



Municipality of North Grenville 2010 Business Retention + Expansion Program

Final Report Action Plan & Implementation Strategy

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1.0 Acknowledgements

As a community based, volunteer driven program, the Business Retention and Expansion Project (BR+E) is the result of dedication and commitment by a large group of volunteers, stakeholders, businesses and community leaders.

The Municipality of North Grenville, in partnership with the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce thanks the business community, all of the volunteers and the community as a whole for the continued commitment and dedication to the Business Retention + Expansion Program.

The project was overseen by a Business Retention and Expansion Subcommittee (Leadership Team) - subcommittee of the Economic Development Committee and was delivered by a Business Retention + Expansion Coordinator (partially funded through OMAFRA).

The Leadership Team was made up of community and businesses leaders whose dedication to the project, insight into North Grenville and a continued desire to support the business community and community as a whole allowed this program to achieve its goals and objectives.

BR+E Subcommittee & Leadership Team

Terry Butler – BR+E Subcommittee Chair, NG Councillor

Wendy Chapman – Exec Director, NG Chamber, BR+E Volunteer Visitation Coordinator

Teri Devine – BR+E Coordinator, Red Flag & Resource Network Coordinator

Krista George – NG Staff, BR+E Media Coordinator

Jim McManaman – Economic Development Committee

Dermid O’Farrell – Economic Development Committee

Mike O’Keefe – Business Development Officer, Grenville CFDC

Jeff Poapst – Economic Development Committee

Forbes Simon – NG Director of Planning & Development

Thanks to our Volunteer Task Force Members who committed substantial hours over several months for both business visits and interviews as well as additional time for meetings, including a Task Force Retreat to review survey results and identify action items.

Appreciation and special thanks to the over forty Volunteer Visitors who were responsible for scheduling and visiting businesses to conduct interviews. We are truly thankful for their energy, dedication and commitment to confidentiality.

A special thank you is extended to Brian Ritchie, Economic Development Consultant for the Rural Community Development Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for his assistance and guidance throughout the stages of the Business Retention and Expansion Project.

2.0 Introduction

Business Retention and Expansion is a community-based, volunteer-driven economic development tool used to encourage growth and stability of local business. Business Retention and Expansion works to improve the competitiveness of local businesses by evaluating and addressing their broader needs and concerns. This is crucial to the sustained viability of communities, since businesses that stay competitive are more likely to remain and expand in their community.

Business retention and expansion:

- contributes significantly to the growth of the local economy through job creation, increased property assessment, etc.;
- facilitates the gathering of strategic business intelligence, which can lead to the development of an effective strategic planning for economic development;
- represents a more cost effective approach to economic development than the attraction of new businesses;
- facilitates the development and implementation of actions to address urgent business issues, i.e., early warning system;
- acts as a business attractions strategy; and
- facilitates the development of an improved local business climate.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs identified the importance of BR+E over ten years ago and responded by developing a suite of tools and resources available to Rural Communities across Ontario. As an economic development tool, the BR+E has a proven track record of success with almost 100 community BR+E projects implemented to date. The program works because it asks local businesses what they want and need, which leads to concrete actions to address specific issues and concerns.

The Municipality of North Grenville delivered a very successful BR+E program in 1999 that resulted in solid action, some of which included the revitalization of Old Town Kemptville, development and implementation of a signage strategy and increased availability of serviced commercial land. Building on that foundation and with so much growth and change in our business community over the last several years, the Economic Development Committee determined that it was time to connect with business again to identify issues and opportunities and help business manage change in the local economic environment.

BR+E focuses on existing business in a community. While the attraction of new business is an important aspect of a balanced economic development strategy, BR+E recognizes the need to do more to assist existing business, helping them survive and grow. This is in recognition of the fact that up to 80% of new jobs in a community are created from existing businesses.

BR+E promotes a welcoming business environment and fosters job retention and creation.

