



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN 2020-2025: OVERVIEW



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## MISSION 2025

With its natural beauty and promise of work/life balance, Collingwood is growing quickly.

Our mission is to encourage its growth as a **thriving, entrepreneurial hub for innovative products, services, and sustainable design**—especially in key areas like water, environment and health sciences innovation.

We will **champion collaboration between government, business and academic institutions**, making it easy for new and existing business to find the support they need to grow in Collingwood; and to attract the young, **skilled workforce** that will support **expanding knowledge-economy businesses**.

### 1 Plan, 3 Goals

This Action Plan zeroes in on just three key points—those that will best help us drive economic success in our municipality. On the following pages, we break each goal down into objectives and actions.



MAKE COLLINGWOOD A  
HUB FOR SUSTAINABILITY  
INNOVATION



PROMOTE COLLINGWOOD  
AS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE  
& WORK



ENSURE  
COLLINGWOOD IS  
INVESTMENT-READY

### Part of a Broader Plan

The Action Plan will guide Collingwood's economic development activities and priorities for the next five years. It forms one of the five pillars of the broader Town of Collingwood Community-Based Strategic Plan:

#### PILLARS OF THE COMMUNITY-BASED STRATEGIC PLAN

Responsible and  
Sustainable Local  
Government

Public Connections  
to a Revitalized  
Waterfront

Support and  
Manage Growth  
and Prosperity

Enhance  
Community and  
Well-Being

Support  
Culture and  
the Arts

This brochure is a toolkit for the Town to use in checking off economic development actions. Inside you will discover how to action the plan.





## WHERE are we going?

These goals will best help us drive Collingwood's economic success.



## HOW will we get there?

Each Goal is composed of Objectives, which in turn contain distinct Actions.



## WHEN will we know we've arrived?

You know you're hitting the mark when you pass each milestone.



### GOAL 1:

#### MAKE COLLINGWOOD A HUB FOR SUSTAINABILITY & INNOVATION

##### Creating job opportunities

From ceramics-based sonar to electrically powered mining vehicles and ground-breaking advances in architectural glass, Collingwood punches way above its weight as a hub for great ideas. Now we're turning up the dial on both innovation and sustainability.



### GOAL 2:

#### PROMOTE COLLINGWOOD AS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE & WORK

##### Attracting the workers we need

Demographics show that Collingwood has a strong need for more young people in the workforce. We need to encourage more affordable accommodation and transportation options, and to promote our great outdoor lifestyle to attract the technical skills our area businesses need.



### GOAL 3:

#### ENSURE COLLINGWOOD IS INVESTMENT-READY

##### Making it easier to do business

We've got a one-stop-shop that takes a collaborative approach to finding space for businesses to build and grow. Comprehensive data and online tools, process transparency and a customer service orientation attract new investments and encourage established businesses to invest.



#### MAKE COLLINGWOOD A HUB FOR SUSTAINABILITY & INNOVATION

##### Objective 1.1 Accelerate Small & Medium Business Growth

We will help local businesses to thrive. We can add a Business Accelerator to the services we offer at the Business Development Centre. We will continue to connect entrepreneurs and businesses to the opportunities and investment dollars they need to get to the next level.

##### Objective 1.2 Promote sustainability projects in collaboration with cluster businesses

Businesses that develop innovative products and services focused on sustainability are blossoming in Collingwood. We will support this growth by encouraging private-public partnerships that help our companies test their innovations here, where they are located.



#### PROMOTE COLLINGWOOD AS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE & WORK

##### Objective 2.1 Promote Collingwood's Better Lifestyle

Collingwood is Ontario's premiere four-season playground. It's a big reason why many business leaders choose Collingwood. We will safeguard and promote this aspect to the kinds of skilled workers and business owners that we wish to attract.

##### Objective 2.2 Attract a Young (20-34) Workforce to the Region

Sufficient young workers is a prerequisite for long-term economic health. We will get to 'sufficient' by working with experts to help recruit the young skilled workers our companies need, while offering more affordable housing and transportation options.

