpful to them in a variety of ways with networking being the area where most (44%) felt that could benefit, followed closely by e-marketing workshops (42%) and joint advertising and marketing (41%) supporting an overall theme that Wellington’s businesses are seeking ways to connect with one another and come together for shared learning (Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Assistance and Opportunities of Interest to Businesses**



## Wellington County Community Questions

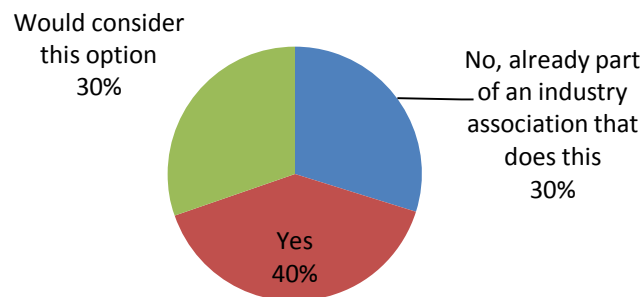
The WMEDG worked together to create additional questions that would provide further information deemed valuable to shape the direction of economic development activities for the County and the municipalities over the next five years.

When asked if there were products or services that they were unable to source locally, 45% of businesses indicated that there was a gap. Specifics include filming equipment, steel and other raw materials, costumes and dancewear, office supplies, grocery options, financing for small businesses and small business consulting.

Public transit proved to be an interesting topic of conversation with 32% of businesses stating that the lack of public transit posed a problem for their workforce. It became evident that the further businesses are located from urban centers the more likely they are to accept that having a car to travel to and from work is simply the way of life, whereas, the closer you are to the urban centers the more opportunities businesses see to tie into existing infrastructure which would allow for the movement of workforce to and from urban centres to rural jobs.

When asked about interest in attending tradeshow under a Wellington County umbrella 40% of businesses indicated yes (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Interest in Tradeshow



The County asked businesses about their use of local food and learned that 66% of businesses are already sourcing locally. This figure was consistent with the comments heard by interviewers throughout the survey where the importance and value of our local food was mentioned.



With a growing demand to fill our gaps in workforce the County in cooperation with the Local Immigration Partnership recognized the need to investigate the businesses’ perspective on how we can be more welcoming to those new to our communities (who have moved here from other parts of Ontario or Canada) as well as those who are newly immigrated. Businesses had the following suggestions (Table 13).

**Table 13: Ways to be More Welcoming to Newcomers**

Those new to the community	New Immigrants
	Translators and translated materials
Package with government information (how to renew a license, health card, passport)	Contact and package from municipality
	Send a small welcome package explaining the services/stores in the area
Continued support for the Centre Wellington Resource Centre.	Keep websites up-to-date with information.
	Federal Programmes should be offered locally and advertised.
Community celebrations around other cultures, community awareness	More youth activities
	GRCA rules need to be explained to those new to the community who reside near the rivers
Single point of contact	Introduction to community services -include what the County provides
Community outreach for newcomers	Be friendly and try to help

Businesses were asked to identify the most important things for the community to focus on in the next 5 years. Businesses felt that signage (50%) and promoting the community (41%) were top priorities (Figure 10). Respondents that stated “other” offered suggestions shown in Table 14.