3.0 Goals and Objectives

At the outset of the program, the Municipality identified both short and long term goals for the project.

3.1 Short Term Objectives

- Provide community support for local business through volunteer involvement
- Identify and address immediate concerns of individual business
- Let local business know how much they are valued in the community

3.2 Long Term Objectives

- Increase the competitiveness of local businesses
- Develop and implement action plan and implementation strategy
- Help local business manage change in the local economic environment

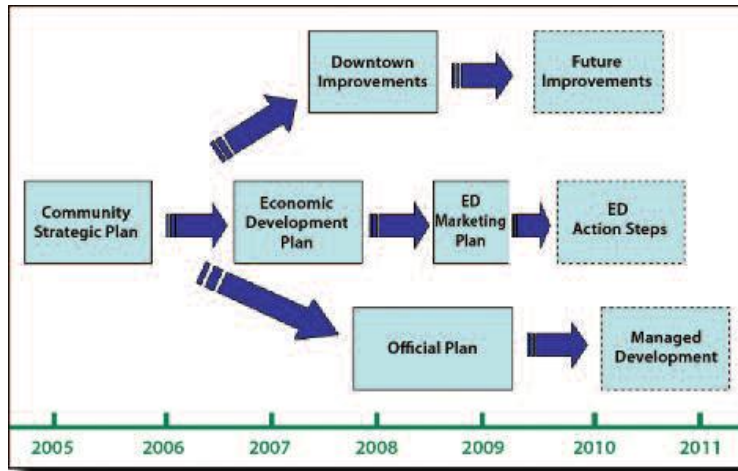
3.3 Immediate Outcomes

- i. A better understanding and appreciation of what it is like operating a business in the Municipality and the challenges they face.
- ii. Strong input and direction from businesses on how to proceed further with business and economic development
- iii. An understanding of business needs, including the necessary information and resources required from professional organizations to address those needs.
- iv. Opportunities to implement short term objectives and identify and address any red flag issues for business.
- v. Developed strong partnerships with local businesses, business support organizations and the community to achieve real results.

Over the longer term, the program endeavours to retain and expand local businesses by increasing their competitiveness, helping them create and preserve jobs and implement a strategic action plan for local economic development to meets the needs of our growing and dynamic community.

4.0 Executive Summary

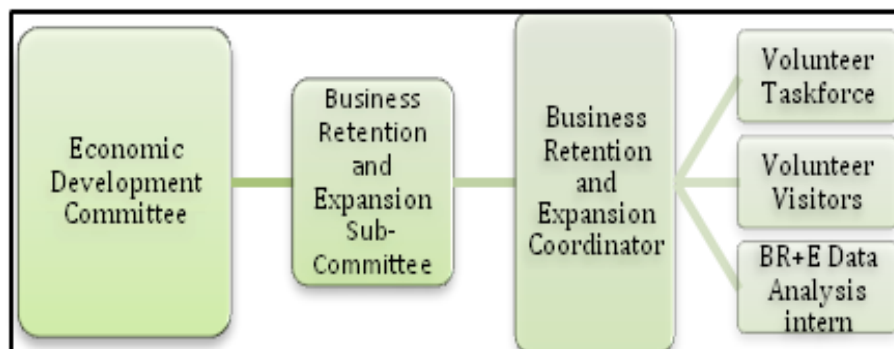
Almost five years ago (2006), North Grenville undertook to create a Community Strategic Plan through public consultation. The plan was further enhanced by development of an Economic Development Plan and Implementation Strategy in 2007, as seen in the chart below.



An Economic Development Committee was created, made up of community and business leaders to guide the plan and ensure execution of the strategies identified.

The Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) program has affirmed the integrity of the Economic Development Strategy while also placing important emphasis on key threats and weaknesses that have been identified and need to be addressed.

The Economic Development Committee set up a BR+E Sub Committee to provide the strong administrative infrastructure needed to move the project forward.



