

TOWN OF WHITBY

Economic Recovery Plan 2020-2021

October 2020



For more information, contact
Strategic Initiatives



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Executive Summary

Whitby's economic development efforts have been focused on increasing local jobs, revitalizing downtowns and continuing to be the "Community of Choice" by enabling a diverse, sustainable economy that enhances the quality of life for residents and the business community.

When the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, Canadian health care policies were implemented immediately to try and prevent further spread of the virus. These health care measures were unprecedented and resulted in severe economic consequences as businesses were locked down, and citizens were asked to self-isolate.

Some industries were less impacted by the lockdowns and Whitby's diverse industry base meant that Whitby fared better than some other municipalities which are dependent on a single industry base. Many of Whitby's information technology and professional services companies continued to operate by working from home. Many organizations, including the Town of Whitby, adopted the new "work-from-home" model to ensure the continuation of essential services.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, the Town of Whitby was in a relatively strong economic position with a low industrial vacancy rate and a renewed vibrancy in our two historic downtowns. Significant growth was happening in the West Whitby development and applications were moving forward for Brooklin and Port Whitby.

Whitby's location in the Greater Toronto Area places it as a prime tourist destination. Responding to the advantage of location, Whitby developed many tourist friendly offerings and fun things to do. Whitby also boasts several quality hotel locations, fine dining and a one-of-a-kind shopping experience in our two historic downtowns. Business was booming.

We All Pulled Together

Economic development team members and others in the Durham Business Support Ecosystem mobilized to respond to the economic fallout by creating the Durham Economic Task Force. This group was made up of Durham Region's Economic Development and Tourism team; all of Durham's Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade; local municipal economic development teams and local Business Improvement Associations (BIAs). The Durham Economic Task Force identified three priorities:

- Advocate to the Provincial and Federal governments to respond to the urgent needs of our business community
- Provide our businesses with resources and information from all levels of government
- Promote Durham small businesses, particularly local stores, food and agri-businesses that are offering safe, no-contact delivery and pick-up options.

With a strong focus on public health and safety, the Province of Ontario released a three-stage framework which outlined the method and principles to be used to reopen businesses, services and public spaces.

Whitby Has a Plan

Focusing on key priorities, the Whitby plan for recovery is to:

1. Retain existing businesses by providing resources and support programs

2. Revitalize and rediscover Whitby's downtowns and manage the main street impact –
3. Foster and sustain the innovation economy
4. Engage with post-secondary institutions and other service providers to improve workforce employability –
5. Improve customer service processes and business experiences.

The timing for the associated actions that serve to implement the Recovery Plan are categorized as immediate (IT) (immediate to 6 months); short term (ST) (6-12 months); and medium term (MT) (12-18 months). Some of the actions are in-progress and some have already been completed.

Conclusion

This plan is meant to be fluid, reacting quickly to the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. New actions and initiatives may need to be added to account for these evolving conditions in response to the health and safety of residents. This recovery plan can be implemented with existing staff and financial resources for 2020 and 2021.

Despite these present and short term health care and economic conditions, there is a need for a longer term Economic Development Strategy to accelerate business growth post-COVID-19 that builds upon these recovery efforts. The formulation of this strategy requires input from business community members and needs to examine a sustainable and prosperous economic future for the subsequent five years.

Introduction

Whitby's economic development efforts have been focused on increasing local jobs, revitalizing downtowns and continuing to be the "Community of Choice" by enabling a diverse, sustainable economy that enhances the quality of life for its residents and business community. When the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, Canadian health care policies were implemented immediately to try and prevent further spread of the virus. These health care measures were unprecedented with economic consequences as a result of lock-downs, self-isolation and other preventative measures. However, Whitby's diverse economy meant that certain industries would be less impacted in our community compared to other communities more dependent on single industries. For example, communities reliant on tourism based industries such as accommodation, food and beverage services, and entertainment would be impacted by lock-downs and health care measures. Many of Whitby's information technology and professional services companies could continue to work from home. Manufacturers, logistics and transportation companies (among others) were declared essential services by the Province of Ontario and could carry on operating with health care measures in place.

Whitby's immediate economic development attention is to support reopening and recovery and a sustainable economic future.

This Economic Recovery Plan is built on the following framework:

Before COVID-19 Outbreak: Background Assessment – This section provides an assessment of the local economic, demographic and municipal characteristics prior to the outbreak.

Provincial Economic Recovery Framework – This section describes the Province's recovery framework and stages for reopening the economy. These stages shape local recovery efforts.

Durham Business Support Ecosystem - There are several business support organizations in Durham Region that focus on business retention and expansion. Each of these organizations has a role to play as Durham's economy reopens and progresses through each of the Provincial stages.

Mobilization: COVID-19 Response – This section identifies early measures in response to the economic fallout and quantifies the labour force and real estate impact during the first half of 2020.

Economic Recovery Plan Action Items – This section outlines the activities that will be undertaken to help the Whitby business community adapt and recover by working with other business support organizations. This outbreak has evolved considerably over the first half of 2020 and it is important to adapt to circumstances as they change.

Conclusion – This section concludes the Economic Recovery Plan and lays the framework and discussion for a longer term Economic Development Strategy.

Before COVID-19 Outbreak: Background Assessment

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, the Town of Whitby was in a relatively strong position. Whitby's industrial vacancy rate was at a record low of 1 percent, there was renewed vibrancy in our two historical downtowns with recent and planned development projects. Significant growth was being built in west Whitby and development applications were planned for Brooklin and Port Whitby. Planning tools such as land servicing agreements have been established to create serviced land in west Whitby. These tools have proven to be effective and generated business expansion interest in this employment land area. For example, the Oshawa Clinic Group has acquired a serviced land parcel in west Whitby for their expansion plans. If this property was un-serviced, its marketability for business expansion use would have been reduced significantly.

Whitby is becoming a strong tourism hub in the Greater Toronto Area with a depth of offerings. These offerings included a walkable waterfront and harbor, two conservation authorities for outdoor recreation, and entertainment business investment (e.g. Playdium, iFly Toronto). Construction is also well underway for Le Nordik Spa, the only urban spa of its kind in the Greater Toronto Area.

A demographic, economic and business background assessment was undertaken to better understand the resident and business community prior to the COVID-19 outbreak being declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization in March 2020. Demographic and economic data was collected from Statistics Canada along with a dataset from Manifold Data Mining Inc. to supplement more recent data. Additional materials have been gathered from the World Council on City Data Indicators for Sustainable Development initiative and the Durham Workforce Authority. Indicators from the 2019 Economic Development Annual Report prepared for Town Council were also referenced. These data sources enabled a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of demographic, industry and employment indicators for the Town of Whitby. Further details about the data results are available in Appendix 1: Background Analysis. The key findings that emerged from the analysis are:

- Population growth will continue in the future. The households in Whitby's population base tend to have a higher amount of disposable income than other communities in Ontario.
- There are large concentrations of the labour force working in the energy and education services sector, which are driven by the proximity to Ontario Power Generation and post-secondary schools (e.g. Ontario Tech University, Durham College, and Trent University-Durham Campus).
- Whitby has been strong and growing as a result of being a desired place to live in the Greater Toronto Area.



Provincial Economic Recovery Framework

On April 27, 2020 the Province of Ontario released a three-stage framework which outlined the method and principles to be used to reopen businesses, services and public spaces. For each stage, public health and safety is the leading concern.¹

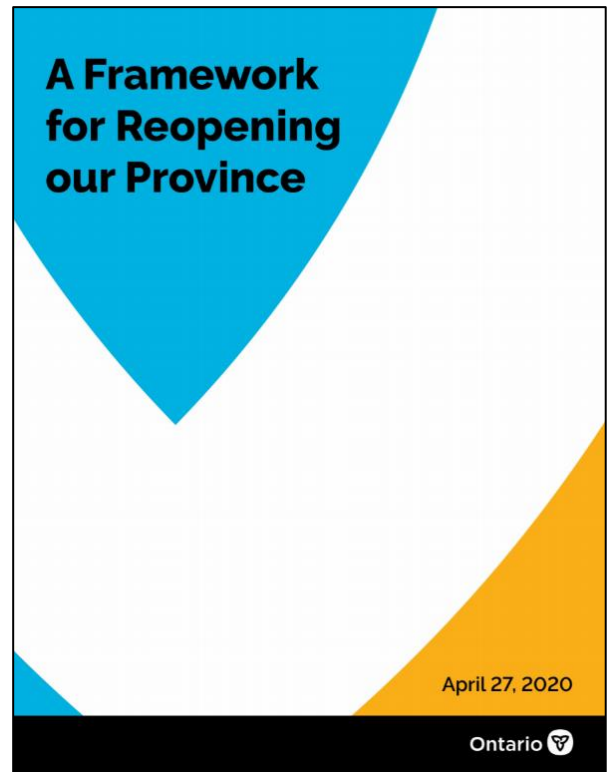
The Province's guiding principles to reopen the economy are based on the following:

- Responsible – guided by public health advice to protect the most vulnerable and at risk.
- Evidence-informed - defined criteria and consistent measures.
- Resourced – sufficient health system capacity to respond to any new outbreaks.
- Monitored – a timely and rigorous testing process.
- Responsive and effective – measures could be introduced quickly.
- Clear – there are clear plans and responsibilities for individuals, employers and the health care system.

Key considerations for each stage are as follows:

- **Stage 1** – opening select workplaces that can meet current public health guidelines; allowing essential gatherings of a limited number of people; opening some outdoor spaces. Hospitals would also begin to offer some non-urgent and scheduled surgeries and other health care services.
- **Stage 2** – opening more workplaces with significant mitigation plans, which may include some service industries and additional office and retail workplaces, opening more public spaces; allowing some larger public gatherings.
- **Stage 3** – opening workplaces responsibly, relaxing restrictions on public gatherings and allowing full services to resume.

Throughout each stage, continued protections for vulnerable populations must be in place along with the continued practice of physical distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene to limit health risks. The Province announced in May, 2020, Ontario would be in Stage 1 of the reopening of businesses, services and public spaces. Province of Ontario announced the Durham Region would move to Stage 2 on June 19, 2020 and Stage 3 on July 24, 2020. The dates were dependent upon how this health care crisis evolved on a Regional basis. Business support organizations, which includes the Town of Whitby, needed to be cognizant of these guiding principles and stages and adapt programming accordingly.



¹ Reopening Ontario after COVID-19, Province of Ontario, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario-after-covid-19>, published on April 27, 2020.

The Durham Business Support Ecosystem

The Durham Business Support Ecosystem includes a variety of organizations that aim to support business growth locally and across the Region. Of the many organizations, Whitby works very closely with the Whitby Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Whitby BIA and 1855 Whitby Tech Accelerator. Each of these business support partners play a crucial role in our economic development and recovery efforts.

Whitby Chamber of Commerce – The Chamber has a long history in Whitby and acts on behalf of its members as a dominant voice within the business community, advocating for legislative and policy change. It drives local economic growth and professional development, serving a variety of economic sectors. Most of the membership base are small companies of less than 50 employees.

Downtown Whitby Business Improvement Area (BIA) – Downtown Whitby's BIA is in a specially designated zone in the downtown core that was established in 2017. Its 300 member businesses contribute to a program that helps build awareness of product and service offerings and activities to experience in the downtown.

1855 Whitby Tech Accelerator - 1855 Whitby is a vital partner for Whitby's innovation economy. This organization was co-created by the Town of Whitby and Jason Atkins, CEO of 360insights.com in 2019. 1855 Whitby provides support for established high-potential tech and innovation companies to accelerate growth and land within the community. This organization has collaborated with the Town of Whitby's economic development team on a variety of projects including investment missions, events, programming and other initiatives that support the growth of the Downtown Whitby Innovation District.

Aside from the Whitby Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Whitby BIA and 1855 Whitby, there are several business support organizations in Durham Region that service business expansion and growth. Each of these organizations has a role to play as Ontario's economy reopens after the COVID-19 outbreak is contained. Some additional organizations that contribute to Durham's business support ecosystem are in:

- **Non-profit sector** – Composed of organizations funded by members and programs or government programs (i.e. Business Advisory Centre Durham, Spark Regional Innovation Centre, Spark Angel Network, John Howard Society of Durham Region, Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre, Central Counties Tourism, and Palette Skills).
- **Academic sector** – Composed of Durham College and Ontario Tech University's research and entrepreneurship programs. Trent University – Durham Campus has also expanded its programs over the past few years. Whitby companies can access these academic resources to solve engineering or science challenges and/or to hire students to complete business projects.
- **Federal, provincial and regional governments** – Composed of federal crown corporations such as the Business Development Bank of Canada and Export Development Bank of Canada, agencies such as FedDev Ontario and National Research Council of Canada. A considerable amount of funding programs have been created in response to the economic fallout from COVID-19. Many of the business support programs are delivered through these crown corporations and agencies. FedDev Ontario is one of the six Canadian regional development agencies that implements the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund, a \$962 million support fund for businesses across Canada

impacted by COVID-19.² Ontario Centres of Excellence is a provincially funded agency with a mandate to advance Ontario's innovation agenda. In the past, one of the key goals of the Region's Economic Development and Tourism department is to attract new foreign direct investment to Durham. Given the investment attraction challenges presented by COVID-19, their focus may need to shift to support businesses across the Region.