Figure 10: Suggested Areas of Focus

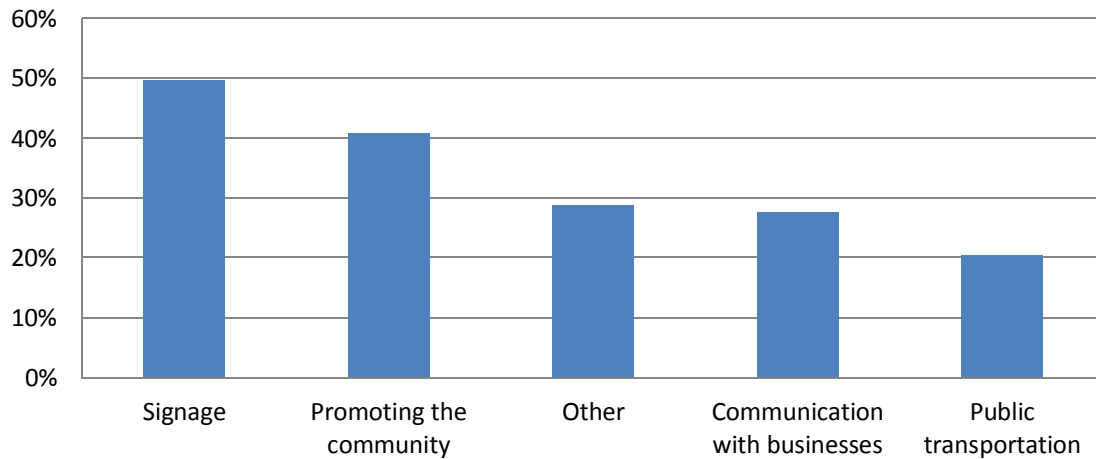


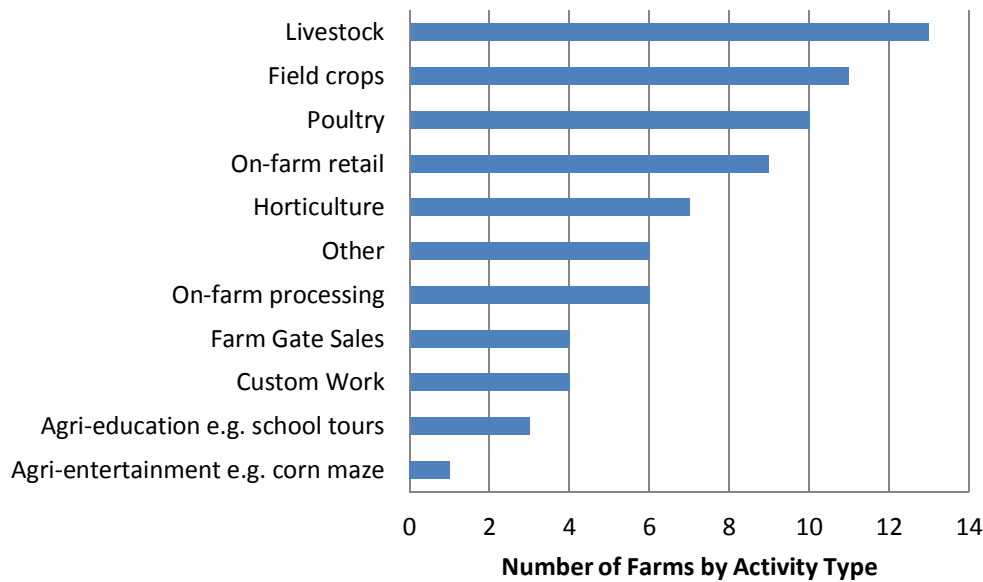
Table 14

Other Suggested Priorities
Local business hero stories
Downtown improvements
Electronic communication with businesses
Business to business networking
Social media communication to businesses
High speed in rural
Joint marketing
Affordable housing
Promoting healthy communities
Develop local jobs
Promote what's here
Walking Trails
More referrals by other businesses needed
Community marketing videos