The Municipality of North Grenville, in partnership with the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce, applied for and received partial funding through OMAFRA's Rural Economic Development Program (RED) in July 2009 to deliver a Business Retention + Expansion (BR+E) program to the North Grenville business community.

A Business Retention + Expansion Coordinator was hired in November 2009 to administer and deliver the program to the community in 2010. The ground work for the project was laid in November-December 2009, including development of a comprehensive Work Plan (appendix “A”) and Communications Plan (appendix “B”) to guide the project.



The BR+E project was introduced to the community in January 2010 at a community stakeholder meeting and program launch.

A number of volunteers signed up at the event with continued recruitment occurring into February 2010 until the goal of forty volunteers was reached to fill the positions of Task Force Members and Volunteer Visitors.

The first phase of the project was spent compiling a comprehensive business inventory of all businesses in North Grenville (including Kemptville and surrounding hamlets). Businesses were then randomly chosen from a variety of sectors and invited to participate through letters and follow up by volunteer visitors. The goal of visiting eighty businesses was successfully accomplished and interviews were completed from April to June 2010.

All participants in the Project, including the Leadership Team, Task Force and Volunteer Visitors signed a confidentiality agreement to ensure the information gathered was kept in the strictest of confidence.

As part of the funding and work plan, a Data Analysis Intern was hired in May 2010 to enter all surveys into specifically designed software (Executive Pulse), ensuring the business information remained confidential. Comprehensive analysis of the data was conducted by the Intern and the BR+E Coordinator in July 2010. The resulting Overview and Summary of Results (*Schedule “E”*) was presented to the Leadership Team and Task Force in August 2010.

The group reviewed the data and developed an action plan to address the priorities, objectives and themes that came from the data analysis.

The BR+E Coordinator finalized the recommendations into a Final Report, Action Plan and Implementation Strategy (*Schedule “F”*) for presentation to Council at a public meeting in November, 2010.

The actions identified through the BR+E program will also feed back into the Municipality’s Economic Development Strategy. The Economic Development Committee will affirm and reflect on the information and recommendations from the BR+E to identify what is still relevant and where the Economic Development strategy can be enhanced.

5.0 Municipality of North Grenville

North Grenville, one of eastern Ontario’s fastest growing communities, offers great promise for economic development. Housing a unique blend of rural and small town culture, North Grenville boasts a population of approximately 15,000 people enjoying the benefits of quality lifestyle, natural heritage, essential services, positive growth and more.

The community is situated just 30 minutes south of Ottawa, the Nation’s Capital, off the 416 Highway.

North Grenville includes the Town of Kemptville and the surrounding hamlets of Bishop’s Mills, Burritt’s Rapids, East Oxford, Heckston, Oxford Mills, Oxford Station and Pelton’s Corners.

North Grenville – including Old Town Kemptville and the surrounding rural villages and hamlets – is strategically located at the doorstep of the Nation’s Capital, offering abundant access to key markets including Ottawa and the United States.

Some of the **Competitive Advantages** in North Grenville are;

- Proximity to Ottawa and US Markets
- Excellent accessibility via the Major Highways (416, 417, 401, etc.)
- Excellent access to Ottawa International Airport
- Cheaper land, labour, and taxes relative to Ottawa
- Full municipal water and sewer services to support modern urban densities
- Availability of skilled, creative workers
- Kemptville District Hospital, expanding and attracting doctors
- Excellent educational facilities, including University of Guelph – Kemptville
- Safe, small-town atmosphere surrounded by rural villages & open spaces
- Rideau Heritage Route: Rideau Waterways and South Branch
- Ferguson Forest Centre, part of 150 km of trails and green space
- Educated population base who share a strong sense of community
- Vibrant and talented arts and culture



Known as a caring and giving community, North Grenville offers a distinctly small-town/rural lifestyle. Whether in the Town of Kemptville, or in the rural villages and hamlets in the outlying areas – residents enjoy trails, waterways, dining, shopping, arts and culture.