Further details about the business and entrepreneurship support services offered by each organization are provided in Appendix 2. Any economic recovery plan that is implemented requires contribution from a combination of a number of these business support organizations.

² Regional Relief and Recovery Fund: COVID-19, Government of Canada,
https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/icgc.nsf/eng/h_07682.html last updated on May 29, 2020.

Mobilization: COVID-19 Response

Economic development team members and others in the business support ecosystem mobilized early in the pandemic to respond to economic fallout.

Durham Economic Task Force – COVID-19 Response Team

The Durham Economic Task Force is made up of Durham Region's Economic Development and Tourism team; Business Advisory Centre of Durham; all of Durham's Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade; as well as local municipal economic development teams and local Business Improvement Associations (BIAs). The Durham Economic Task Force's priorities are to:

- Advocate for the urgent needs of our business community to the Provincial and Federal Governments.
- Provide resources and information from all levels of government to businesses.
- Guide small businesses through the process of accessing emergency financial assistance.
- Develop and implement support programming for impacted businesses.
- Promote Durham small businesses, particularly local stores, food and agri-businesses who are offering safe, no-contact delivery and pick-up options.

A Durham Business Recovery Series was created and began in early May 2020. To date, the following sessions have addressed: mental health; navigating government funding programs; navigating new business practices; human resource processes; and e-commerce practices.

In addition, this task force led two business surveys early in the COVID-19 outbreak to understand the severity of this health crisis to the business community. Key insights from the results showed an overwhelming impact to the business community. Small businesses were most impacted early into the pandemic. Over fifty percent of the businesses would either shutdown or partially shutdown from the health crisis measures to control the outbreak. In addition, over fifty percent of the business community respondents did a layoff of staff.

In May, there was a subsequent business survey conducted by this task force. Key insights from this survey were:

- Nearly 50% of survey respondents report major or catastrophic impacts to their businesses.
- Biggest barriers to recovery were potential for a second wave, cash flow financial implications and operating with physical distancing restrictions.
- Key stimulus strategies included expanding high-speed Internet access and supporting local initiatives.



- Nearly three quarters of respondents are changing their workplace safety measures.
- 43% of respondents were estimating up to six months of business recovery and another one-third were estimating up to 12 months recovery.

In May 2020, sector roundtables were arranged with key companies in Durham Region. These roundtables offered the business community a chance to provide feedback on what efforts and programs were required for business recovery and share ideas among one another.

Durham Region approved a Regional Recovery Framework and Action Plan in June 2020, which was driven by a Regional Recovery Task Force. This Regional Task Force included members of the Durham Economic Task Force and addressed four pillars of recovery: social, built, economic and municipal. A set of 50 action items were identified and focused on the potential for job creation, community health and safety, restoration of services, support for businesses, and for vulnerable residents and long-term sustainability. More specifically, the economic pillar addressed the following actions:

- support small business growth
- enable infrastructure development
- attract investment in the energy, environment and engineering industry and innovation community
- enable Smart Community projects

As the summer months progressed, the number of COVID-19 cases declined and eventually stabilized in Ontario. However, as of early October 2020, the number of cases are dramatically increasing as we enter the second wave. There remains little immunity to the virus and no vaccine. Further advocacy is required by this group to define what conditions could trigger another lockdown.

Whitby's Business Recovery Survey

Whitby's economic development team along with members of Council garnered input to a business survey over the months of June to early September 2020. Sixty-five (65) responses were gathered during this time. Key insights from this survey were:

- Survey respondents were well represented in food services (20, or 31% of respondents) and professional, scientific and technical services (17, or 26% of respondents).
- Surveys were also completed by respondents in personal services, retail trade and health care.
- The number of business owners who completed the survey were largely represented in the 0-20 employee category (57, or 88%).
- Fifty respondents (50, or 77%) indicated a moderate (14) or major (36) negative impact to their business due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Of all the barriers listed, the top three barriers to economic recovery are the potential for a second wave (50, or 77%), cash flow implications (44, or 66%) and increased costs associated with compliance (39, or 60%).
- The most common responses for a full business recovery from summer 2020 to pre-COVID-19 conditions were 6 – 12 months (20, or 31%) and more than 12 months (21, or 32%).

The following themes emerged from the comments.

- For businesses significantly impacted by COVID-19:
 - many are taking services online and finding new ways to create income
 - many will be challenged to cover rent and taxes over the short term
 - many of them are recommending that government bodies should be issuing compliance warnings and/or educating them about regulatory requirements
- Some businesses have not been impacted by COVID-19 and their revenues have either stayed strong or increased from the previous year
- There is a lot of negative attention placed on COVID-19. People need to understand and focus on the population's resiliency to this virus
- Health and safety restrictions and guidelines, while they may be necessary, are making businesses unprofitable. These restrictions are especially true for restaurants, entertainment, and personal and aesthetic service businesses.

Further details from the survey are in Appendix 3: Business Recovery Survey Results.

Labour Force Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic immediately disrupted Canada's labour force. Travel restrictions, business closures and physical distancing measures imposed by the Canadian government soon after created a sudden shock to the economy. Across Canada, the unemployment rate shot up to 12.3% by June 2020. Comparatively, Canada's unemployment rate was 5.6% in June 2019. With nearly 2.5 million people unemployed across Canada, emergency relief measures have been implemented federally and funding was dispersed to those who became unemployed.³

The following table illustrates the labour force impact of the COVID-19 virus. By using June 2019 as a baseline, there were 12,000 fewer people in the labour force and 26,400 fewer people employed in the Oshawa Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) in 2020.⁴ **Despite the job losses, the Oshawa CMA has shown resiliency as over 200,000 jobs remained and an unemployment rate stayed under twelve percent (12%) despite the virus and its labour force impact.** The majority of the loss in employment was from full-time jobs (-14,800 or 7.9%), but also a sizable number of part-time jobs (-11,600 or 30%) were lost too. The short term job losses in part-time employment indicates that people employed in vulnerable, casual roles were at greater risk of losing their jobs early into the pandemic.

³ Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0017-01- Labour force characteristics by sex and detailed age group, monthly, unadjusted for seasonality.

⁴ The Oshawa CMA includes the Town of Whitby, City of Oshawa and Municipality of Clarington.

Table 1: Labour Force Characteristics: Oshawa Census Metropolitan Area

	June 2019	March 2020	June 2020	Total Change June 2019-2020	% Change June 2019-2020
Population	344,900	350,000	351,200	6,300	1.8%
Labour Force	238,700	233,400	222,600	-12,000	-5.0%
Employment	227,000	217,000	200,600	-26,400	-11.6%
Full-time	188,300	174,600	173,500	-14,800	-7.9%
Part-time	38,700	40,000	27,100	-11,600	-30.0%
Unemployment	11,700	18,900	26,200	14,500	123.9%
Not in Labour Force	106,200	116,600	124,500	18,300	17.2%
Unemployment Rate	4.9%	8.1%	11.6%	6.7%	

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0095-01 Labour force characteristics by census metropolitan area, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality.

Real Estate Market Impact

Industrial – The demand for industrial space in the east end of the Greater Toronto Area (i.e. Durham Region) was very high prior to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. The overall availability rate in Durham Region was at an all-time low at 1.2% and average asking net lease rates were a strong \$7.29 per sq. ft.⁵ Industrial space in Whitby was declining as Amazon leased 354,000 sq. ft., the largest new deal at the end of 2019 and marking the company's entrance into Durham Region. There was also a large 385,000 sq. ft. industrial project along Tricont Avenue that was preleasing. The industrial market has shown resiliency during the pandemic. CoStar Realty Research is forecasting a vacancy rate to adjust to 1.9% by the first quarter of 2022.⁶ This adjustment is likely due to many smaller companies lacking cash reserves to get them through this economic downturn. A continued low vacancy rate indicates that there will be a demand again for industrial space, past 2021.



⁵ Avison Young, Fourth Quarter 2019 / Industrial Market Report, p.2.

⁶ CoStar Realty Research, custom industrial market search, July 2020.

Office – The office market inventory in Whitby has remained relatively stable over the past few years. It is estimated that there is 1.5 million sq. ft. of office space inventory in Whitby with a healthy vacancy rate of 2.7%. In comparison, the Greater Toronto Area (which includes Whitby) has 272 million sq. ft. of office space inventory with a vacancy rate of 4.5%.⁷ Whitby is a small office market and represents less than one percent of the entire office market of the Greater Toronto Area. CoStar Realty Information is forecasting vacancy rates to trend over 4.0% and market rental rates to return to pre-COVID-19 rates by the first quarter of 2022.⁸ It is reasonable for companies that require office space to re-evaluate their office needs when their leases come due. Many of their employees are working from home or have fewer employees. These companies may require less office space in the future. This presents an economic development opportunity for Whitby as companies with offices in large urban centres like Toronto may turn to smaller offices closer to labour in suburban areas like Whitby.



Residential - On a year-over-year basis, residential transactions in Durham Region decreased considerably during May in comparison to the same time last year. The number of sales reported represented a decrease of forty five percent (45%) in Whitby for all home types. It is positive to note the average selling price in Whitby has increased to \$736,640 for all home types.⁹

The full impact of the housing market remains unknown at this time. For Whitby, the housing market has shown considerable resiliency when comparing sales and average selling prices in May 2019 to May 2020 (Table 2). The volume of house sales may have declined in each major category year-over-year, but average house prices have increased in each of categories (i.e. detached, semi-detached and attached/row /townhouse).

⁷ CoStar Realty Information Inc., custom office market search in May 2020.

⁸ CoStar Realty Information Inc., custom office market search in July, 2020.

⁹ Durham Region Association of REALTORS®, Housing Report, May, 2020.

Table 2: Monthly Housing Sales for three common home types, Town of Whitby, May 2019 and 2020 Comparison

	May 2019		May 2020			
Housing Type	No. of Sales	Average Price	No. of Sales	Average Price	% Change in Sales	% Change in Price
All Home Types	242	\$681,446	132	\$736,640	-45%	8%
Detached	171	\$747,300	97	\$802,190	-43%	7%
Semi-Detached	9	\$539,510	4	\$606,875	-56%	12%
Attached/Row/Townhouse	35	\$553,222	15	\$600,293	-57%	9%

Source: Durham Region Association of Realtors, Housing Report, May 2019 and May 2020.

The collaborative and coordinated response among Durham Region municipalities, boards of trade, chambers of commerce and others to mobilize and create the Durham Economic Task Force has proven to be effective during this crisis. The members have been able to advocate for businesses as a collective to the provincial and federal governments and offer business support programming by tapping into their resources network. This agility to navigate and influence other levels of government at a critical point in time during the COVID-19 health crisis demonstrates that there is continued value with this group for economic recovery programming.

The labour force in the Oshawa CMA has shown resiliency with over 200,000 jobs remaining despite the COVID-19 health crisis. The negative impact to the labour force left over 26,200 people in the Oshawa CMA unemployed. The Federal government responded quickly in March 2020 with an income support program - the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. This program would alleviate the stress for eligible workers who stopped working due to COVID-19. This program was modified and extended into September 2020. These modifications are most likely a result of advocacy efforts from local groups such as Durham Economic Task Force and others across Ontario and Canada. For Whitby and the surrounding area to recover from the job losses requires a plan that addresses improving the employability of people affected by the economic fallout.

Although it is too soon to gauge the full economic impact, businesses have always had to adapt to changing market demands and pressures to remain viable. There is a need to understand the number of businesses remaining and new ones created for 2020 and 2021 and how this business data compares to prior years. An immediate to medium term response from economic development and business organizations requires a tactical economic recovery plan that addresses the local economic fallout.

Economic Recovery Plan

As the COVID-19 pandemic developed, it became clear that an Economic Recovery Plan needed to be implemented over a short time period (i.e. within 18 months). The Economic Recovery Plan is a ‘living document’ and can be modified readily with new challenges and solutions that may arise. Five key priorities emerge and require a tactical response in discussions with business owners, other business support organizations, and the Durham Economic Task Force. These five priorities are intended to anchor and qualify all subsequent actions. The associated objectives support the overarching economic development focus prior to COVID-19, which is to address the creation of more local jobs, revitalize downtowns and continue to be the “Community of Choice” by enabling a diverse, sustainable economy. These key priorities of a COVID-19 economic recovery are:

1. **Retain existing businesses by providing resources and support programs** – Many business owners and representatives of business support organizations state that businesses won’t be “turning back to normal”. There will be a “new normal” where businesses have changed their product and service offerings and the way they deliver these products and services.

Objective: Provide existing businesses with the tools and resources to succeed during and after COVID-19.

2. **Revitalize and rediscover Whitby’s downtowns and manage the main street impact** – Downtown businesses were significantly impacted by COVID-19 public health provisions and Provincial closures. Many of the businesses closed temporarily or offered product/service delivery with reduced staff. Most recently, business expenses remain high and for many of them revenues are down. Downtown businesses could be at risk of closing under these public health requirements.

Objective: Restore attractive downtowns to rediscover the shops, services, heritage, and culture in a pedestrian-friendly environment.