## Farm Survey Results

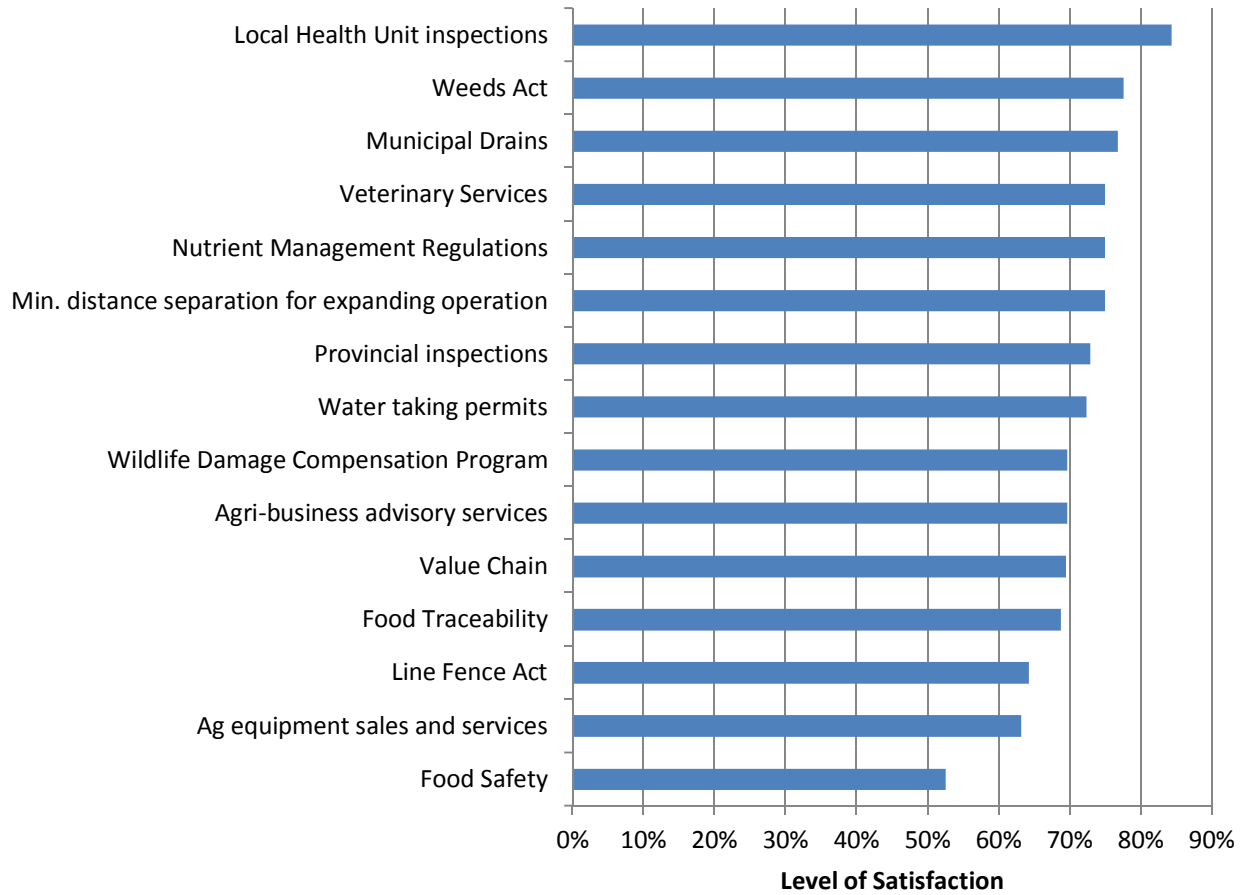
The BR+E included involvement from a variety of businesses in the agriculture sector. There were 60 agriculture businesses interviewed in total. Reflecting Wellington's diverse agriculture industry these businesses were made up of a variety of types including producers, input suppliers, agriculture manufacturers and retailers. Only the 29 businesses who were involved with farm and closely related farm activities participated in the farm survey. A snapshot of these businesses is shown below in Figure 11. Note that some businesses participate in more than 1 activity.

Figure 11



Farm businesses were asked to report on a variety of factors in doing business using the same scale as the previous retention survey where 1 = poor, 2 = good, 3 = fair and 4 = excellent. Figure 12 provides a snapshot of these ratings.

Figure 12

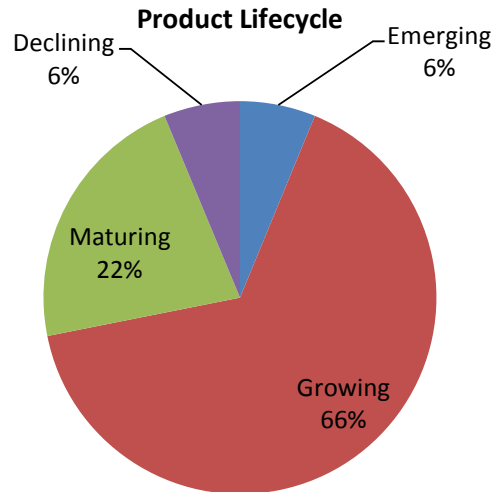


## Manufacturing Survey

There were 46 businesses that participated in the manufacturing survey and provided valuable insights into the lifecycle of their products, outsourcing activities, technology, research and development, process improvement, certifications, capacity issues, exporting and programmes of interest.

Wellington's manufacturers are primarily in the growth stage of their products' lifecycle (Figure 13)

Figure 13



A snapshot of the outsourcing of participating businesses is shown in Figure 14 with the primary locations for sourcing shown in Figure 15.