With a solid foundation as a green and growing community, North Grenville is more than just a place to live and invest – it’s a feeling of a community looking to the future, while savouring the past. Economic and environmental sustainability are core values of the North Grenville community.

Visit our Economic Development website at www.greenandgrowing.ca to find out more about North Grenville.

6.0 Scope of the Project

The major project stages for BR+E are:

- Project Planning and Business Survey
- Immediate Follow-up
- Data Analysis and Recommendations
- Public Meeting and Implementation

6.1 Work Plan

A Work Plan was developed (**Appendix “A”**) that identified the steps and tasks required and was utilized as the roadmap to gauge progress and meet targets and milestones.

6.2 Communications Plan

In order to be successful, a BR+E project requires the participation and support from a broad range of individuals and organizations in the community. Therefore, a Communications Plan (**Appendix “B”**) was developed to address these challenges.



The Communications Plan included a co-ordinated program of letters to community and business leaders and local businesses, a launch event, information kits for businesses, community organizations and media, presentation materials, ongoing media coverage and regular updates to local businesses and other groups via email and mail, website www.northgrenville.ca/BRandE.cfm and presentations.

7.0 Volunteer Recruitment

The BR+E Leadership Team canvassed community and business leaders from a wide variety of backgrounds to become part of the Volunteer Taskforce and to stand as Volunteer Visitors. Volunteers were selected through an application process (**Appendix “C”**) by the Leadership Team in February 2010.

Over forty volunteers were recruited during our BR+E Community Stakeholder meeting and Program launch at the end of January 2010, to conduct business visits. Throughout the process, the BR+E team had the full support of OMAFRA BR+E consultant Brian Ritchie.

The BR+E Program follows strict confidentiality guidelines and requires all participants/volunteers to sign an agreement to ensure that information collected is treated as confidential and not disclosed to others, except in the context of the work for which it was intended. Data is reported in aggregate only, with no individual information disclosed or published.

Training was provided to the Volunteer Taskforce and Volunteer Visitors to prepare them for the tasks ahead and to ensure that the best possible results could be gathered.

To enhance the business survey and identify opportunities and barriers specific to North Grenville, the BR+E taskforce was also asked to submit community questions that they felt best reflected North Grenville. The final community questions were chosen through a selection process by the Leadership Team and were added to the final survey.

The dedicated volunteers were celebrated at a special luncheon in June 2010 upon completion of the business visits to thank them for their continued commitment and participation in the BR+E project and their volunteer hours provided.



With over 50 volunteers involved to date and volunteer hours exceeding 250, the North Grenville community responded by committing the volunteer hours necessary to get the job done!

Successes to date

| | |
|---------------------------------|------|
| # of volunteers | 50+ |
| # of hours volunteered | 250+ |
| # of businesses visited | 80 |
| # of red flag issues identified | 7 |
| # of referrals | 7 |
| # of requests for information | 270 |

8.0 Survey Respondents

After building a comprehensive business inventory and developing a sampling plan, a total of 80 businesses from a variety of sectors were randomly selected for business visits within North Grenville. The 80 businesses represented a fair and equitable sampling giving the survey statistical significance. Below is the final stratified table indicating the goal amount of businesses from each sector to be surveyed and the actual number of businesses surveyed per sector.

| Sector | Goal | Total confirmed |
|--|-----------|-----------------|
| 11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | 4 | 4 |
| 23 - Construction | 12 | 11 |
| 31-33 - Manufacturing | 2 | 2 |
| 41 - Wholesale Trade | 4 | 3 |
| 44-45 - Retail Trade | 10 | 12 |
| 48-49 - Transportation and Warehousing | 3 | 2 |
| 51 - Information and Cultural Industries | 1 | 1 |
| 52 - Finance and Insurance | 2 | 3 |
| 53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 3 | 4 |
| 54 - Professional, Scientific and Technical Services | 14 | 13 |
| 56 - Administrative and Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services | 4 | 2 |
| 61 - Educational Services | 1 | 2 |
| 62 - Health Care and Social Assistance | 5 | 5 |
| 71 - Arts, Entertainment and Recreation | 2 | 2 |
| 72 - Accommodation and Food Services | 4 | 6 |
| 81 - Other Services (except Public Administration) | 9 | 8 |
| Total Business Visits | 80 | 80 |

The survey data was input into the data collection program provided by OMAFRA called “Executive Pulse”, which was used to generate the data sets for further analysis.

