

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025 AND BEYOND

MARCH 2025

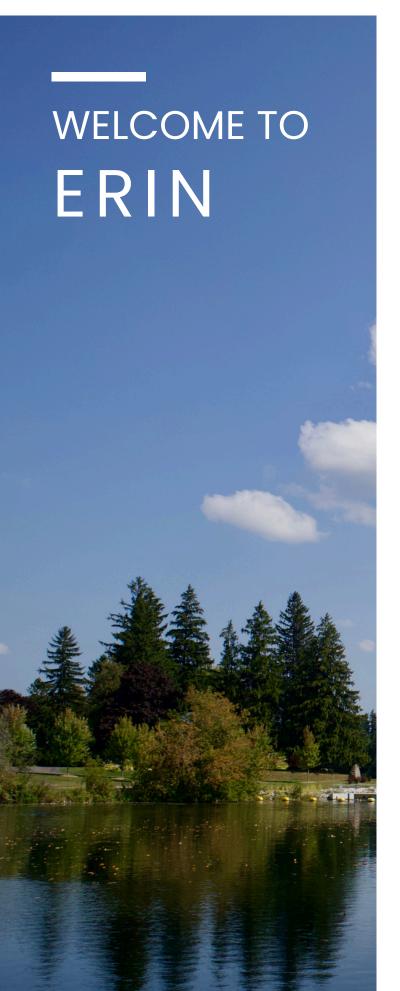




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Nestled close to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), the Town of Erin offers a harmonious blend of a charming community, agricultural heritage, and environmental stewardship. Our picturesque landscape and heritage-rich environment create a community where businesses and residents alike can thrive. With a growing population and a strong sense of community, the Town of Erin is the ideal place for innovative ideas and new investments to flourish.

The Town of Erin's strategic location near the GTA fosters strong business connections, while our commitment to preserving community charm ensures a high quality of life for all residents. Our supportive environment for investment attraction, combined with a rich mix of historic and progressive elements, Erin a prime location makes for businesses looking to grow.

The famous Erin Fall Fair, a cornerstone of our vibrant community, showcases our deep-rooted agricultural heritage and rich culture. Erin is more than just a place to live; it's a community invested in shaping a prosperous and dynamic tomorrow. Combining the tranquillity of rural living with the convenience of nearby urban amenities, the Town of Erin offers the best of both worlds.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan leverages Erin's strengths, from our supportive business environment and stunning natural landscapes to our engaged and innovative community. We are committed to fostering economic growth, attracting new investments, and supporting our existing businesses while upholding our commitment to preserving Erin's unique character and natural beauty.



A NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE TOWN OF ERIN

The Town of Erin will experience significant growth and change in the coming years. As we look to the future, it is necessary to establish a new Economic Development Strategy that reflects the current needs and aspirations of our community. With our proximity to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and a growing population, the Town of Erin is at a pivotal point where a refreshed strategy will help harness new opportunities and address emerging challenges.

WHY NOW?

The Town of Erin's previous economic development efforts have laid a strong foundation for growth, focusing on attracting businesses and supporting local enterprises. However, the landscape is evolving rapidly. Our community is preparing for a significant increase in population, which necessitates a strategy that not only accommodates this growth but also leverages it to enhance our local economy.

With a projected rise in population, the Town of Erin must prepare to meet the needs of both new and existing residents. This includes creating job opportunities, enhancing infrastructure, and ensuring a high quality of life. Our community values its heritage and charm while embracing innovation. The new strategy balances these aspects, ensuring that growth is sustainable and aligned with the Town of Erin's unique character. As a Town supportive of investment and open to new ideas, Erin must proactively attract and retain businesses that align with our community's values and contribute to our economic resilience.





THE NEW STRATEGY

The Town of Erin's new Economic Development Strategic Plan stems from the collective vision that was developed following an analysis of the Town's economy and demographics, and several stakeholder engagement sessions, including a strategic planning workshop with Council and the Erin Economic Development Committee, and a Focus Group session.