3. **Foster and sustain the innovation economy** – Many of the companies in the innovation economy and technology sector are start up or scale up companies. Their business value is in their intellectual property and founders. Typically, these businesses are new and may not qualify for the federal and provincial COVID-19 response programs. For example, the National Research Council of Canada’s Industrial Research Assistance Program or Business Development Bank of Canada’s programs require business financial statements to ensure business viability prior to providing funding or offering financing to companies. However, it is important to recognize that these companies create new employment opportunities, can adapt to changing market demands and create new business ventures during moments of economic crisis.

Objective: Collaborate with 1855 Whitby Tech Accelerator and innovative businesses (e.g. 360insights.com, geekspeak Commerce) to restore growth and investment in our Innovation District and local economy.

4. **Engage with the post-secondary institutions and other service providers to improve workforce employability** – The post-secondary institutions (i.e. Ontario Tech University, Durham College and Trent University – Durham) are key anchors in Durham Region that will help drive the economic recovery process. These institutions and other service providers can offer educational programming that can re-skill or upskill people in the labour force who are faced with economic hardships.

Objective: Promote educational programming that meets demands of local employers.

5. **Improve customer service processes and business experiences** – This COVID-19 crisis has presented an opportunity for Whitby to improve its processes further to respond quickly to customers. For example, business resources were quickly curated and available on the main Whitby website, and the Town quickly shifted key services online. Business success story telling during the health care crisis has been developed in the immediate term as well and shared through Whitby's economic development social media channels.

Objective: Reassess previous customer experiences, align corporate objectives and modify larger corporate processes where appropriate.

The successful implementation of the Economic Recovery Plan will need the support and cooperation of the corporation and the business support organizations identified earlier in the report to ensure a stronger and more resilient business community when COVID-19 passes.

The timing for the associated actions that serve to implement the strategy are categorized as **immediate (IT) (immediate to 6 months); short term (ST) (6-12 months); and medium term (MT) (12-18 months)**. Some of the actions are also complete or in-progress.

The identification of leads and internal/external partners is included to provide direction for who is responsible for each action and which other organizations need to be involved in carrying the action forward. This recovery plan can be implemented with existing staff and financial resources for 2020 and 2021.

Priority 1: Retain existing businesses by providing resources and support programs

Objective: Provide existing businesses with the tools and resources to succeed during and after COVID-19

Number	Action	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6-12mths)	MT (12-18mths)
1.1	Collect and monitor government financial and business support funding and resources that businesses need to succeed during the recovery phases. Have these resources available on the Town of Whitby's new economic development services website.	Whitby Economic Development Team	In progress		
1.2	Leverage partnerships among the business support ecosystem to advocate for businesses during and post reopening.	Durham Economic Task Force, Whitby Chamber of Commerce	In Progress	X	
1.3	Offer tax relief support for local businesses by offering payment deferrals for two months with no penalty or interest charged for May and June.	Town of Whitby	Complete		
1.4	Create and monitor a 'What's Open Whitby' web portal for Whitby businesses and communicate this tool's features to the community.	Whitby Economic Development Team	Complete	Ongoing	
1.5	Create and promote business development webinars and virtual events. Topics can address new and innovative business approaches, COVID-19 funding programs, managing cash flow, managing mental health and employment law. Connect business	Durham Economic Task Force, Whitby Economic Development Team, Chamber of Commerce, Business Advisory	In progress	X	

Number	Action	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6-12mths)	MT (12-18mths)
	community members to these webinars and event resources.	Centre Durham (BACD)			
1.6	Share resources to access personal protective equipment (PPE) and tool kits.	Durham Economic Task Force, Whitby Economic Development Team, Downtown Whitby BIA, Whitby Chamber of Commerce	In progress	X	
1.7	Support distribution of business reopening kits and follow up kits to existing businesses.	Whitby Economic Development Team, Downtown Whitby BIA	In progress	X	
1.8	Support and promote ShopHere, Digital Main Street or Starter Company Plus programs that allow existing businesses to improve their ecommerce experiences.	Business Advisory Centre Durham, Whitby Economic Development Team, Downtown Whitby BIA, Whitby Chamber of Commerce	Complete	X	X
1.9	Connect with key businesses / employers to gauge economic impact and where Whitby can serve as a resource through a corporate calling program and surveys.	Whitby Economic Development Team, Whitby Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Whitby BIA, Durham Economic Task Force	In progress	X	
1.10	Create a marketing and messaging campaign to rally business and build	Whitby Economic Development Team, Whitby		X	

Number	Action	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6-12mths)	MT (12-18mths)
	consumer confidence to support local (#SupportLocal) businesses in Whitby.	Chamber of Commerce, Durham Region Economic Development			
1.11	Create a local promotion campaign for the tourism/ hospitality /entertainment industry to drive consumer spending (e.g. Staycations) to businesses and restore consumer confidence in this industry.	Whitby Economic Development Team, Whitby Chamber of Commerce, Durham Tourism, Central Counties Tourism		X	
1.12	Advocate to the provincial and federal governments for Regional broadband expansion to improve service and support equitable access, thereby supporting increased online and virtual services and remote work.	Whitby Economic Development Team, Public Works, Region of Durham	Complete	X	X
1.13	Advocate to the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to advance installation of fibre to under serviced areas in the Town.	Whitby Economic Development Team, Public Works, Region of Durham		X	X
1.14	Support and promote the Region of Durham's Business Count Survey to the business community.	Region of Durham, Whitby Economic Development Team			X
1.15	Facilitate sustainability synergies between businesses and community partners (e.g. energy efficiency retrofits, waste to resource sharing, coffee grinds to community gardens).	Town of Whitby		X	X

Number	Action	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6- 12mths)	MT (12- 18mths)
Performance Measurements					
	Number of monthly page visits to the new Whitby economic development services website				
	Percentage of the Whitby businesses that have reopened and remain viable (with Provincial Guidelines in place)				
	Frequency of business development webinars offered and number of attendees				
	Number of Whitby businesses that have received business reopening kits and follow up kits				
	Number of Whitby-based businesses participating in the ShopHere, Digital Main Street or Starter Company Plus programs				
	Number of tourism related and entertainment businesses participating in promotional programs				
	Regional, provincial and federal funding dedicated to broadband expansion				

Priority 2: Revitalize Whitby's downtowns by managing main street impact

Objective: Restore attractive downtowns to rediscover the shops, services, heritage, and culture in a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Number	Action Item	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6-12mths)	MT (12-18mths)
2.1	Offer free parking in the downtown to offset any added customer costs for businesses.	Town of Whitby	Complete		
2.2	Create short-term delivery pick-up/drop off zones and/or queuing areas outside of businesses using municipal on-street parking spaces.	Town of Whitby, Downtown Whitby BIA	Complete	X	
2.3	Support the Downtown Whitby BIA in the development of business reopening toolkits and distribute to downtown businesses.	Downtown Whitby BIA, Whitby Economic Development Team	Complete		
2.4	Develop opportunities to create additional pedestrian areas to address physical distancing requirements.	Town of Whitby	X	X	X
2.5	Promote and encourage local food opportunities (e.g. online farmers market, in-person farmers market and local food guide).	Town of Whitby, Downtown Whitby BIA, Durham Economic Task Force	In progress	X	X
2.6	Promote positive story telling through social media campaigns and the Downtowns of Durham website.	Town of Whitby, Downtown Whitby BIA, Whitby Chamber of Commerce, Durham Economic Task Force	In progress	X	X

Number	Action Item	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6-12mths)	MT (12-18mths)
2.7	Redefine and support small and/or virtual cultural, heritage and commerce experiences.	Town of Whitby, Downtown Whitby BIA, Durham Economic Task Force		X	X
2.8	Support renovations related to re-opening requirements for properties in Downtown Whitby and Brooklin Community Improvement Plans.	Town of Whitby, Downtown Whitby BIA	X	X	X
2.9	Explore incentives to advance energy efficiency through the Downtown Whitby Community Improvement Plan.	Town of Whitby		X	X
2.10	Collaborate with Durham Tourism and Central Counties Tourism to develop an awareness campaign about public health safety procedures and reopening of businesses in the Downtown, public spaces and assets.	Whitby Economic Development Team, Durham Tourism, Central Counties Tourism and Downtown Whitby BIA	X		
2.11	Initiate the repurposing of the town owned property at 128 Brock Street South for creative entrepreneurs and workers.	Whitby Economic Development Team		X	X
2.12	Collaborate with landlords to bring in new uses or animations in any vacant storefronts or spaces.	Whitby Economic Development Team, Downtown Whitby BIA		X	X
2.13	Ensure multi-residential projects continue as planned pre-COVID-19 by checking on status with Planning and supporting the project where possible	Town of Whitby			X

Number	Action Item	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6-12mths)	MT (12-18mths)
	(e.g. market information, connections to non-residential tenants).				
2.14	Advocate for flexible uses within Downtown Whitby Secondary Plan policy direction.	Whitby Planning, Whitby Economic Development Team, Downtown Whitby BIA			X
2.15	Provide input to the Bus Rapid Transit route and design along Dundas Street.	Whitby Economic Development Team, Downtown Whitby BIA, Chamber of Commerce		X	X
2.16	Continue to track key economic and development indicators through the annual Benchmarking Report as part of the Downtown Whitby Action Plan. Consider developing annual benchmarking for Downtown Brooklin.	Whitby Economic Development Team, Downtown Whitby BIA	X	X	X
2.17	Support the Downtown Whitby BIA's application for the Digital Main Street program and promote its service offering.	Downtown Whitby BIA, Whitby Economic Development Team	Complete	X	

Performance Measurements

Locations for delivery drop off zones and queuing areas

Number of business reopening toolkits distributed in Whitby's Downtowns

Locations of Town owned properties for seating

Number of positive stories created

Community Improvement Plan funding used to support renovations

Number	Action Item	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6-12mths)	MT (12-18mths)
	Funding dedicated to repurpose 128 Brock Street				
	Number of building permits issued				
	Funding from Metrolinx dedicated to the Bus Rapid Transit line				
	Commercial and office vacancy rates				
	Number of businesses participating in the Digital Main Street Program				

Priority 3: Foster and sustain growth in the innovation economy

Objective: Collaborate with 1855 Whitby Tech Accelerator and innovative businesses (e.g. 360insights.com, geekspeak commerce) to restore growth and investment in our Innovation District and local economy.

Number	Action Item	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6-12mths)	MT (12-18mths)
3.1	Leverage the partnership with 1855 Whitby to provide webinars with FedDev Ontario, Industrial Research Assistance Program, Ontario Centres of Excellence, and Export Development Bank of Canada about their COVID-19 response funding parameters.	1855 Whitby, Whitby Economic Development Team, Spark Centre, Business Advisory Centre Durham, Downtown Whitby BIA, Whitby Chamber of Commerce	X	X	
3.2	Continue to work with 1855 Whitby and other innovation companies to connect with local business owners about service solutions.	1855 Whitby, Whitby Economic Development Team, Spark Centre, Whitby Chamber of Commerce	In progress	X	X
3.3	Leverage the expertise of local innovative companies and share their positive business success stories	1855 Whitby, Whitby Economic Development Team, Whitby Chamber of Commerce		X	X
3.4	Launch the autonomous vehicle pilot project aided by smart transportation infrastructure.	Whitby Economic Development Team, 1855 Whitby, Region of Durham			X

Number	Action Item	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6-12mths)	MT (12-18mths)
3.5	Connect with tech companies to gauge impact through 1855 Whitby programming (e.g. Innov8AM)	1855 Whitby, Whitby Economic Development Team, Whitby Chamber of Commerce	In progress	X	X
3.6	Enhance the economic development team visibility at 1855 Whitby to support continued growth and relationships.	Whitby Economic Development Team	In progress	X	X
3.7	Support 1855 Whitby's business expansions and needs for landing pad spaces (e.g. Colborne Street property).	1855 Whitby, Town of Whitby, Downtown Whitby BIA		X	X
3.8	Support and attract tech innovation companies into 1855 Whitby accelerator.	1855 Whitby, Whitby Economic Development Team, Durham Region Economic Development		X	X
3.9	Participate in the Collision From Home Conference and subsequent Collision Conference in 2021 and share the innovation stories happening in Whitby/ Durham Region.	1855 Whitby, Whitby Economic Development Team, Durham Region Economic Development, Ontario Tech University, Durham College, Trent University – Durham, Spark Centre	Complete		X

Number	Action Item	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6-12mths)	MT (12-18mths)
3.10	Support development of 1855 Whitby joint communications strategy.	1855 Whitby, Whitby Economic Development Team, Corporate Communications	X	X	X

Performance Measurements

Number of Whitby-based companies participating in the innovation themed webinars

Number of tech companies connected with during the recovery plan

Number of days the autonomous vehicle was operational during the recovery plan

Funding dedicated to landing pad spaces

Number of new companies expanding into the accelerator since March 2020

Communication tactics (reports, presentation, media articles on 1855 and innovation district)

Priority 4: Engage with the post-secondary institutions and other service providers to improve workforce employability

Objective: Promote education programming that meets demands of local employers.