8.1 Community Questions

The core survey was broad based with over 100 fact finding questions. Key areas of interest were the business climate, business development, workforce development and community development. The BR+E survey was also enhanced by adding eleven Community Questions to better reflect the unique and individual needs of the North Grenville Community. (See **Schedule “D”** for both surveys).

8.2 Red Flag Issues

Red Flag issues were identified for seven respondents. These businesses were immediately referred to the volunteer resource network who were able to respond to the issues immediately.

8.3 Agricultural Sector

There were four agriculture businesses surveyed who operate livestock and/or crop production facilities. Results from these surveys were forwarded to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs for review. The key concerns identified were commodity prices, overall cost of doing business, public concern/awareness of industry, international competition and availability of labour.

9.0 Community Advantages



Community Highlights

- **Quality of life**
- **Participation**
- **Key services**
- **Location**
- **Growth potential**

Local Market Strengths

- **65% local sales**
- **Collaborative spirit**
- **Customer service focus**
- **Customer loyalty**
- **Lower cost of doing business**

- Overall, businesses surveyed agreed that North Grenville is a good or excellent place in which to do business and is a great place to live in terms of quality of life.
- It's important to note that 79% of business owners surveyed also reside in North Grenville and 76% of the workforce employed by local business lives in North Grenville.
- With a strong sense of community, over 85% of businesses surveyed participate in local events and festivals with majority of contributions being financial.
- The business community overwhelmingly believes that key services provided in North Grenville are excellent, including schools, the hospital, fire services, the OPP, recreational facilities, snow removal and garbage removal services.
- Other community advantages highlighted were North Grenville's strategic location and economic growth.
- Local Markets were also seen to be strong with 65% of business sales coming from the local market.
- Businesses also indicated a lower cost of doing business in North Grenville as a competitive advantage.

10.0 Doing Business in North Grenville

Although the survey findings show an overwhelming proportion of business owners are happy with North Grenville as a place to do business in general, there are key factors and barriers that need to be addressed.

10.1 Top Key Factors/Barriers

| Top 3 key barriers to doing business in North Grenville | # of Responses | % of Respondents |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| Traffic | 25 | 22% |
| Increased cost of doing business | 22 | 19% |
| Municipality | 19 | 16% |

The top three key factors were;

1. North Grenville's traffic and roadways
2. Increased cost of doing business
3. Municipal issues (such as lack of communication, development fees and high taxes) that relate to conducting business in and with the Municipality.

10.2 Other Key Factors

- Lack of affordable lease space
- Need for more industry
- Availability of skilled labour
- Seen as a bedroom community of Ottawa
- Need for a hotel
- Widening of Cty Rd 43
- Zoning By-Law updates
- Traffic lights or Traffic circles
- Lack of public transportation
- Too much focus on retail
- Better use of waterways
- More pedestrian friendly
- Taxes getting high
- Not enough shopping locally

11.0 Summary of Results

Through the Data Analysis process, four strategic themes were identified and were then associated with strategic objectives. More detailed objectives and actions for each theme can be found in the “Action Plan & Implementation Strategy on Page 20.

Business Development * Community Development * Downtown Revitalization * Communications

The themes outlined deal with a variety of issues and are felt to best represent the survey results and priorities for those businesses surveyed.