This strategy will focus on several key areas, beginning with investment attraction, which will involve proactively seeking and encouraging new businesses to establish themselves in Erin. Infrastructure improvements will enhance and expand the infrastructure to support the growing population and business community, ensuring efficient development. Business retention and expansion efforts will support existing businesses in their growth, ensuring they remain integral parts of the community.

Finally, fostering a vibrant community will involve creating a dynamic, inclusive, and engaged environment where residents enjoy a high quality of life and actively participate in the Town's development. As part of the Town's commitment to Environmental Stewardship, the Town of Erin will prioritize green initiatives in all economic development efforts, promoting sustainable growth, energy efficiency, and environmental responsibility. This focus aligns with our vision for a greener, more sustainable future for both residents and businesses.





VISION

To be a welcoming community where businesses and residents thrive.

MISSION

To foster purposeful economic development, in harmony with community needs.





VALUES

Accountability

A commitment to responsibility, and excellence in governance and decision-making for the community's needs.

Transparency

Enhancing openness and accountability through clear and accessible communication, ensuring that decision-making processes, actions, and information are readily available.

Integrity

An unwavering foundation of honesty and ethical conduct, fostering trust and respect in all that we do.

Sustainability

Ensuring the long-term quality of life for current and future generations by responsibly managing resources and embracing environmentally friendly practices that support ecological balance and social well-being.

Inclusivity

A community where empathy guides actions, diverse perspectives are celebrated, equitable opportunities are prioritized, and everyone feels valued and included.

Innovation

A commitment to continuous improvement, exploring effectiveness and efficiency in all that we do.





ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

POPULATION

The Town of Erin has shown steady population growth, increasing from 10,770 in 2011 to 11,981 in 2021, and our population is estimated to be 26,000 by mid-2030. The majority of the population falls within the 15-64 age range, with a median age of 46.8 years, indicating a mature community with a significant working-age population. Regarding education, twenty-three percent of residents have a university degree, and another twenty-three percent hold a college diploma, showcasing a well-educated community. Residents primarily hold post-secondary degrees or diplomas in the fields of 'Business, Management and Public Administration,' 'Social and Behavioural Sciences and Law' and 'Architecture, Engineering, and related trades.'

WORKFORCE AND LABOUR FORCE

The Town of Erin's workforce is primarily concentrated in a few key occupations and industries. The top occupations include 'Trades, Transport, and Equipment Operators,' followed closely by 'Sales and Service,' 'Business, Finance, and Administration,' 'Education, Law, Community and Government Services, and 'Natural and Applied Sciences.' This occupational distribution suggests a community heavily involved in skilled trades and services, with a significant portion also engaged in administrative and scientific roles.

The Town of Erin's workforce exhibits higher labour force participation rates than Wellington County and the Province of Ontario overall. Erin's participation rate stands at 69.4 percent, with 73.3 percent for males and 65.3 percent for females. This suggests that Erin benefits from a relatively engaged workforce, particularly among women, who participate at higher rates than in both Wellington County and Ontario.

The employment rate in the Town of Erin stands at 63.6 percent (68.1 percent for males and 59.1 percent for females), again outperforming Wellington County (61 percent overall) and Ontario (55.1 percent overall). While unemployment in Erin remains lower than the provincial average, it still presents a gender gap: Erin's unemployment rate is 8.2 percent, with 7.1 percent for males and 9.6 percent for females. This gender disparity in both employment and unemployment rates suggests opportunities to further support female workforce engagement and reduce unemployment within the town.



ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

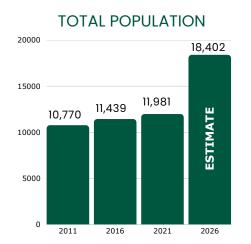
TOP INDUSTRIES

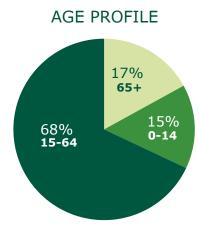
The leading industries in the Town in terms of employment are 'Construction', 'Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services', 'Healthcare and Social Assistance', 'Manufacturing', and 'Retail Trade'. These industries indicate a local economy that balances infrastructure development with professional and healthcare services. While it is not one of the leading industries in Town, Management of Companies and Enterprises, led growth between 2019 and 2023 with an impressive 135 percent increase. This sector includes organizations focused on overseeing and managing other companies within the same group. These entities either hold controlling shares in subsidiaries to influence their management decisions or directly handle administrative and strategic operations for affiliated businesses, without offering services to outside companies, signalling emerging opportunities in corporate and administrative roles. Manufacturing also showed robust growth at 52 percent over the 4-year period, indicating a rise in production activities. Conversely, Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation declined by 29 percent, and Agriculture saw a reduction of 17 percent.

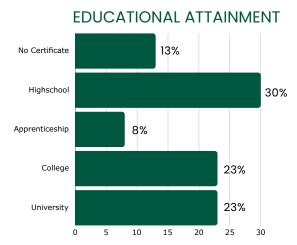




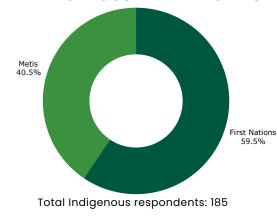
DEMOGRAPHICS

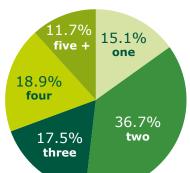




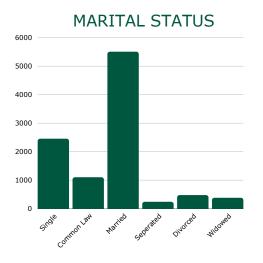


INDIGENOUS IDENTIFICATION





HOUSEHOLD SIZE



REAL ESTATE

DWELLING VALUE

Average Value \$980,000

Median Value \$1,086,000

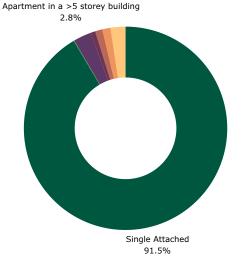
AFFORDABILITY

Average Monthly Shelter Costs Renters vs. Owners

\$1,984 | \$2,064

TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS





of Erin's population spends 30% or more of household total income on shelter costs.

RENT VS. OWN







LOCAL ECONOMY

TOP 5 INDUSTRIES



12%Construction



10%
Professional,
scientific and
technical services



9%Healthcare and Social Assistance



9% Manufacturing

HIGHEST DECLINE 2019-2023



8% Retail trade

HIGHEST GROWTH 2019-2023

135%

Management of Companies

52%

Manufacturing

(29%)

Arts, Entertainment, Recreation (17%)

Agriculture (Top 6 industry)

LABOUR FORCE

TOP 5 OCCUPATIONS



24% Trades, Transport and Equipment



23% Sales and Service



Business, Finance and Administration



10%
Education,
Law/Social,
Community &
Government



8%
Natural and
Applied
Sciences

LABOUR FORCE

PARTICIPATION

EMPLOYEMENT

UNEMPLOYMENT

MEDIAN INCOME

6,930

69.4%

63.6%

8.2%

\$127,000



FOCUS SECTORS

Following a statistical industrial analysis, and two strategic planning workshops with Council members, the Erin Economic Development Committee, and various focus groups, six sectors have been identified as key areas of focus for the Town of Erin's Economic Development Strategic Plan.

- 1. Agriculture, Agri-food and Equine
- 2. Tourism
- 3. Retail Trade
- 4. Entrepreneurship
- 5. Construction
- 6. Manufacturing

By concentrating on these sectors, we aim to foster sustainable growth, enhance the quality of life for residents, and attract new businesses and visitors to our community.





FOCUS SECTORS

Agriculture, Agri-food and Equine (FS1)

Our Economic Development Strategy aims to strengthen the Agriculture Agri-food Equine industries by promoting sustainable farming practices, supporting local farmers, and encouraging the growth of agri-food businesses. We are committed to creating opportunities, that connect our agricultural roots with broader market trends.