Figure 14

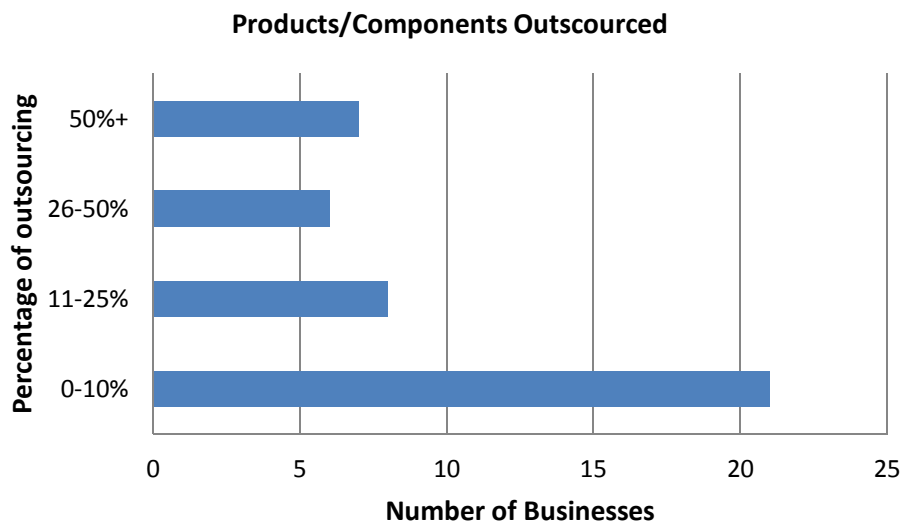
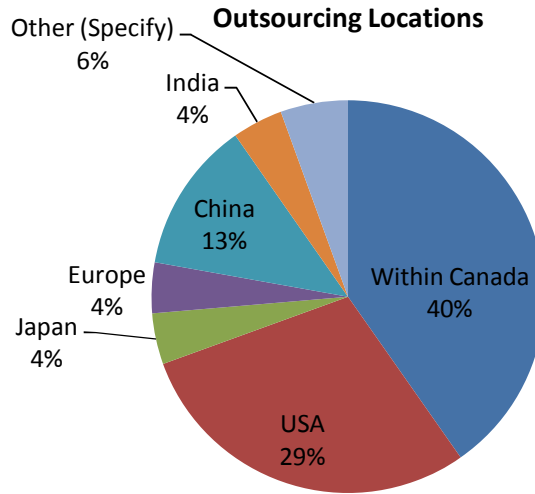
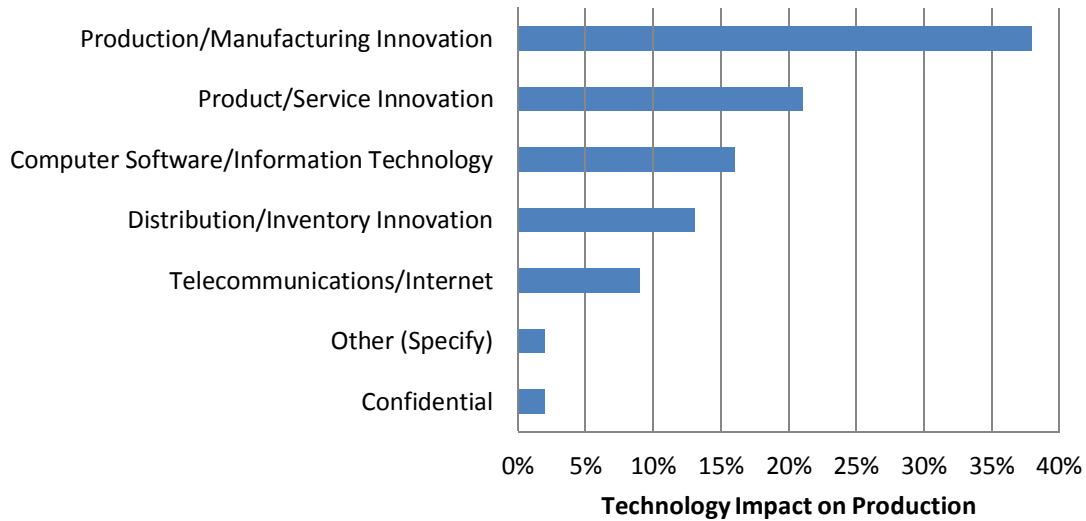


Figure 15



When asked if there is new technology emerging that will change their primary product and how it is produced 37% indicated yes and stated the specifics shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16



Currently the majority of businesses are spending under 6% of a percentage of their sales on research and development, with 11% spending nothing, 40% spending under 3% and 36% spending between 3% and 6%.