11.1 Business Development

11.11 Requests for Information/Assistance

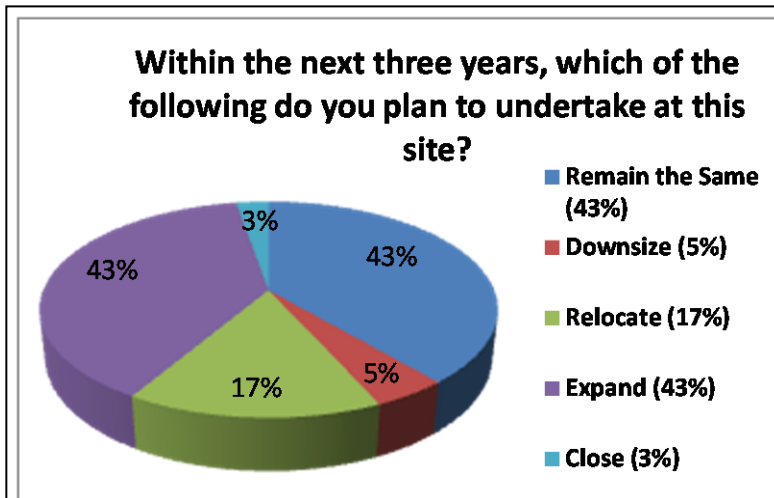
| | Description | Number of Responses | Percentage |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Market development (collaboration, networking, joint marketing/advertising, seminars, marketing plans, increase sales) | Marketing | 95 | 35% |
| Workforce development (recruitment, skills training, local access, financial support) | Workforce Development | 39 | 14% |
| Financial (financial planning, access to capital, expansion, funding resources CFDC’s, BDC) | Financial | 37 | 14% |

Over 270 requests were made for information and assistance on a variety of topics under Business Development with the top three concerns being Market Development, Workforce Development and Financial Resources.

The Municipality has already started to address these requests through partnership with the Grenville Community Futures Development Corporation, the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce, the local Business Improvement Area and the Leeds & Grenville Small Business Enterprise Centre through ongoing Business Seminars that target topics identified by respondents.

11.12 Plans For Expansion

With over 40 businesses indicating a desire to expand and/or relocate in North Grenville over the next three years with potential for 124 jobs, a key objective is to support business expansion/relocation in North Grenville.



Estimate 108 jobs created over the last 3 years.

Another 124 jobs projected over the next 3 years.

Key concerns for business expansion and relocation are:

1. Financing
2. Labour Availability
3. Training

A number of actions were identified to address key concerns for business expansion:

- Develop commercial office/retail/service/industrial space inventory to determine availability
- Business incubator concept/feasibility – a facility for small business (start ups and existing) with good infrastructure and reasonable rent
- Provide business with preparatory information for financing/loan requests with banks
- Identify labor shortages and support recruitment efforts
- Identify Skills Development programs and opportunities

Of the 17% of businesses relocating three quarters are relocating within North Grenville. Key reason for relocation is inadequate facilities in terms of building space and expansion limitations at the current site.

The 4 businesses planning to relocate outside of the community indicated there was nothing that could be done to prevent it.

Similarly, there were two businesses that indicated their plans to close, but stated there was nothing that could be done to alter the situation as both business owners planned to retire with no plans for succession.

11.2 Community Development

The four main areas identified to improve the local community were:

❖ **Improve Community Marketing & Tourism**

The need to improve local tourism, marketing and promotion in and outside of the community (capitalize on Rideau Canal, build awareness, attract tourists).

❖ **Upgrade roadways and relieve traffic congestion**

Improve roadways and traffic congestion – widen the main commercial roadway, decide on traffic lights or roundabouts, determining one ways, provide more parking in the downtown.

❖ **Provide competitive advantage to business**

Main concerns were cost of doing business, including labor costs and availability, lack of industry, too much retail competition (big box focus), lack of affordable lease space and local taxes increasing.