Tourism (FS2)

Our strategy focuses on leveraging the Town's tourism assets to attract visitors year-round. By enhancing our tourism infrastructure and promoting the Town of Erin's unique attractions, such as our famous Fall Fair, beautiful natural surroundings and various outdoor activities, we aim to boost the local economy and create lasting memories for our visitors.

Retail Trade (FS3)

Providing essential goods and services to residents, Retail Trade is a vital component of the Town's economy. Our strategy aims to support and expand the local retail sector by attracting diverse businesses and enhancing the shopping experience. We are dedicated to creating a vibrant retail environment that meets the needs of our growing population.

Entrepreneurship (FS4)

Fostering entrepreneurship is key to the Town of Erin's economic development. We aim to create a supportive environment for startups and small businesses by providing access to resources, mentoring, and networking opportunities. We are committed to nurturing a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship that drives economic growth and job creation.

Construction (FS5)

As the leading provider of jobs, the construction sector plays a vital role in our community's economic stability. We aim to meet the needs of our growing population through continued support of local contractors, and by ensuring that development aligns with community values.

Manufacturing (FS6)

Erin's manufacturing sector is a key driver of economic activity, providing jobs and contributing to local and regional economies. Our strategy aims to support existing manufacturers, attract new manufacturing businesses, and encourage innovation and sustainability within the sector.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION
INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS
BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION
VIBRANT COMMUNITY





INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

Attracting new investments is vital to the long-term prosperity of the Town of Erin's economy, as it will ensure a healthy balance between residential and non-residential tax bases, following the recent surge in residential development. New investments lead to job creation, economic growth and enhanced overall quality of life, contributing to a community where residents and businesses can thrive. This strategy prioritizes investment attraction by:

- Targeting sectors that support our existing businesses, especially our focus sectors
- Maximizing employment lands
- Facilitating new investment

How will we achieve this?

- Develop and maintain a land inventory of industrial, commercial and investment (ICI) properties, and invest in tools to enhance accessibility and data visualization for potential investors
- Foster collaboration with Wellington County to align and promote local and county-level Community Improvement Programs (CIP)
- Advocate for policies and initiatives that ensure an adequate supply of construction-ready land to support economic growth
- Increase engagement in policy development that impacts employment lands and non-residential development
- Design and implement investment attraction strategies, including marketing campaigns and sector-focused initiatives
- Explore methods to streamline development processes, reduce red tape, and introduce incentives to attract new investment





1. INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

Objective	Actions	Lead/ Partners	Performance Measures
1.1 Grow Targeted Sectors	1.1.1 Develop and implement an investment attraction marketing campaign and sector-focused initiatives around the six focus sectors: Agriculture, Agri-food and Equine, Tourism, Retail Trade, Entrepreneurship, construction and manufacturing	Town of Erin (ToE)	Measure the reach, engagement, and outcomes of the campaign, including investor inquiries and investments secured Monitor annual growth in focus sectors
	1.1.2 Update the community profile	ToE	Measure the distribution and online reach of the community profile
1.2 Maximize and optimize employment lands	1.2.1 Develop and maintain an Employment Lands Inventory	ToE, Private Sector	Land inventory maintained and updated
	1.2.2 Launch a pilot project to develop an Employment Lands Strategy that includes an evaluation of servicing needs	ToE	Completion of pilot project
	1.2.3 Invest in tools to enhance accessibility and data visualization for potential investors – GIS mapping software	ToE	GIS platform engagement and number of inquiries
	1.2.4 Conduct a gap analysis to identify Town- owned development opportunities and explore the possibility of budgeting for the acquisition of additional industrial land to expand the supply of non-residential properties	ToE	Completion of a detailed gap analysis report, including recommendations for industrial land acquisition



1. INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

Objective	Actions	Lead/ Partners	Performance Measures
1.2 Maximize and optimize employment lands	1.2.5 Identify and explore opportunities to re-zone land for commercial and industrial use	ТоЕ	Re-zoning approval for at least one parcel of land for commercial or industrial use within the next 24 months Number of commercial/industrial developments
1.3 Facilitate New Investment	1.3.1 Implement a Customer Relations Management (CRM) system to track investor interactions and proposals	ToE	Monitor the number of investor interactions and proposals successfully tracked through the CRM system
	1.3.2 Identify and offer grants to support new investments in focus sectors and update the Community Improvement Plan to address emerging needs	ToE	Measure the uptake of revised CIP programs and the funding provided through the CIP
	1.3.3 Introduce a Development Change Deferral policy	ToE	Number of investors using the DC deferral policy



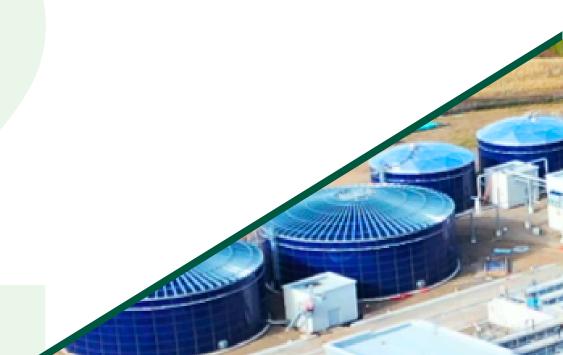
INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Developing and enhancing infrastructure is vital for the future success and quality of life in the Town of Erin. Modern infrastructure lays the foundation for economic expansion, draws new businesses to the area, and significantly benefits residents, aligning with the Town's Economic Development vision of a community where businesses and residents thrive. Infrastructure improvements include:

- Prioritize and support the advancement of commercial projects and partnerships
- Advance Broadband Infrastructure
- Enhance and develop tourism Infrastructure

How will we achieve this?

- Foster partnerships with investors to co-fund and co-develop commercial projects that align with the Town's vision
- Collaborate with the Town's Internet Service Providers to regularly deliver updates on high-speed internet projects such as the Rogers Wellington County Fibre-to-the-Home (FTTH) project
- Engage the community in conducting a gap analysis to ensure that all broadband needs are met or that there is a plan in place that will guarantee coverage for everyone in the Town
- Support the development of new accommodations such as hotels, motels and bed-and-breakfasts
- Improve visitor amenities
- Upgrade wayfinding signage
- Encourage private investment in tourism-related projects
- Connecting existing commercial properties to water and water treatment facilities





2. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Objective	Actions	Lead/ Partners	Performance Measures
2.1 Prioritize and support the advancement of commercial projects and partnerships	2.1.1 Foster partnerships with investors to co-fund and co-develop commercial projects that align with the Town's vision	Town of Erin (ToE)	Measure the amount of financial investment secured through partnerships with private investor
2.2 Advance broadband Infrastructure	2.2.1 Develop and execute a communication plan to keep the community informed about broadband infrastructure developments and timelines	ToE, Internet Service Providers (ISPs), Wellington County (WC)	Ensure community satisfaction by providing clear high-speed broadband project updates and timelines
	2.2.2 Conduct a Gap Analysis: Identify areas lacking adequate broadband coverage and develop a plan to address these gaps	ToE, ISPs, WC	Identify and address broadband coverage gaps
2.3 Enhance and develop tourism infrastructure	2.3.1 Tourism Information: Enhance the accessibility and reach of tourism information by adopting innovative and flexible approaches to engage visitors effectively. This could include popup visitor centers at major events, digital kiosks, or virtual information such as downloadable guides	ToE, Central Counties Tourism (CCT)	Track the number of visitors, their satisfaction, and spending
	2.3.2 Improve visitor amenities by increasing the availability and accessibility of public washrooms in key locations, including parks, downtown areas, and popular attractions. This may include installing new facilities, upgrading existing ones, and ensuring proper maintenance	ToE	Track the number of new or upgraded public washrooms and measure visitor satisfaction through surveys



2. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Objective	Actions	Lead/ Partners	Performance Measures
2.3 Enhance and develop tourism infrastructure	2.3.3 Work with developers and property owners to identify opportunities and incentives for new accommodations, including hotels, motels, and bedand-breakfasts	ToE, developers, property owners	Track and report the number of new accommodations developed or expanded annually
	2.3.4 Wayfinding Signage: Develop a Directional Wayfinding Master Plan and upgrade and enhance wayfinding signage to improve navigation for tourists	ToE (Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Roads)	Measure the increase in tourism-related private investments
2.4 Build water and wastewater infrastructure	2.4.1 Explore opportunities to connect exisiting commercial properties to water and water treatment infrastructure	ToE (Infrastructure department)	Infrastructure connected



BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Fostering the growth and sustainability of our local businesses contributes to the Town's economic resilience. Through our commitment to Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E), we are cultivating an environment where our existing businesses can flourish. Our strategic initiatives to support BR+E include:

- Identifying and addressing major obstacles in focus sectors
- Providing growth and expansion incentives to help local businesses grow and expand their operations
- Leverage collaborations with partner organizations
- Promoting local commerce and encouraging residents to shop locally, boosting the local economy

How will we achieve this?

- Conduct sector-specific BR+E studies to identify challenges and opportunities across focus sectors
- Develop comprehensive BR+E Action Plans to proactively support businesses and address identified challenges
- Provide programs that help local businesses grow, ensuring they remain integral parts of the community
- Offer ongoing incentives through the CIP to facilitate business expansion
- Partner with educational institutions to ensure a skilled workforce that meets businesses' needs
- Leverage partnerships with local organizations, such as the Erin Chamber of Commerce, Guelph-Wellington Business Centre, and Wellington County, to maximize business resource utilization
- Support and encourage "shop local" initiatives to strengthen the local economy





3. BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Objective	Actions	Lead/ Partners	Performance Measures
3.1 Identify and address major obstacles in key sectors	3.1.1 Conduct sector-specific interviews with businesses in key sectors such as Equine, Retail, Entrepreneurship and Manufacturing to identify challenges and growth opportunities	Town of Erin (ToE), Wellington County (WC), Business Community	Conduct interviews with businesses from two key sectors annually
	3.1.2 Develop and implement sector-specific action plans based on insights from BR+E studies to address business needs and encourage growth. Sectors of focus include agriculture, agri-food and equine, tourism, retail trade, entrepreneurship, construction and manufacturing	ToE	Develop and implement sector-specific BR+E Action Plans Track number of BR+E participants, as well as businesses assisted, and challenges resolved through the BR+E Action Plan initiatives
3.2 Provide growth and expansion incentives	3.2.1 Actively promote the CIP to ensure businesses are aware of the incentives available to support expansion or green initiatives	ToE	Track number of businesses applying for and receiving CIP incentives, and the amount of investment, expansion and job creation resulting from CIP incentives
3.3 Leverage partnerships	3.3.1 Collaborate with partner organizations such as the Erin Chamber of Commerce, Erin Agricultural Society, Wellington County, Business Centre Guelph-Wellington or Boundless Accelerator to deliver workshops, business resources and training around the focus sectors, including entrepreneurship. Work towards development of a business mentorship and training site in Erin	ТоЕ	Track the number of collaborations established with partner organizations



3. BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Objective	Actions	Lead/ Partners	Performance Measures
3.4 Support and encourage shop local	3.4.1 Implement targeted campaigns and events to encourage residents to support local businesses including agri-food, equine, tourism and retail trade	ToE	Measure increase in local sales through business surveys and feedback



VIBRANT COMMUNITY

Creating a vibrant, inclusive, and engaged community is fundamental to the Town of Erin's vision of being a place where both businesses and residents thrive. A vibrant community not only enhances the quality of life for residents but also attracts new businesses and visitors. Our strategic efforts to build a vibrant community include:

- Establishing a distinctive identity
- Downtown revitalization initiatives
- Placemaking activities

How will we achieve this?