Those that are investing in research and development are primarily doing this at their own location (68%) with an additional 18% being done at head office. There were eight manufacturers who indicated

that they would like assistance with research and development. This will become part of the follow-up activities of the BR+E project.

Manufacturers were asked to provide insight into the implementation of process improvements by indicating current involvement (yes/no), requests for information (RI) and requests for assistance (RA). Table 15 provides a snapshot of these responses.

Table 15

Process Improvements	RA	RI	Currently doing	Not currently
Productivity improvement (lean mfg.)	2	6	28	7
Six sigma and quality	2	4	12	18
Energy efficiency	4	10	28	8
Waste product recovery	6	8	20	14
Health & safety activities	5	5	28	9
Administrative support toward ISO Certification	2	3	12	20
Vendor/supplier network for continuous product	3	3	18	14
Traceability	3	3	8	7

In terms of certifications, 47% of participants have quality certifications. Of those businesses:

- HACCP Advantage – 6 businesses
- ISO – 13 businesses
- Other – 9 businesses

When asked about capacity, 47% of the manufacturers indicated that their plant or equipment were at capacity; however 90% also indicated that their plant/equipment was underutilized. In terms of equipment, 27% stated that theirs was outdated.

There is an interest in working cooperatively with other businesses to bring plants and equipment to full capacity as stated by 46% of the manufacturers.

Wellington’s manufacturers are exporting in a variety of markets (Figure 17) and 47% of them indicated that over the next three years the development of export marketing will be important to ensure that their business remains competitive (Figure 18).

Figure 17

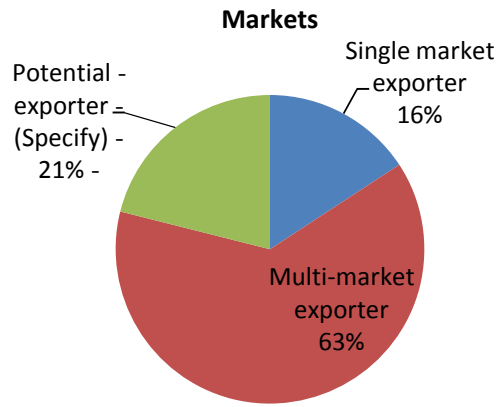
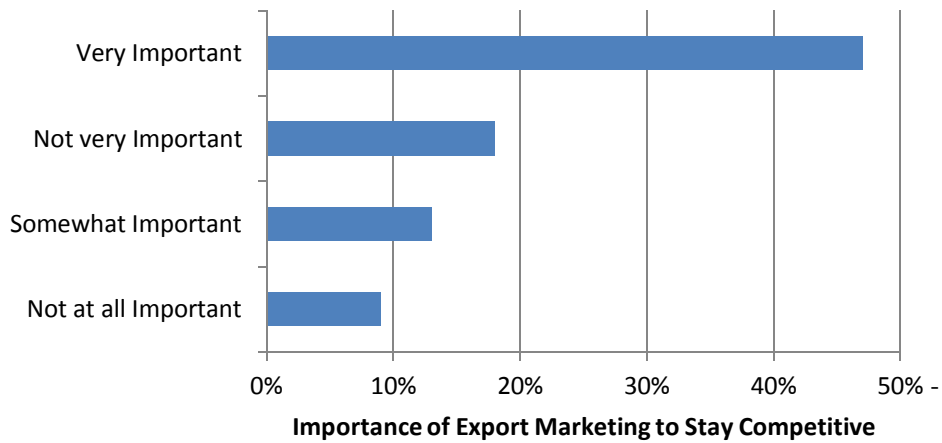


Figure 18





## **Key Findings**

On February 20, 2014 a BR+E Retreat was held with a working group including members of the WMEDG, the Wellington County Economic Development Committee of Council and the Wellington Federation of Agriculture for the purpose of reviewing the countywide survey results. Participants were assigned to tables that would focus on one of the four key sectors of the industry throughout the session. This was intended to ensure that as the data was reviewed and discussed, the unique challenges and opportunities by key sector would be understood and reported on. The groups reviewed the quantitative data as well as the qualitative data (open ended comments) that had been collected in the survey process. The open ended responses were useful in providing context for the survey responses as well as suggestions on how businesses see the County and municipalities assisting them in the future.