Number	Action Item	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6-12mths)	MT (12-18mths)
4.1	Improve awareness of employment services available to local businesses from organizations including John Howard Society of Durham Region and Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre.	Whitby Economic Development Team, John Howard Society of Durham Region, Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre, Whitby Chamber of Commerce		X	X
4.2	Engage with Palette Skills for new, in-demand skills training programs.	Whitby Economic Development Team, Palette Skills, Whitby Chamber of Commerce		X	X
4.3	Explore CityStudio Durham for implementing creative, innovative project ideas for Whitby's business community.	Region of Durham, Town of Whitby, Whitby Chamber of Commerce		X	X
4.4	Engage with Durham Workforce Authority about sector specific (e.g. logistics industry) labour needs.	Durham Workforce Authority, Whitby Economic Development Team, Whitby Chamber of Commerce	X		
4.5	Promote new, available capstone/ internship opportunities for businesses.	Whitby Economic Development Team, Ontario Tech University, Durham College, Trent			X

Number	Action Item	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6-12mths)	MT (12-18mths)
		University – Durham, Whitby Chamber of Commerce			
4.6	Enable connections between post-secondary institutions' research and student capabilities with the business community such as Ontario Tech U establishing a footprint (e.g. physical or virtual) in Downtown Whitby in collaboration with 1855 Whitby.	Whitby Economic Development Team, Durham College, Ontario Tech University and Trent University Durham, Whitby Chamber of Commerce		X	X
4.7	Advocate to post-secondary institutes to develop training programs needed to build infrastructure back better.	Durham College, Ontario Tech University, Whitby Economic Development, Whitby Chamber of Commerce		X	X

Performance Measurements

Number of Whitby based companies using resources offered by John Howard Society of Durham Region and Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre

Number of post-secondary students engaged with Whitby companies

Number of people in Whitby and Durham Region participating in Palette Skills programs

Number of active CityStudio Durham projects impacting Whitby

Number of research connections with Whitby companies

Number of new post-secondary offerings or spaces available to respond to post COVID-19 growth sectors (health, climate change etc...)

Priority 5: Improve Whitby's customer service processes and business experiences

Objective: Reassess previous customer service processes as it relates to our corporate objectives and modify larger corporate processes where appropriate.

Number	Action Item	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6-12mths)	MT (12-18mths)
5.1	Develop and implement a quick approval process to allow for temporary outdoor patio permits for restaurants.	Town of Whitby	Complete		X
5.2	Collaborate with other departments to roll out economic recovery programming, thereby leading to improved customer responsiveness.	Town of Whitby	In progress		
5.3	Implement online intake forms and applications.	Town of Whitby	In progress		
5.4	Launch a new streamlined economic development services website.	Whitby Economic Development Team	Complete		
5.5	Provide input towards the Town's customer service strategy.	Town of Whitby	In progress	X	
5.6	Support local businesses through government procurement processes so that they can bid on local infrastructure projects and/or provide business services.	Town of Whitby, Region of Durham	In progress	X	X
5.7	Provide economic development related questions into the Town's biennial customer service survey.	Town of Whitby		X	
5.8	Develop a business navigator program (e.g. support and guidance through municipal requirements and	Whitby Economic Development Team; Planning and			X

Number	Action Item	Lead/Partner	Timing		
			IT (<6mths)	ST (6-12mths)	MT (12-18mths)
	permitting processes) that streamlines the processing of new non-residential development.	Development; Corporate Services			
5.9	Provide longer range input into the Zoning By-law for the employment area south of Highway 407 and the Development Charges Study to attract new investment and jobs.	Whitby Planning, Economic Development Team, Corporate Services		X	X
Performance Measurements					
Number of outdoor patio permits issued Number and percentage of total intake forms and applications completed online Number of page visits to and length of time on the economic development services website Number of economic development questions in the biennial survey Positive feedback received on updated business experiences Customer service strategy results					

Conclusion

This Economic Recovery Plan for 2020 and 2021 will only be successful with implementation of the actions and accountability of its performance. To ensure accountability, it is vital to identify and make best use of the resources available among Whitby's Economic Development team and business support organizations. Collaboration has been a key component of the COVID-19 response since March 2020. The Durham Economic Task Force has been a key example of Durham's local chambers of commerce and local municipalities working together to respond to immediate business challenges. Federal and provincial governments responded immediately with income support and business support programs.

Any business recovery programming needs to be aligned with the Province's Economic Recovery Framework. This three stage process places the health and safety of residents as the top priority. Although Durham Region public health unit is in Stage 3, there needs to be further reduction in cases.

Economic recovery is underway in Whitby. Further recovery needs to be intentional, collaborative and equitable among business support organizations over the next 18 months.

A full economic recovery will require access to child care and a full re-opening of schools.

Council's role is to continue to engage with the business community, ensure resources (staff and financial) are available at the Town of Whitby to respond to economic recovery, and ensure Town policies (e.g. parking, Pedestrian drop-off zones, etc.) enable businesses to carry on through 2020 and 2021.

In addition, this plan is meant to be fluid and may need to evolve as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves. New actions and initiatives may need to be added to account for these evolving conditions in response to the health and safety of residents. Despite these present and short term health care and economic conditions, there is a need for a longer term economic development strategy to accelerate business growth post-COVID-19 that builds upon these recovery efforts. The formulation of this strategy requires input from business community members and needs to examine a sustainable and prosperous economic future for the subsequent five years.

Appendix 1: Background Analysis

Demographic Analysis

Population - The Town of Whitby has experienced strong population growth over the past decade. Whitby's population increased from 122,022 residents in 2011 to an estimated 137,733 residents in 2019. This increase of 15,711 residents (13% growth) in less than a decade has led to significant residential development during the time period. With this growth, there are associated challenges in ensuring effective service delivery and sustainable use of land area. The *Town of Whitby's Official Plan* identifies the need for greater concentration of land uses in Whitby and higher densities of jobs and people to accommodate a forecasted population of 192,800 residents by 2031.¹⁰ The figure below provides the population projections for Whitby through to 2031.

Figure 1.1.: Population Projections, 2021 to 2031

Year	Population
2021	156,915
2026	179,150
2031	192,800

Source: Town of Whitby Official Plan, 2018 Office Consolidation, p.5.

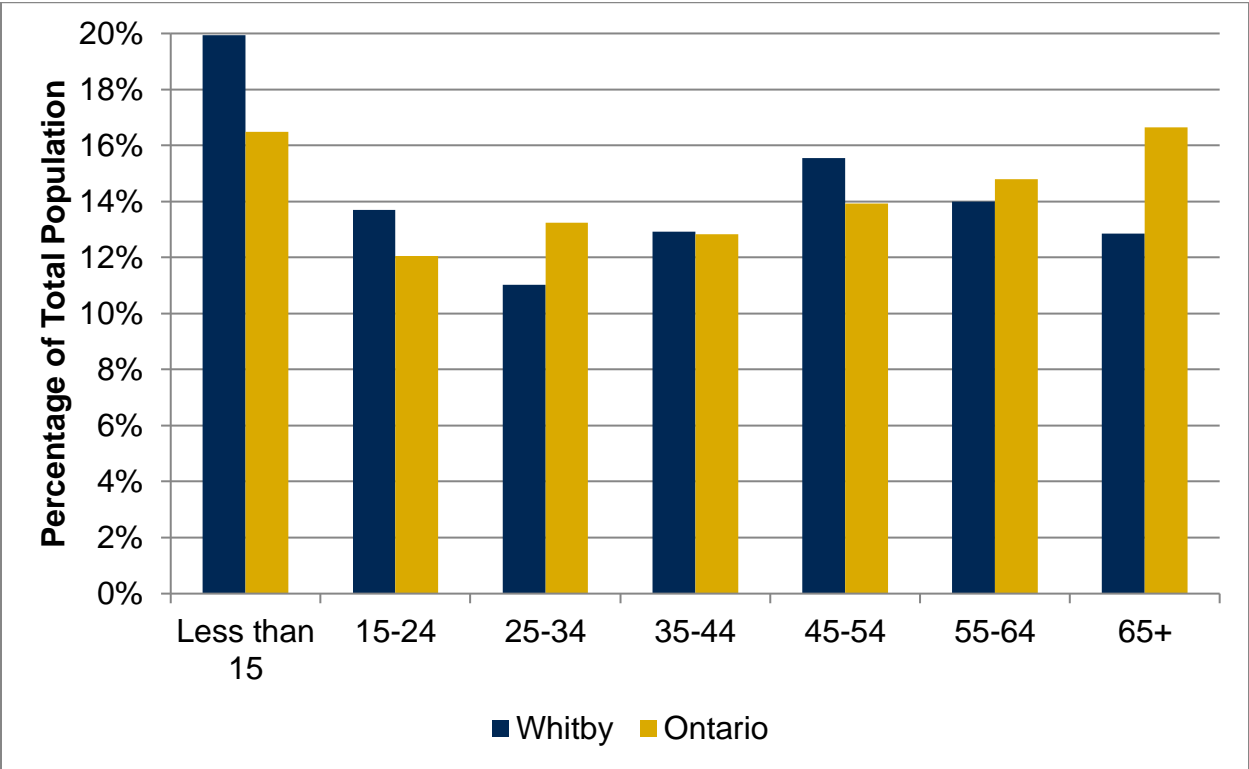
It is important to note the impact population growth can have on the Town of Whitby. The development charges and community benefit charge (CBC) study is underway and planned to be completed in 2021. The Town-wide development forecast for the 2021 Study projects a population increase from 2021 to 2031 of over 33,000 people.¹¹ Historically, development charges have not fully paid for new growth and the tax base has covered much of the difference. The recent changes to the Development Charge Act will put increased pressure on the Town to fund new residential growth while managing effective service delivery.

¹⁰ Town of Whitby Official Plan, 2018 Office Consolidation, p. 5.

¹¹ Town of Whitby Staff Report, Development Charges Background Study Update (Revised), ([CS 33-20](#)), July 20, 2020

Population by Age Cohort - As the next figure indicates, Whitby will not only have to address the challenges of a growing population, Whitby will also have to face the challenges of retaining its young population. While Whitby remains a young community and has 20% of its population under the age of 15 and 14% of its population 15 to 24 years of age (Ontario is lower at 16% and 12% respectively), there needs to be an effort to keep this population engaged locally and motivated to stay in the community or region and fill employment opportunities over the coming years.

Figure 1.2: Population by Age, 2019

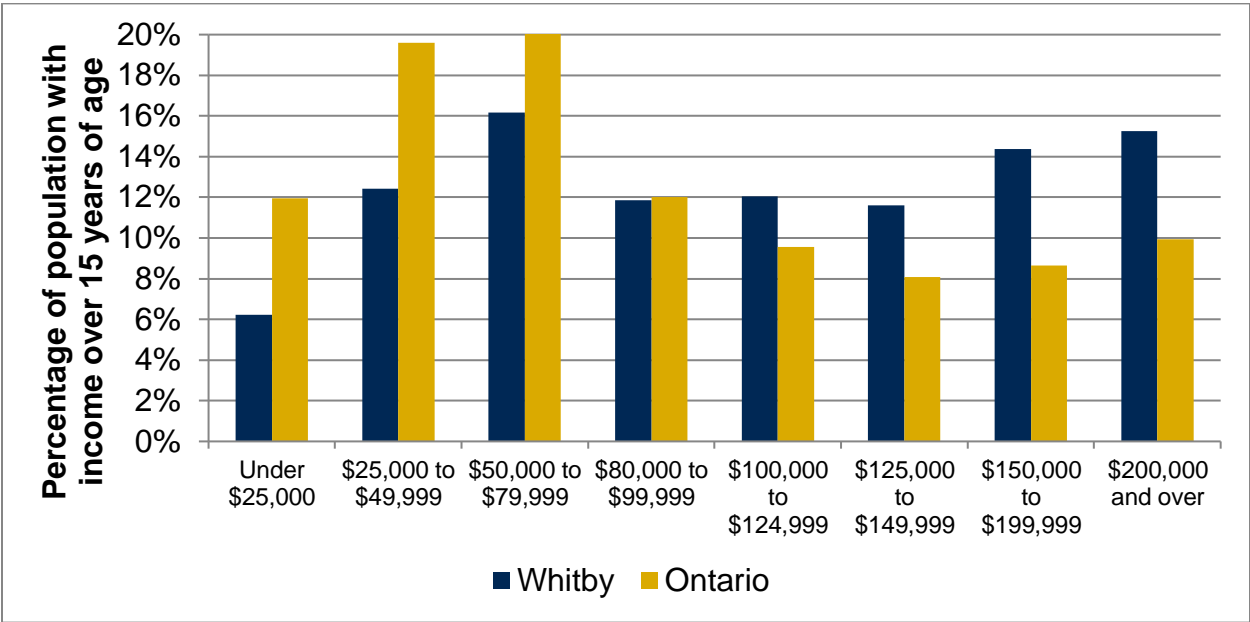


Source: Manifold Data Mining Inc., February 2020.



Population with Income over 15 years of age - The following figure indicates that in the Town of Whitby much of the population are in households earning over \$100,000 in annual income. The proportion of income brackets over \$100,000 are higher in Whitby than the Province of Ontario.

Figure 1.3: Population with income over 15 years of age



Source: Manifold Data Mining Inc., February 2020.