❖ **Decrease energy costs & Go Green (alternative energy)**

Though Hydro is the main source of energy for local business, over half of the respondents would prefer to use alternative energy options like solar and wind as a more green solution. Barriers identified in implementing these preferences were cost of installation/transition and lack of availability both on site and in the community.

11.3 Downtown Revitalization

The importance of downtown revitalization is examined throughout the economic development strategy and the BR+E has affirmed that this is a key priority for local businesses and the Municipality.

Extensive work has been done to improve the downtown core and the Strategy proposed by the BR+E will further develop Kemptville's downtown core into "an economic and social heart of the Municipality".

As part of the 15 Community Questions that were added to the survey to provide more local flavor and address key local issues, respondents were asked to identify the most significant actions the Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA) could take to enhance, improve and support business development and business growth in North Grenville.

11.31 Top Four Identified Actions

1. Continue the beautification process
2. Provide more joint marketing/advertising programs for members
3. Create better parking signage and increase the amount of parking in the downtown
4. Actively recruit more businesses

During the BR+E Task Force Retreat and facilitated strategic planning session, the group reconfirmed Downtown Revitalization as a key theme and provided recommendations and actions to respond to the survey results.

11.32 Short Term Actions

- First Impressions Program (OMAFRA)
- Beautification Projects
- Improve Parking

11.33 Medium Term Actions

- Business Recruitment
- Downtown BR+E

11.34 Long Term Actions:

These longer term actions are a phased approach and can be addressed through collaboration with OMAFRA and funding opportunities through the Rural Economic development (RED) program.

- **Leadership and Management** – a group of people willing to do the leg work
- **Economic Development component** – What are the business gaps? What are the business opportunities?
- **Marketing and Promotion** – festivals, events, branding
- **Physical Improvements** – Façade improvements, typically involves a Community Improvement Plan



The Business Retention + Expansion Program Action Plan and Implementation Strategy will also be used to leverage government funding, both provincially and federally to support actions and strategies identified for Downtown Revitalization.

11.4 Communications

Respondents identified the need to improve communications in a number of areas.

❖ **Communications between the Municipality and local business**

❖ **Communications business to business**

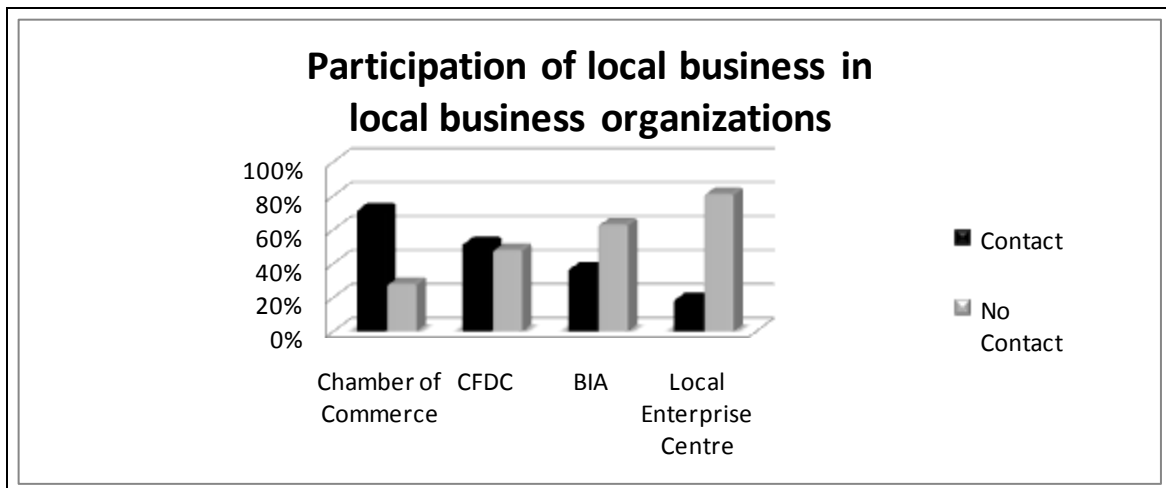
❖ **Communications between local businesses and business organizations**

Although 76% of respondents know that the Municipality has a plan for economic development, over half do not think enough is being done and/or do not know what is being done by the Municipality in terms of business and economic development.