Discussion that day revealed that there are several shared issues that affect all sectors as well as those that are sector specific.

### **Shared Responses**

- Hydro outages and cost problems -
- Hi-speed internet availability -
- Show youth the job path of future careers -
- Commercial banks are limiting start-ups and expansions -
- Need commercial/industrial space -
- Businesses are unaware of products/services of other Wellington businesses -
- Need to market Wellington County -
- Need for cross business promotion -
- Need affordable housing -
- Business training needs (succession planning to online sales) -
- Need for commercial/industrial space inventory -
- Train small business to become big business -

### **Agriculture**

- Lack of 3 phase hydro -
- Need help navigating regulatory challenges for value add expansions and on-farm processing -
- Misperceptions about career opportunities -
- Current networking does not work for farmers -
- Local food is huge market opportunity in Wellington -
- Need help navigating regulatory hoops -
- Lack of natural gas -
- Adapting to unforeseen changes -

## Manufacturing

- Lack of 3 phase hydro -
- Not enough commercial/industrial space for small and medium businesses -
- Provide assistance/training for international growth -
- Need uniformity of municipal permits/zoning -
- Transportation of workers is challenging -
- Provide starter home options -
- Misperceptions about career opportunities -
- Lack of natural gas -

## Health Care

- Challenges recruiting beyond just physicians
- Demands are growing but funding is not
- Be creative with opportunities of new Fergus hospital and Mount Forest expansion
- Need to prepare workforce for changing health care needs
- Market the wellness opportunities in Wellington

## Creative Economy

- So many unique products/services in Wellington, but no opportunity to network
- Need more attractive/vibrant downtowns (commercial/residential mix)
- Lack of start-up commercial space
- Need for start-up financing options
- Encourage maintenance of downtown properties
- Attract newcomers for new business

Wellington's BR+E Retreat – February 20, 2014



## Opportunities and Action Plan

As a follow-up to the BR+E Retreat the WMEDG met in mid-march to review the key findings and develop a series of opportunities and Action Plan. The following identifies those opportunities and strategic actions, and states the lead agency and timing for completion.

Opportunity	Action By the end of 2014	By Who (lead)	Action After 2014	By Who (lead)
<b>Promote Wellington</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment sector profiles</li> <li>ED website with videos</li> <li>DFAIT Latin America trade convention</li> <li>Festivals and Events Guide</li> </ol>	County ED in conjunction with all municipalities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familiarization tours (by sector or general investment)</li> <li>Get on the radar of the Investment Branch of MEDTE</li> <li>Develop potential for agri-super region</li> <li>Discuss potential for newcomers strategy*</li> <li>RTO4 tourism development (enrich existing assets i.e.: Grand River, festivals, trails, IPM)</li> <li>Research on how to promote Wellington – lifestyle - we are a health and wellness community (Safe Community, Active Transportation, Quality of Life, spas, Taste Real)</li> <li>Create a video to highlight</li> <li>Signage strategy</li> </ol>	<p>County ED</p> <p>County ED (meet with neighbouring municipalities) GWLIP County ED</p>
<b>Support businesses</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link companies with apprentices*</li> <li>ED website business resources list</li> <li>Greater media promotion of WWCFDC</li> <li>Minto Small Business Incubator (replicate elsewhere?)</li> </ol>	<p>Conestoga College</p> <p>County ED</p> <p>WWCFDC</p> <p>Town of Minto</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a “Wellington Mentors” business resource</li> <li>E-newsletters for businesses (highlight a new business, show business resources, funding for apprentice hiring, land available, industry networking etc.)</li> <li>Discuss how to communicate financing beyond the traditional bank</li> </ol>	<p>County ED, WWCFDC, GWBEC</p> <p>County ED</p> <p>Golden Triangle AngelNet, WWCFDC</p>
<b>Encourage our downtowns to leave an indelible impression</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss opportunities for encouraging residential/commercial mix downtown</li> </ol>	All municipalities with OMAF to provide education/best practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“First Impressions” for each downtown in Wellington</li> <li>Municipal Community Improvement Plans</li> <li>Research on successful Community Improvement Plans (IntraWest assessment of our downtowns)</li> </ol>	Wellington North, Minto, Centre Wellington, Puslinch
<b>Advocate for level playing field in utilities infrastructure (natural gas, electricity, internet)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate BR+E results with various Ministries</li> </ol>	County ED via Council	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per County Council recommendation</li> </ol>	