The higher proportions of households earning over \$100,000 of income in Whitby compared to the Province indicates higher disposable income and is driven by proximity to the Greater Toronto Area. Residents will have more income to support service-based industries such as restaurants, entertainment and recreation facilities, and health and wellness companies.



Knowledge of other languages - The familiarity with other languages except English or French in a community indicates ethnic diversity. The value of diversity cannot be underestimated. Academic research by notable scholars such as Richard Florida and others confirm that a diverse community generates social and economic prosperity. A diverse community indicates an openness to newcomers, new businesses and new ideas. A diverse community is also highly correlated with its ability to attract talent and innovative businesses, which drive business productivity. Having citizens from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds also generates access to new economic opportunities, which can include new business networks or export markets.

There are large populations in Whitby that are familiar with other languages which indicates local diversity. The following table indicates that the Whitby population is most commonly familiar with Italian, Spanish and Urdu (commonly spoken in Pakistan) languages. Across the Province, Mandarin and Cantonese are most commonly spoken followed by Spanish.

In terms of the population familiar with Indigenous languages, there is a small population of over 100 residents. These languages are at risk of disappearing if the Indigenous culture is not passed on to the next generation.

Figure 1.4: Top 10 Languages other than English or French

Top 10 - Knowledge of other languages Ontario				Whitby	Number of people
1	Mandarin	1	Italian		2,427
2	Cantonese	2	Spanish		2,382
3	Spanish	3	Urdu		2,352
4	Italian	4	Mandarin		1,561
5	Punjabi	5	Hindi		1,507
6	Hindi	6	Farsi		1,300
7	Arabic	7	Filipino		1,272
8	Urdu	8	Tamil		1,181
9	Filipino	9	Greek		1,114
10	Portuguese	10	German		1,040
				Indigenous languages	112

Source: Manifold Data Mining Inc., February 2020.

Labour Force Analysis

A component of Whitby's overall economic position is its labour force profile, which encompasses a review of the composition by industry and occupation.

The following table indicates Whitby's labour force concentration in comparison to the Province of Ontario. The largest concentration of our residents are in:

- Professional, scientific and technical, administrative, waste management services (9,478 residents)
- Retail trade (8,864 residents) and
- Health care and social assistance industries (7,697 residents).

However, when the proportion of the labour force in industry is compared to the Province of Ontario, Whitby's labour force is proportionately higher in:

- Utilities and construction (7,481 residents, or 9% of the labour force)
- Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing (7,581 residents or 9% of the labour force) and
- Educational services industries (6,957 residents or 9% of the labour force).

The higher proportions of people employed in these industries is likely driven by the proximity to Ontario Power Generation (Pickering in Clarington), the Downtown Toronto Financial Services Hub and Ontario Tech University, Durham College and Trent University Durham campuses (Oshawa and Whitby).

Figure 1.5: Labour Force by Industry, 2019

Labour Force by Industry	Whitby Total	% of Total	Ontario % of Total	Whitby's Labour Force Proportion
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining, etc.	655	1%	2%	Lower
Utilities and construction	7,481	9%	7%	Higher
Manufacturing	5,781	7%	9%	Lower
Wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing	6,373	8%	9%	Lower
Retail trade	8,864	11%	11%	Even
Information and cultural industries	2,610	3%	3%	Even
Finance, insurance, real estate, and leasing	7,581	9%	8%	Higher
Professional, scientific and technical, administrative, waste management services	9,478	12%	13%	Lower
Educational services	6,957	9%	7%	Higher
Health care and social assistance	7,697	10%	10%	Even
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	6,205	8%	9%	Lower
Other services (except public administration)	2,905	4%	4%	Even
Public administration	4,994	6%	6%	Even
Industry - not applicable	2,228	3%	3%	Even

Source: Manifold Data Mining Inc., February 2020.

The following table examines the composition of the labour force by occupation in Whitby and Ontario. The largest concentration of the labour force are in sales and service occupations (17,461 residents), but this proportion (22%) is slightly lower than the provincial average (23%).

There are three occupational groups in Whitby that have larger concentrations than the Province of Ontario. These groups are:

- Management (10,445 people in the labour force, or 13 % of the labour force)
- Business, finance and administration (13,319 people or 17%)
- Education, law and social, community and government services (10,784 people or 14%).

There is a great deal of diversification among all of the occupations in Whitby as all the occupations are within two percentage points compared to Ontario. There is a higher tendency of Whitby residents to be employed in professional occupations such as management, business, finance, education and legal services.

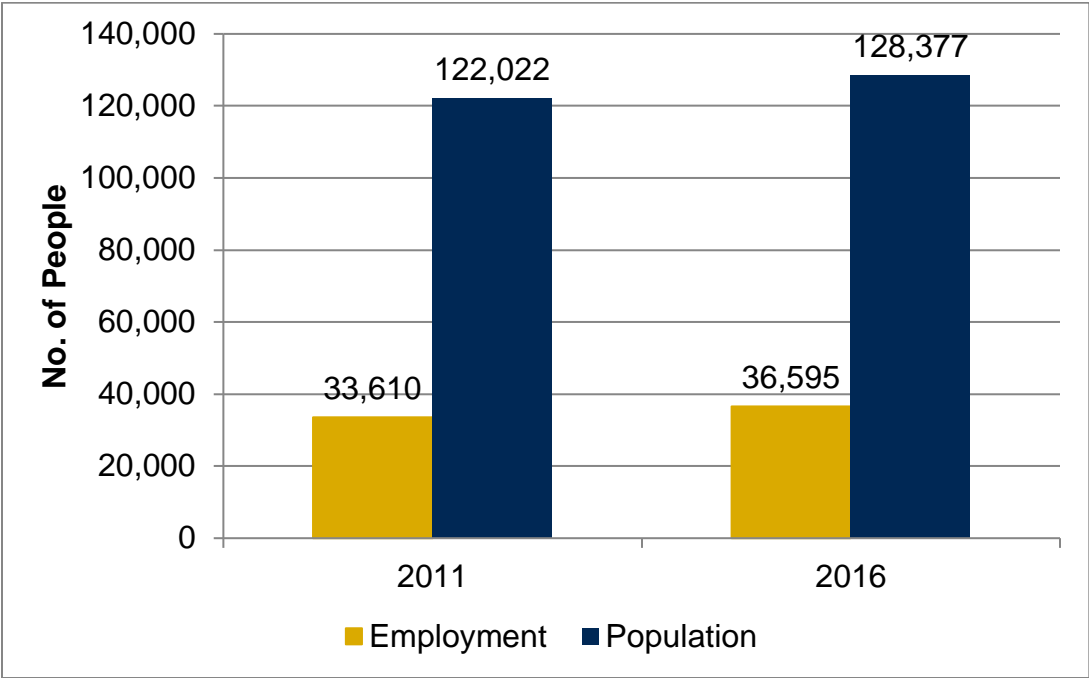
Figure 1.6: Labour Force by Occupation, 2019

Labour Force by Occupation	Whitby		Ontario		Whitby's Labour Force Proportion
	Total	% of Total	% of Total		
0 Management	10,445	13%	11%		Higher
1 Business, finance and administration	13,319	17%	16%		Higher
2 Natural and applied sciences and related	5,654	7%	7%		Even
3 Health	4,515	6%	6%		Even
4 Education, law and social, community and government services	10,784	14%	12%		Higher
5 Art, culture, recreation and sport	2,601	3%	3%		Even
6 Sales and service	17,461	22%	23%		Lower
7 Trades, transport and equipment operators	9,329	12%	13%		Lower
8 Natural resources, agriculture and related production	1,069	1%	2%		Lower
9 Manufacturing and utilities	2,727	3%	5%		Lower

Source: Manifold Data Mining Inc., February 2020.

The following figure identifies that employment grew in Whitby from 33,610 jobs in 2011 to 36,595 jobs by 2016, for an average employment growth of 1.8%. In comparison, the population grew from 122,022 residents in 2011 to 128,377 resident by 2016, for an average growth of 1.0%. This metric indicates that Whitby has been able to generate employment growth at a higher rate than population growth.

Figure 1.7: Employment Growth, 2011-2016

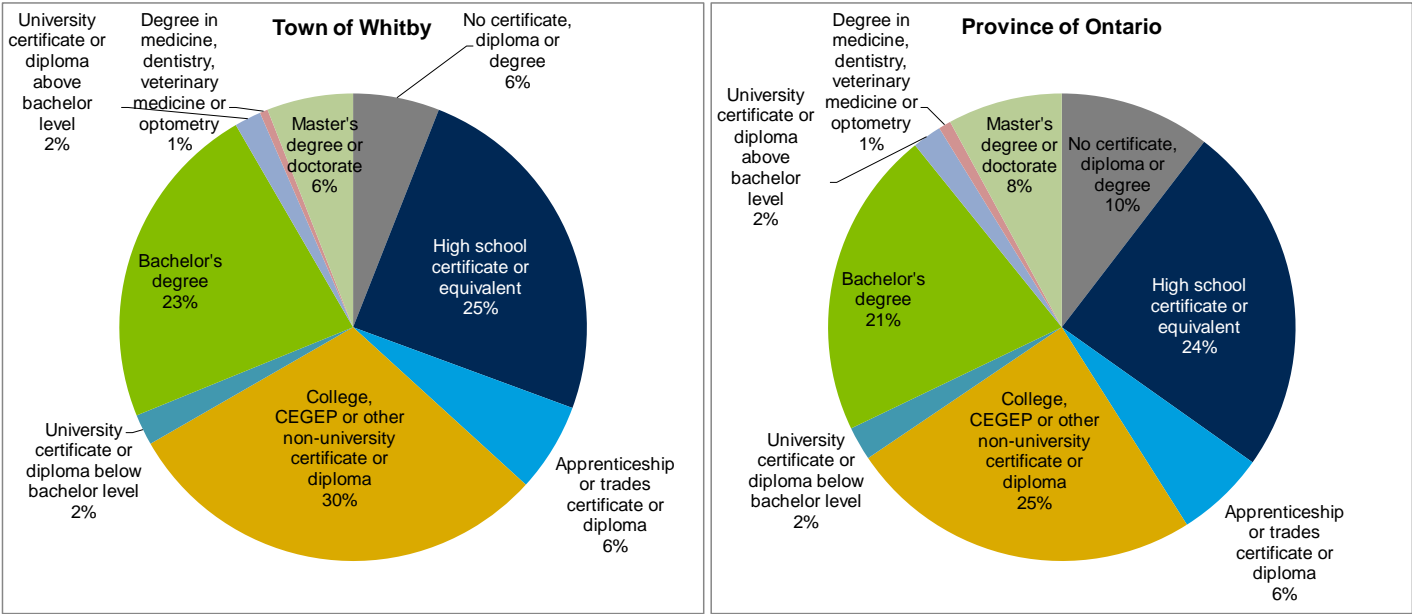


Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey and 2016 Census. Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016325



The following figure examine the highest educational achievement for the labour force in Whitby in comparison to the Province of Ontario. Although the trends for Whitby are very similar to the Province, there is a larger portion of the labour force with a college or related diploma (30% versus 25% for the Province) and a Bachelor’s degree (23% versus 21% for the Province). These results indicate that the local labour force is highly educated with specialized skill sets. This labour force offering adds to the local value proposition for businesses being located in Whitby.

Figure 1.8: Highest Educational Attainment, 2019



Source: Manifold Data Mining Inc., February 2020.

Further analysis of the labour force reveals that the highest concentrations of the labour force studied:

- Business, management and public administration (14,184 residents)
- Architecture, engineering and related technologies (11,954 residents) and
- Social and behavioural sciences and law (9,024 residents).

Although much of the field of study proportions are similar to the Province, there are higher concentrations of the labour force who studied:

- Business, management and public administration
- Social and behavioural sciences and law and
- Education.

These results reconfirm that Whitby's labour force have specialized skills and training in disciplines valuable for local businesses and businesses that are considering expanding into Whitby and Durham Region.