- Promote and develop arts and cultural initiatives to celebrate local talent
- Upgrade public spaces to enhance the Town's aesthetic appeal, prioritizing downtown areas for revitalization
- Foster a strong sense of community by encouraging public engagement in decision-making and community activities
- Provide consistent promotional support to increase the Town's visibility, attract visitors, and draw new businesses
- Collaborate with Wellington County and Central Counties Tourism (CCT) to amplify promotional efforts
- Promote inclusivity by ensuring all public facilities and attractions comply with AODA standards to be accessible to everyone





4. VIBRANT COMMUNITY

Objective	Actions	Lead/ Partners	Performance Measures
4.1 Identity development and promotion	4.1.1 Create and implement a unique marketing strategy for the Town that reflects its distinctive identity	Town of Erin (ToE)	Completion of a comprehensive marketing strategy
	4.1.2 Enhance online presence by regularly updating the Town's website and Discover Erin platforms with engaging content, and by utilizing Google Ads, social media campaigns and other marketing channels to boost engagement and promote attractions	ToE	Increased website traffic, social media engagement levels, compliance with AODA standards across digital spaces and reach of other promotional activities such as print
	4.1.3 Develop and implement a tourism strategy	ToE, Central Counties Tourism (CCT), Community Stakeholders	Development and implementation of a tourism strategy, with measurable increases in visitor numbers
4.2 Downtown Revitalization and Placemaking	4.2.1 Develop a downtown streetscape furnishing plan to highlight our unique heritage districts and beautiful streetscape	ТоЕ	Develop and implement a Downtown Streetscape Furnishing plan
	4.2.2 Implement the streetscape plan by u pgrading downtown areas with improved landscaping, signage, furniture, planters, hanging baskets, banners, lighting, trees, artwork and décor	ToE	Number of public spaces upgraded, with downtown revitalization milestones achieved Compliance with AODA standards across public spaces and facilities



4. VIBRANT COMMUNITY

Objective	Actions	Lead/ Partners	Performance Measures
4.2 Downtown Revitalization and Placemaking	4.2.3 Plan and execute community art projects to enhance public spaces and promote local creativity	ToE, community arts groups and local talent	Installation of 1 project annually
4.3 Expand Economic Development resources to manage demands	4.3.1 Allocate for an additional Economic Development Officer in the 2026 budget	ToE, CAO and Treasurer	Budget allocation approved



CONCLUSION

The Town of Erin stands at a pivotal point as it prepares for significant growth. As we look to the future, the new Economic Development Strategic Plan will be essential in guiding the Town through this period of change, ensuring that both the needs of our growing population and the aspirations of our business community are met. This strategy reflects our commitment to fostering a vibrant, resilient economy by attracting new investments, supporting existing businesses, and enhancing our infrastructure. Through targeted initiatives, we aim to preserve the Town's character while embracing innovation and growth. The collaborative efforts of our internal departments and engagement with stakeholders are crucial in achieving these goals. The Town of Erin is not just preparing for growth; it is actively shaping a future where businesses and residents can thrive.







This Economic Development Strategic Plan is the result of a collaborative effort, with input from a wide range of voices across our community.

We would like to thank all our partners for their participation and valuable contributions to the Town of Erin's new Economic Development Strategic Plan, including:

- The Town Council
- The Erin Economic Development Committee
- The Erin Chamber of Commerce
- The Wellington County Economic Development team
- The Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin
- Additional participants in the focus group sessions:
 - Ann Shanahan Team RE/MAX
 Real Estate Centre Inc., Brokerage
 - Elliott Tree Farm
 - Erin Auto Recyclers
 - Erin Hill Acres
 - Foodland Hillsburgh
 - Greyden Equestrian
 - Heartwood Cidery
 - Rural Commons
 - Tailwinds B&B
 - The Erin Agricultural Society
 - Tin Roof Café
 - Yetti Construction Ltd
- Community members who provided feedback on our engagement platform erinengaged.erin.ca

Thank YOU