##### Objective 2.3 Offer Workforce Education to a Multi-Generational Talent Pool

We will strengthen our workforce by harnessing the full power of all age groups by working together with Georgian College and other academic institutions to ensure we have the education options that meets the needs of local businesses.



#### ENSURE COLLINGWOOD IS INVESTMENT-READY

##### Objective 3.1 Characterize, Magnify & Market business growth areas with available lands & space

We will help investors find space to rent, lease or build their business in Collingwood through a more collaborative, transparent, data-rich customer service-oriented approach.

##### Objective 3.2 Make it Easy to do Business with the Town

We will review Town development approvals processes and our regulatory framework to ensure that we are clearly communicating our expectations and that the community is investment-ready.

##### Objective 3.3 Establish a Business Ambassador Team

Local business leaders carry tremendous influence with potential investors. Keeping these 'ambassadors' informed and engaged about the latest economic development news is just as important as listening to their feedback about what's working, what can be improved and how the Town can open new opportunities with other levels of government.

Watch for headlines like these in the years ahead:

- UN Habitat Conference Chooses Collingwood as a Hub for Sustainability Innovation
- Collingwood Digital Discovery Platform to Help Downtown Sustainability, Walkability
- Business Accelerator Opens Doors in Collingwood, Welcomes 6 Companies For First 6 Months
- Major New Employer to Build Water Innovation Centre, Investing Millions

- NEW Live More Now Podcast Series Part of Workforce Recruitment Initiative
- Transportation Task Force Doubles Employee Bus Usage, Introduces New Active Transport Options
- 2021 Census Data Reveals Rapid Growth of 'Creative Class' in Collingwood
- Collingwood Tracks Progress on Sustainability Index, Developed Jointly with UN
- Collingwood Recognized as One of Best Places to Live & Work

- New Interactive Portal Helps Businesses Find Land & Space in Collingwood
- Town wins Provincial business-friendly award for its high level of service and support

## BUILDING ON SUCCESS

- Building permits up
- Unemployment down
- Strong growth across small and medium-sized business



## MEASURING PROGRESS

What gets measured gets done. Annual scorecards will focus on these key metrics:



- Number and growth of jobs in prioritized knowledge-economy sectors; Job vacancy rate



- Growth rate and number of people in the 20- to 40-year-old age group
- Workforce post-secondary education levels; Overall workforce participation across multiple generations



- Number and growth of entrepreneurs, Small (1-99 employees) & Medium (100-499 employees) sized companies
- Satisfaction with Town approval processes; meeting 'Green Stamp' benchmarks; Index of business leader local investment sentiment



- Impact of Business Development Centre grants, loans and coordinated capital investments in helping local business grow and create new jobs
- Investments made in commercial and industrial building developments by companies



- Measure the quality of life based on an index that evaluates Collingwood's health, education, economic security, sustainability and several other values

## SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVES

Just some of the projects designed to stimulate the kind of economic growth that Collingwood needs:



### Profiling Available Land & Space

Businesses need a place to locate. Whether it's office space for rent or industrial-style space to rent or build, it's not just about filling space. It's about attracting and helping investors build higher-value structures that compliment the emerging knowledge economy and ensuring the right space is available for growing businesses.



### Attainable Accommodation

With local unemployment at less than 3%, we have an acute labour shortage. Making more affordable accommodation available for workers to rent and buy will require innovative ideas from developers and a municipality open to considering opportunities.



### Business-Friendly Customer Service

When processes and expectations are clear, projects move forward efficiently. We will review Town development approvals processes and our regulatory framework to ensure that we are clearly communicating our expectations and able to meet our Mission and objectives. We will ensure that the community is investment-ready and that residents, applicants and businesses understand each process.



### Business Accelerator

This program will accelerate the time it takes for companies to go from viable to high-growth leaders. The result? Turning Collingwood's small enterprises into core economic contributors. This will increase the Town's ability to connect high-growth companies with outside investment.



### Living Lab for Sustainable Innovation

Turn Collingwood into even more of a hotbed for innovative technology with companies focused on water, environmental and health projects. Encourage our businesses to test their cutting-edge technologies here through private-public partnerships involving experts from Ontario and around the world.

WANT TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS?

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