Figure 1.9: Post-Secondary Education by Major Field of Study, 2019

Major Field of Study	Whitby Total	% of Total	Ontario % of Total	Labour Force Proportion
Business, management and public administration	14,184	22%	21%	Higher
Architecture, engineering, and related technologies	11,954	19%	19%	Even
Social and behavioural sciences and law	9,024	14%	13%	Higher
Health and related fields	8,418	13%	14%	Lower
Education	4,216	7%	6%	Higher
Personal, protective and transportation services	3,841	6%	6%	Even
Humanities	3,461	5%	6%	Lower
Visual and performing arts, and communications technologies	2,838	4%	4%	Even
Mathematics, computer and information sciences	2,769	4%	5%	Lower
Physical and life sciences and technologies	2,688	4%	4%	Even
Agriculture, natural resources and conservation	933	1%	2%	Lower
Other fields of study	10	0%	0%	Even

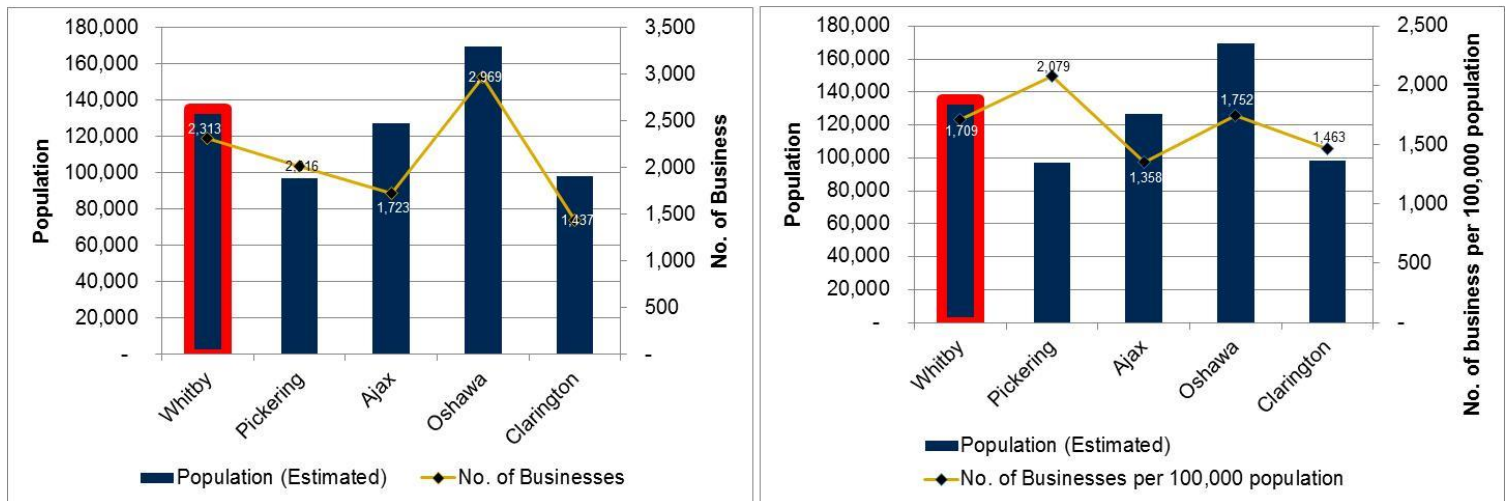
Source: Manifold Data Mining Inc., February 2020.

Business and Employment Base

The following figure was data collected as part of the World Council of City Data's ISO 37120 certification process for 2019. The number of businesses to population can inform a city's level of economic activity and economic performance. It can provide an indication of the overall business climate in a community and attitudes towards entrepreneurship. A community with strong entrepreneurial activity is closely associated with a dynamic and growing economy. In addition, the number of businesses can also be used to inform competitiveness of a city and attractiveness for investment.

The left side of the chart reveals that Whitby is Durham's second largest municipality along the lakeshore municipalities in terms of population and businesses (2,313 businesses). However, when the number of businesses per 100,000 population is examined (right side), Whitby ranks third at 1,709. Pickering is ranked first at 2,079 businesses per 100,000 population followed by Oshawa at 1,752.

Figure 1.10: Population and Number of Businesses Comparison



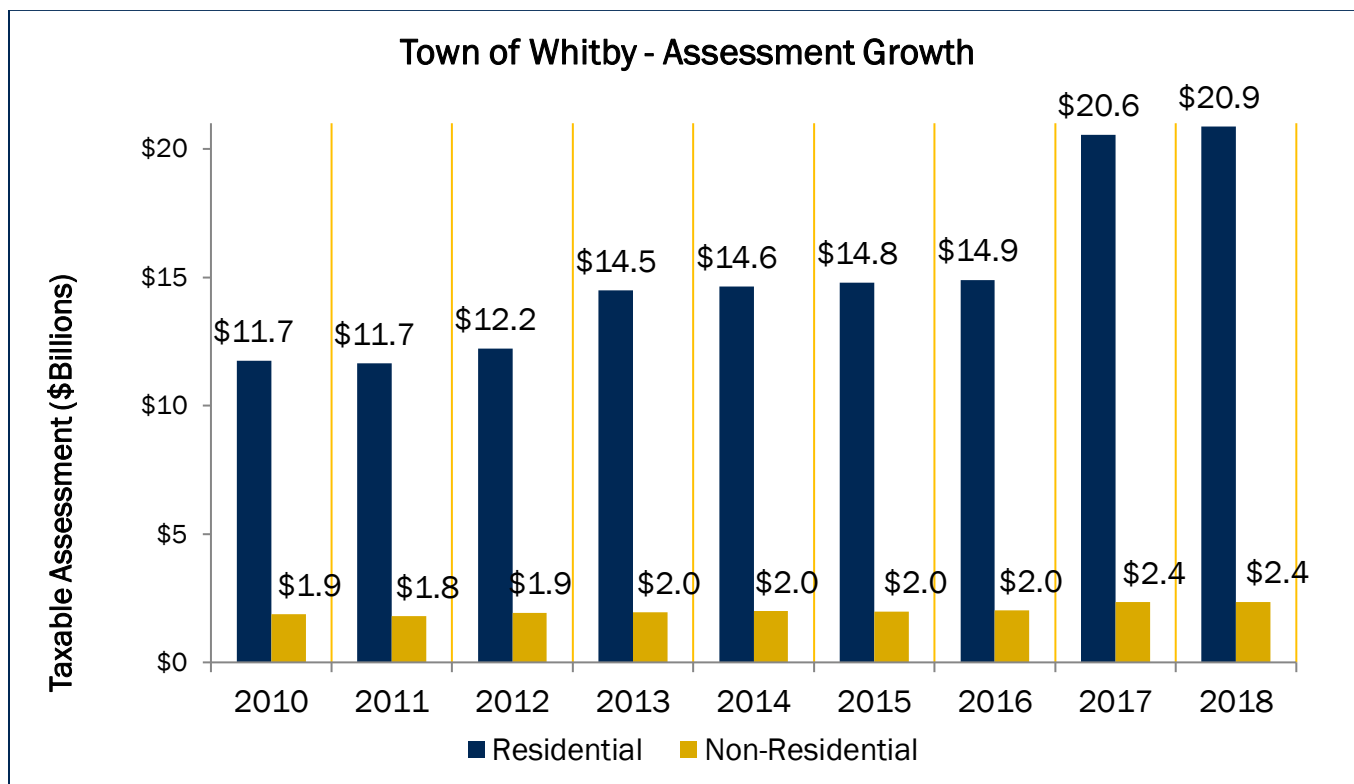
Source: Durham Region Business Count, 2018 and Durham Region Planning Department, Population estimates, 2018.

Residential vs. Non-Residential Assessment

The following figure illustrates the taxable assessment trend for residential and non-residential properties in Whitby from 2010 to 2018. The 2010 year was used as a baseline since this represents the year when the previous economic development strategy was completed. Non-residential includes the taxable assessment for industrial and commercial properties.

The assessment value and growth of residential greatly exceeds that of non-residential (i.e. commercial and industrial), which is largely due to Whitby's proximity in Toronto and being a desirable place to live in the Greater Toronto Area.

Figure 1.11: Town of Whitby Assessment Growth



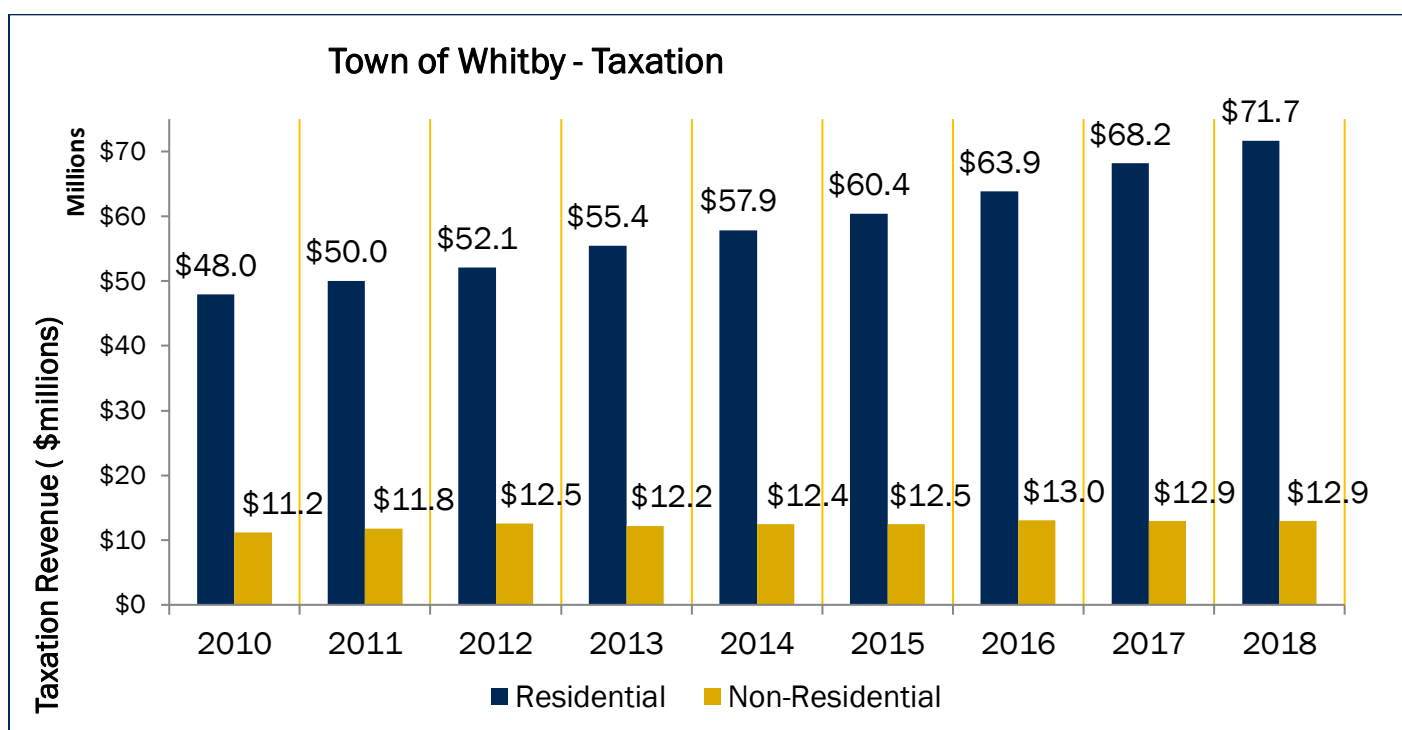
Source: Financial Information Returns – Ministry of Municipal Affairs (2010 – 2018)

Residential vs. Non-Residential Taxes

The following figure illustrates the taxation revenue from 2010 to 2018, and 2018 tax base for residential and non-residential. Non-residential includes the tax revenue for industrial and commercial properties.

The taxation revenue growth for residential greatly exceeds that of non-residential, largely a result of new residential development projects building out in Whitby. Non-residential taxation represents approximately 15% of total revenue.

Figure 1.12: Town of Whitby Taxation Growth



Source: Financial Information Returns – Ministry of Municipal Affairs (2010 – 2018)

Appendix 2: Business and Entrepreneurship Support Ecosystem

Three key business and entrepreneurship support organizations serving the Whitby community are:

Whitby Chamber of Commerce – Established in 1928, the Chamber acts on behalf of its members as a dominant voice within the business community, advocating for legislative and policy change. It drives local economic growth and professional development, serving a variety of economic sectors. Most of the membership base are small companies of less than 50 employees.

Downtown Whitby Business Improvement Area (BIA) – Downtown Whitby's BIA is in a specially designated zone in the downtown core that was established in 2017. Its 300 member businesses contribute to a program that helps build awareness of product and service offerings and activities to experience in the downtown.

1855 Whitby Tech Accelerator - 1855 Whitby is a vital partner for Whitby's innovation economy. This organization was co-created by the Town of Whitby and Jason Atkins, CEO of 360insights.com in 2019. 1855 provides support for established high-potential tech and innovation companies to accelerate growth and land within the community. This organization has collaborated with the Town of Whitby's economic development team on a variety of projects including investment missions, events, programming and other initiatives that support the growth of the Downtown Whitby Innovation District.

The other support organizations are represented across the non-profit, academic and other levels of government.

Non-Profit Sector Support

Business Advisory Centre Durham (BACD) – The BACD helps individuals who want to start businesses navigate through the essential steps required to turn their start up idea into a profitable business. BACD will also work with existing companies to develop strategies and action plans to enable them to expand their market and grow their business.

Spark Regional Innovation Centre - The Spark Centre's mission is to inspire entrepreneurs to start and grow successful, innovative companies in Durham Region and Northumberland County with success measured through sustainable business, economic growth and local job creation. Spark Centre provides free advisory services to early stage or growing innovation and technology companies. These services include executive coaching and day to day operational support.

Spark Angel Network – This membership organization is a group of individual investors whose aim is to build economic growth and sustainability within Durham Region and Northumberland County. The members have come together to provide private equity investment to early-stage technology and innovative businesses.

John Howard Society of Durham Region – This organization provides community and justice, employment and training and housing services and has multiple locations in Durham Region (including Whitby). The employment and training services include job search strategies, resume preparation and assessment of skills and experiences. The youth employment services are for those aged 15 to 30 years who face complex barriers.

Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre – This organization is a non-profit organization that provides help for unemployed and underemployed people find employment and helps employers with their hiring and training needs.