<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Action By the end of 2014</b>	<b>By Who (lead)</b>	<b>Action After 2014</b>	<b>By Who (lead)</b>
<b>Training gaps for small/medium sized businesses</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Offer 3 workshops (i.e.: management skills, cost control, health and safety, marketing) in various locations across Wellington</li> <li>2. Map who is providing what training when, to cross promote using one calendar, host on ED website</li> </ol>	County ED, WWCFDC, GWBEC and in conjunction with all municipalities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Traveling business coach hired for one year (export to accounting advice)</li> <li>2. Out of the box training “When you run into a cash flow problem, what do you do?”</li> </ol>	Innovation Guelph, County ED, WWCFDC, all municipalities
<b>Support business networking opportunities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. WOWSA</li> <li>2. Wellington North Showcase</li> <li>3. Waterloo Regional Innovation Summit</li> <li>4. Mapleton Business Networking Event</li> <li>5. Mayor’s Breakfasts</li> <li>6. Northern Wellington Young Professional’s Network</li> </ol>	Town of Minto Township of Wellington North Township of Mapleton County ED where required Andrew Gowan (Mandy)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Host 2015 Wellington business symposium (futurist speaker, use sector profile to show what’s in your own backyard, offer training, networking, tradeshow, awards?)</li> </ol>	County ED in conjunction with all municipalities
<b>Business directory for promotion and supply chain development</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create an online business directory for Wellington</li> </ol>	County ED	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintenance of online business directory</li> </ol>	County ED
<b>Workforce skills gaps</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wellington Waterloo Manufacturing Day*Oct 3</li> <li>2. Working in Rural Wellington</li> <li>3. Health Care Human Resource Strategy</li> <li>4. 2014-2017 Labour Market Plan Wellington Waterloo Dufferin (June consultations begin)</li> </ol>	Workforce Planning Board, County ED, Career Education Council and all municipalities Waterloo Wellington Health HR Committee Workforce Planning Board	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce careers demanded and available locally to grade 10 students, showing full career path (how did I get here in my career)*</li> <li>2. County to engage school board and career counsellors to formalize partnership</li> <li>3. Speakers’ Bureau</li> </ol>	County ED, Career Education Council, Workforce Planning Board, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programme All Municipalities Career Education Council
<b>Affordable housing</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion on how do we encourage people to buy a home in Wellington (affordable options?)</li> </ol>	WWCFDC, County ED in conjunction with all municipalities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion on how to encourage developers to build multi-unit dwellings (linked to DCs? Financing?) Discussion to involve Wellington builders.</li> </ol>	County ED in conjunction with all municipalities

<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Action By the end of 2014</b>	<b>By Who (lead)</b>	<b>Action After 2014</b>	<b>By Who (lead)</b>
			2. Research redevelopment of downtowns as affordable attractive options	County ED in conjunction with all municipalities
<b>Vacant land/building inventory</b>	1. Create relationship with Guelph Wellington Real Estate Board	County ED in conjunction with all municipalities	1. Municipalities to encourage local inventories to be promoted via real estate board	County ED in conjunction with all municipalities
<b>Explore employment commuting patterns*</b>	1. Assessment of cost-shared rural transportation models	Rural Ontario Institute, County ED, Dillon Consulting, all municipalities	1. Is this a workforce skills gap (commuters that could possibly work locally) or is this a transit problem (workers can't get to their workplace)	County ED in conjunction with all municipalities
<b>Provide consistency in municipal business development services</b>	1. MEDTE to introduce themselves to municipality and offer support to business enquiries	MEDTE, County ED in conjunction with all municipalities	1. Sharing of municipal development process, sharing best practices with local building, planning and ED officials, to provide upfront expectations for process and timelines	County ED in conjunction with all municipalities
<b>Develop local food sector in Wellington</b>	1. Taste Real Local Food programme	County ED in conjunction with all municipalities	1. Develop business to business event beyond Wellington, partnering with Waterloo to encourage greater value chain development	County ED in conjunction with all municipalities

County of Wellington  
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ALTERNATE FORMATS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

April 2014