Central Counties Tourism (CCT) – This organization works with existing tourism offices within the regions of Durham and York and Headwaters. CCT is largely responsible for product development and marketing to tourism consumers outside of the service area.

Palette Skills – Palette Skills is a not-for-profit organization, housed at Ryerson University, connecting fast-growing companies to new sources of talent. This organization provides upskilling to help workers whose jobs are threatened by new technologies gain the skills they need to transition to high demand careers.

These non-profit business support organizations are based in Whitby and Durham Region and deliver economic development programs in line with Whitby's economic development efforts.

Academic Support

Durham College's Office of Research Services, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ORSIE) – ORSIE is Durham College's applied research group that addresses industry and social challenges through innovation and collaboration. This group is highly engaged with industry, faculty and students and the community in research projects. This group also supports entrepreneurial students to succeed with their innovative business ideas by improving their entrepreneurial skills.

Ontario Tech University's Brilliant Catalyst - Brilliant Catalyst is a non-academic entrepreneurship program for students. Brilliant Entrepreneurship helps students develop their own startups while providing them with entrepreneurial skills and aptitude.

Ontario Tech University's Office of the Vice President Research and Innovation – This office serves as the linkage between academic researchers and the business community. Whitby and the larger Durham Region business community can access academic researchers and address engineering and science challenges that companies are facing.

Trent University – Durham Campus – Trent's Durham campus provides liberal arts and science undergraduate programs and post-graduate certificates (human resources management, marketing and entrepreneurship).

Whitby's economic development team is engaged with managers and directors of many programs from these academic institutions. There are opportunities in the reopening of the economy to match Whitby businesses with applied research projects and students engaged in entrepreneurship programming.

Federal, Provincial and Regional Government Support

One of the first programs to be announced by the federal government was the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA). This \$55 billion program provides up to \$40,000 interest-free loans for small businesses and not-for-profits with a 2019 payroll between \$20,000 and \$1.5 million. Repaying the balance of the loan on or before December 31, 2022 will result in loan forgiveness of 25 percent. Small businesses can apply through their financial institution.

Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) - BDC is a federal Crown Corporation whose mission is to help create and develop Canadian small and medium-sized businesses. BDC offers long-term loans,

working capital, refinancing, a change in ownership, patent capital, venture capital and consulting services. COVID-19 business support responses unique to BDC and relevant for Whitby businesses include:

- A co-lending program for small and medium enterprises – This program provides up to \$12.5 million for companies for operational cash flow. The financing amount is based on business revenues and BDC will provide 80% financing and the remaining 20% by a company's primary financial institution.
- A COVID-19 working capital loan provides up to \$2 million with flexible terms and payment postponements for up to six months for qualifying businesses.
- Mid-market financing program – This program provides loans ranging between \$12.5 million and \$60 million for medium-sized businesses impacted by the pandemic to cover operational liquidity needs and business continuity. Qualifying companies will have annual revenues in excess of \$100 million.

Export Development Bank of Canada (EDC) – EDC is also a federal Crown Corporation that offers trade finance, export credit insurance, and bonding services for Canadian businesses in export markets. COVID-19 business support responses include the EDC Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP) guarantee. This guarantee helps companies access up to \$6.25 million in credit through their financial institution to cover rent, payroll and other operating costs caused by the current crisis and to be repaid within one year

Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) - FedDev Ontario is the platform agency that delivers the government's [Innovation and Skills Plan](#) in southern Ontario. Three funding streams that are available include:

- Business scale up and productivity – this stream helps accelerate the growth of companies as they adopt new, innovative technologies that improve productivity and help in entering new markets.
- Regional innovation ecosystem – this stream is for not-for-profit organizations seeking funding to increase a region's innovation capacity.
- Community economic development and diversification – this stream is for businesses and not-for-profit organizations generate sustainable, inclusive growth and help small and rural communities in southern Ontario benefit from economic opportunities.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government announced the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund for businesses that have been unable to obtain funding through other federal COVID-19 response measures. The two components include:

- \$675 million in financing support to small and medium sized businesses. This funding is aimed at mitigating the financial pressure experienced by businesses and organizations to allow them to continue their operations or prepare for a successful recovery.
- \$287 million to support rural businesses and community through the national network of Community Futures Development Corporations.

FedDev Ontario is one of the six Canadian regional development agencies that would implement this federal fund. Other large support funds announced on April 2020 included:

- \$500 million for a COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for Cultural, Heritage and Sport Organizations and

- \$250 million to assist innovative, early-stage companies that are unable to access business support through the National Research Council of Canada's Industrial Research Assistance program.¹²

FedDev Ontario also made announcements in June 2020 to support businesses impacted by COVID-19 to recover and move toward business stability. FedDev Ontario would provide funding to partner organizations deliver the following initiatives through the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund:

- \$39.4 million for rural businesses access capital and delivered through the Community Futures Development Corporations
- \$42.5 million to establish the Digital Main Street Platform to support local companies adopt digital business models delivered by the Ontario Business Improvement Association, Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas, Communitech and Invest Ottawa
- \$7.5 million to establish the Recovery Activation Program to assist SMEs to digitize their operations delivered by the Toronto Region Board of Trade
- \$30 million delivered by the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario to support destination marketing organizations drive visitors back into local communities.

A further \$184 million in additional relief funding was announced in October 2020 by FedDev Ontario. This funding would help more businesses across southern Ontario support employment during economic recovery.

This agency has also delivered funding through the Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy, Regional Economic Growth through Innovation Steel and Aluminum Initiative and Canadian Experiences Fund.

National Research Council of Canada's Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP) - NRC-IRAP provides advice and funding to help Canadian small and medium-sized businesses increase their innovation capacity and take business ideas to market. This program can provide funding to companies that are in need of hiring engineering talent. COVID-19 business support responses have included:

- The COVID-19 Challenges Procurement Program – This program posts challenges seeking near-to-market solutions from small and medium-sized businesses (fewer than 500 staff) to refine and sell their product or solution to meet a COVID-19 related need.
- The Pandemic Response Challenge Program – This program received \$15 million to form dedicated teams to address challenges in the areas of greatest research and development. The program accelerates the development of diagnostics and medical countermeasures for a rapid front-line response to treat Canadians. The three research areas include: rapid detection and diagnosis; therapeutics and vaccine development; and digital health.
- Bio-manufacturing capacity at Royalmount: NRC Human Health Therapeutics Research Centre – This \$15 million investment will result in a good manufacturing practices platform to develop and scale up COVID-19 Canadian vaccine and therapy candidates.¹³

Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) - OCE co-invests to commercialize innovation originating in the province's publicly funded colleges, universities and research hospitals. OCE also supports and invests in

¹² Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, FedDev Ontario website, https://www.feddevontario.gc.ca/eic/site/723.nsf/eng/h_02567.html?OpenDocument, viewed on April 28, 2020.

¹³ NRC COVID-19 programs, National Research Council Canada, <https://nrc.canada.ca/en/research-development/research-collaboration/nrc-covid-19-programs>, viewed on April 28, 2020.

early-stage projects, where there is a high probability of commercial success and return on innovation. Another expanding focus for OCE is the development of the next generation of innovators through entrepreneurship fellowships and programs for students and youth across Ontario. If companies have COVID-19 product and service solutions, the OCE can identify SMEs and experts to fill the current gaps through their networks.

Region of Durham – The Region’s Economic Development and Tourism department’s priority is to lead, facilitate and advance Durham Region’s efforts for continued economic growth, job creation, and revitalization throughout the region.

One of the key goals of this department is to attract new foreign direct investment to the Region of Durham. By working with municipal, regional, provincial and federal partners, the Region promotes its value proposition to businesses in key sectors in priority markets. These sectors include:

- Agri-business – vertical farming and local food production.
- Energy, environment and engineering – an energy cluster with two nuclear generating stations.
- Film and television – film production and related support activities.
- Life sciences – life and biosciences and research and development laboratories.
- Innovative technology – high growth potential technology companies.
- Manufacturing – advanced materials, engineered systems, automated logistics and material handling systems.
- Tourism – four seasons tourism activities.

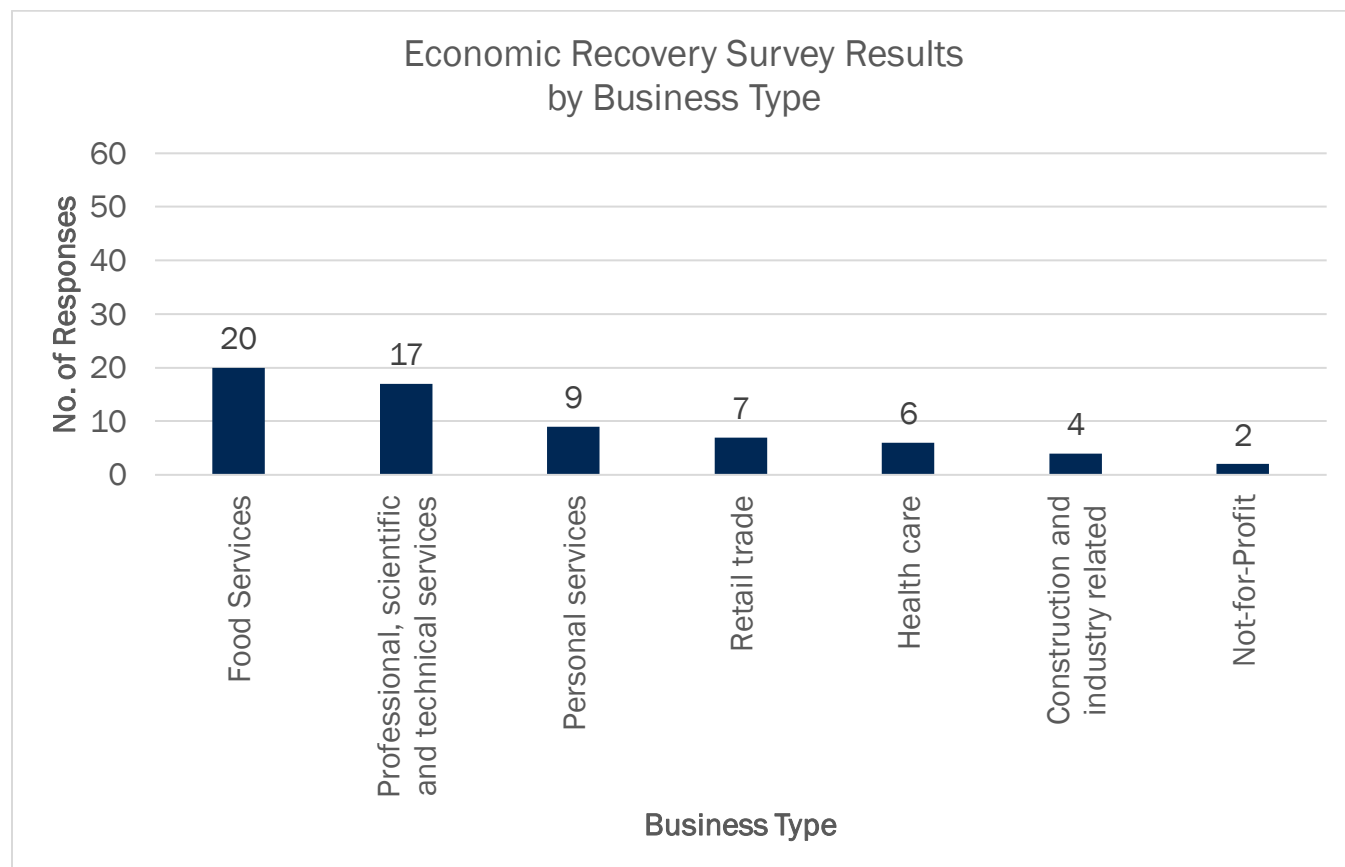
The Office of the Chief Administrative Officer has a new initiative called the CityStudio Durham project. Launched in 2020, this project is a partnership between the Region of Durham and Durham’s academic community (Durham College, Ontario Tech University and Trent University-Durham). Regional staff develop project concepts (or challenge statements), which are aligned with the Corporate Strategic Plan. These concepts are shared with the partner institutions and faculty and students complete the projects. An example of an economic development project challenge statement would be: what policies, incentives and marketing should the Region consider to attract vertical farming operations? A solution would be provided by an academic for the best policies and incentives that enable this type of business investment in Durham.

Appendix 3: Business Recovery Survey Results

A business recovery survey was administered over the summer of 2020 to garner further business input into the economic recovery plan. The survey was promoted on the new economic development services website and social media channels. Council members were active in promoting the survey and its importance for informing a local economic recovery plan. In addition, the Town of Whitby's Communications Division and local business support organizations – Whitby Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Whitby BIA – promoted the survey and the need for input. This survey opened on Thursday, June 25, 2020 and closed on Friday, September 4, 2020.

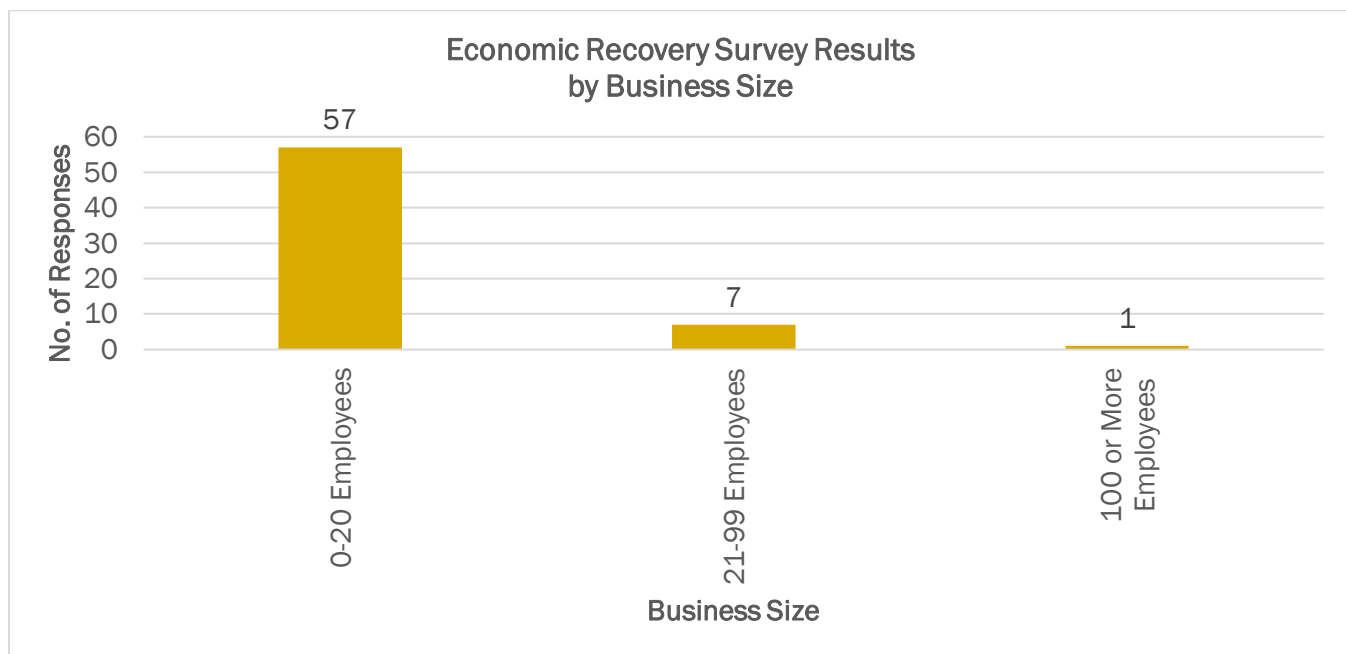
Number of Respondents: 65

Type of Company



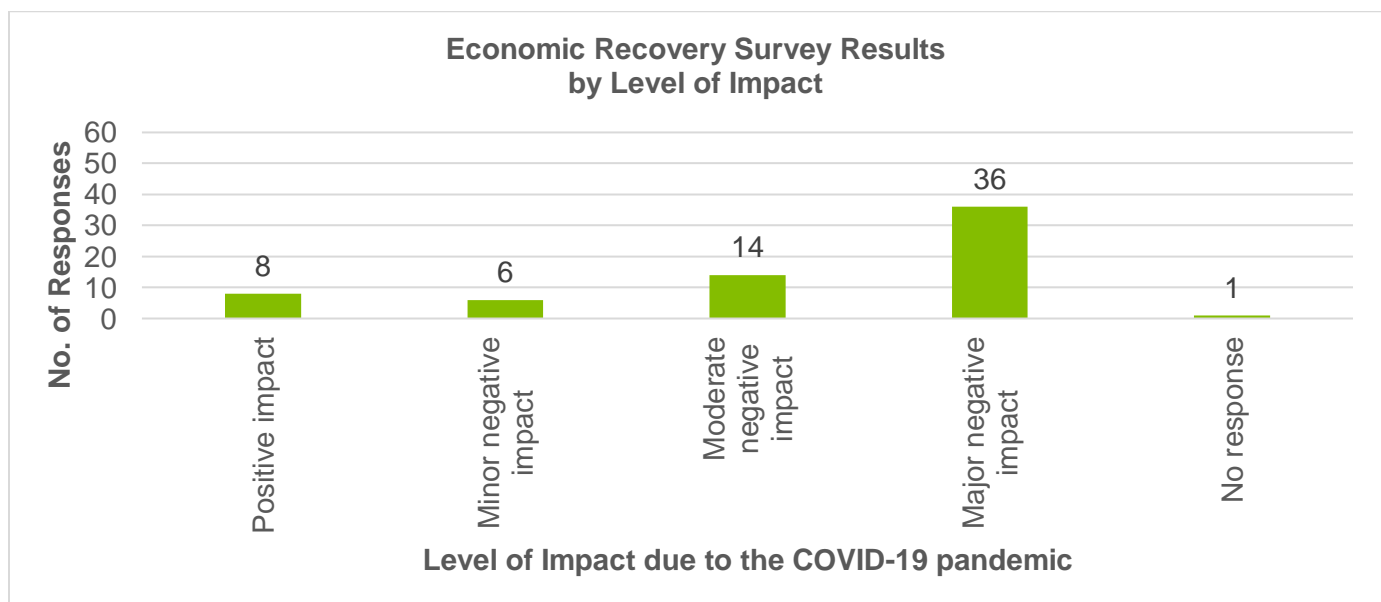
- Survey respondents were well represented in food services (20) and professional, scientific and technical services (17).
- Surveys were also completed by respondents in personal services, retail trade and health care.

Business Size



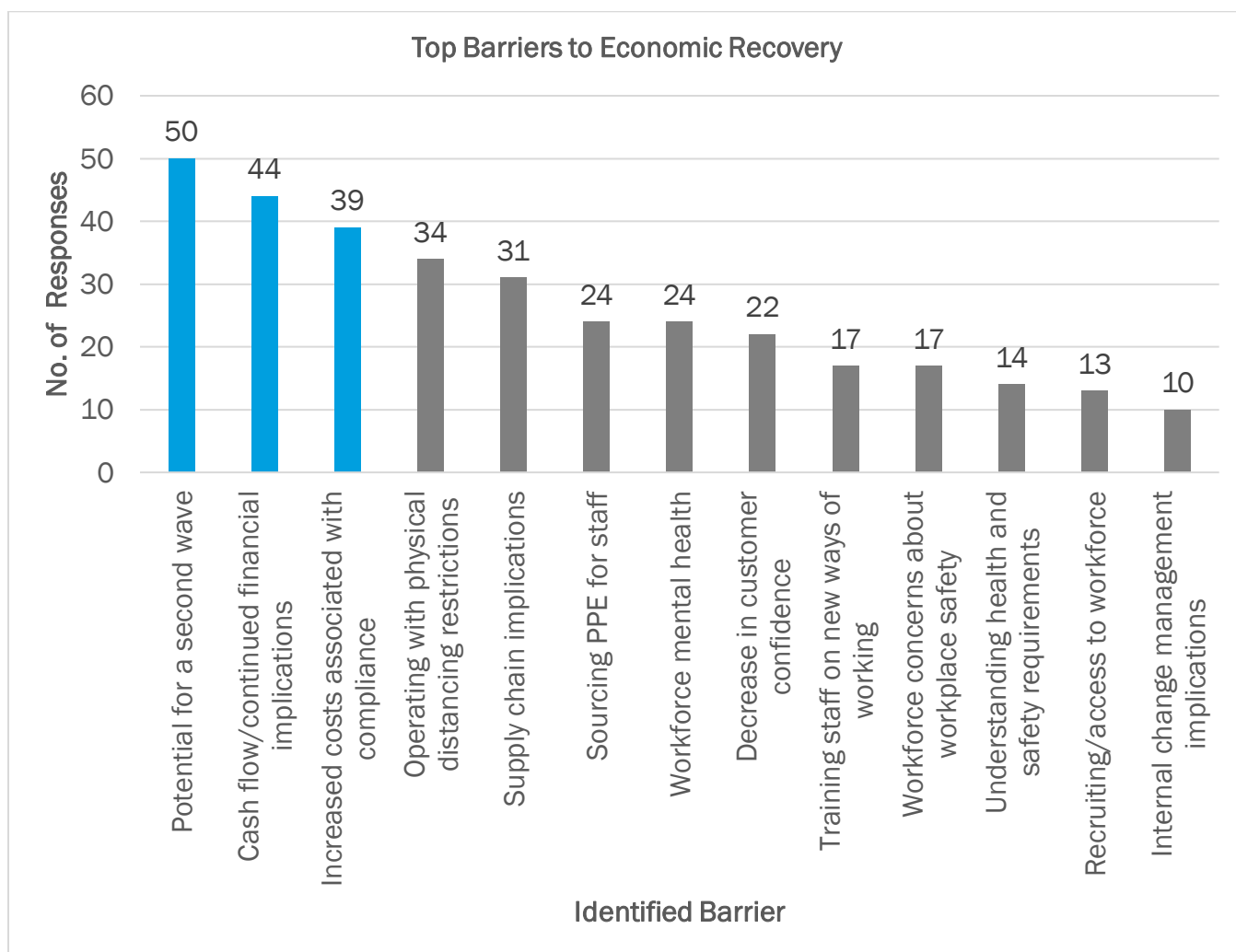
- The number of business owners who completed the survey were largely represented in the 0-20 employee category (57, or 88% of respondents).

What is your organization's current level of impact due to the COVID-19 pandemic?



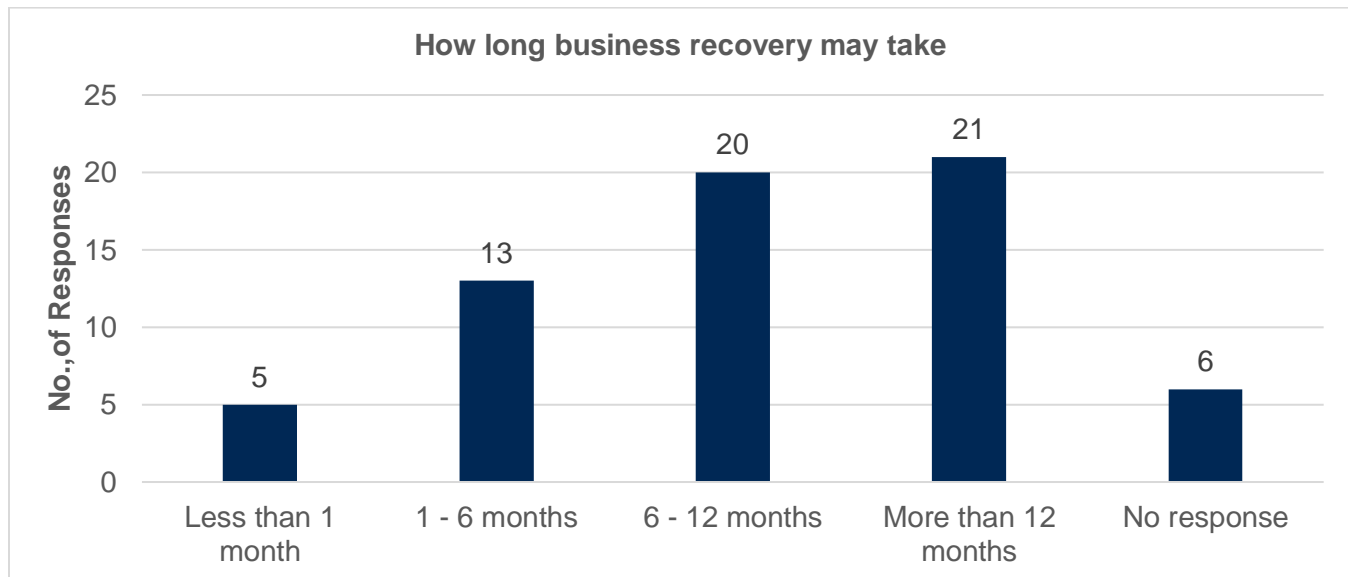
- Fifty respondents (77% of respondents) indicated a moderate (14) or major (36) impact to their business due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Identify your level of concern across the following barriers to recovery.



- Of all the barriers listed, the top three barriers to economic recovery are the potential for a second wave (50, or 77% of respondents), cash flow implications (44, or 68%) and increased costs associated with compliance (39, or 60%).

Please estimate how long you anticipate your business recovery may take (if possible from summer 2020 to pre-COVID-19 conditions).



- The most common responses for a business recovery were 6 – 12 months (20, or 31%) and more than 12 months (21, or 32%).

Please provide any other comments or ideas on how the Town can support your business during the pandemic.

There were 45 comments gathered from the survey respondents. The following themes emerged from the comments.

- For businesses significantly impacted by COVID-19:
 - many are taking services online and finding new ways to create income
 - many will be challenged to cover rent and taxes over the short term
 - government bodies should be issuing compliance warnings and educating them about regulatory requirements
- Some businesses have not been impacted by COVID-19 and their revenues have either stayed strong or increased from the previous year.
- There is a lot of negative attention placed on COVID-19. People need to understand the population's resiliency to this virus.
- Health and safety restrictions and guidelines are making businesses unprofitable. These restrictions are especially true for restaurants, entertainment, and personal and aesthetic service businesses.