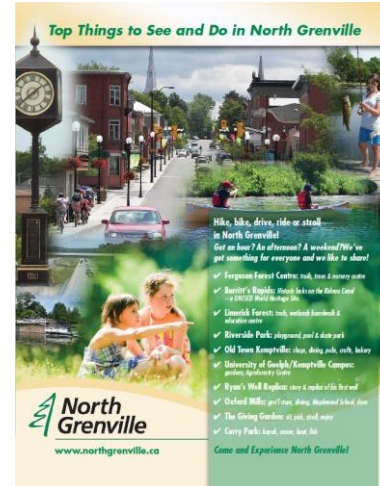
A key objective is to develop a Communications Strategy to identify specific actions to increase communication, build awareness, develop partnerships and facilitate group collaboration and bridge the gap between the Municipality, local business organizations and the businesses they serve.

This graph depicts participation of local business in local business organizations including the Chamber of Commerce, the BIA, the CFDC and the local Enterprise Centre.

Although these organizations are being used, there is significant room for improvement in building membership and connecting business to resources available to them through increased communications.



12.0 Conclusion



Overall, the business climate in North Grenville is very positive – businesses are growing, the workforce is expanding and development is taking place. North Grenville is a green and growing community!

The completion and presentation of the BR+E Report is only the first step to developing a long term strategy to retain and expand existing businesses and attract new businesses to the area.

Collaboration and commitment by all North Grenville Community partners and stakeholders is essential to implement the recommended actions.

The BR+E Strategy will also be a catalyst for future funding opportunities and leveraging through public investment, Federal, Provincial and Municipal.

Leadership will be needed to ensure that the actions are being further developed and implemented and a process is in place to monitor progress and report back to the community.

Implementation and completion of the recommended actions is necessary for the BR+E project to be considered a success.

A special thank you to all of the businesses who participated in the Business Retention and Expansion Project. Without their honest input and co-operation, this report would not be possible.

The following pages represent the Final Action Plan and Implementation Strategy, as developed by the stakeholders involved in the BR+E program and approved by the Economic Development Committee.

The Strategy will be used to guide the Municipality of North Grenville and its partners through implementation to address the opportunities and barriers identified by our local business community through the Business Retention + Expansion Program.

Schedule “B”

Municipality of North Grenville Business Retention + Expansion Program Communications Plan

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Introduction

The proposed BR+E Communications Plan set out in this document identifies:

- Objectives;
- Challenges and opportunities;
- Target audiences and key allies;
- Key messages;
- The recommended communications program, including timeline; and
- Tools and tactics required to execute the program, including recommended communications vehicles and public/media relations activities.

This plan is based on information from a 2004 communications plan prepared by Susan L. Hanna, Public Affairs Consulting for the Business Retention + Expansion Committee for Mississippi Mills, the Municipality of North Grenville BR+E Work Plan, the BR+E Certification Training Course Notebook and other BR+E materials.

Objectives

The objectives of the BR+E project are to demonstrate and provide community support for local business, address immediate individual business concerns and improve communication between the Municipality of North Grenville, local business and the community as a whole. Over the longer term, the program endeavours to retain and expand local businesses by increasing their competitiveness, helping them create and preserve jobs and implementing a strategic action plan for local economic development.

The major project stages for BR+E are:

- Project Planning and Business Survey
- Immediate Follow-up
- Data Analysis and Recommendations
- Public Meeting and Implementation

In order to be successful, the BR+E project requires participation and support from a broad range of individuals and organizations in the community. Therefore, the objectives of this communications plan include:

- Making various key audiences aware of the BR+E project and its objectives;
- Building support for the project among these audiences;
- Encouraging participation in the BR+E project by community and business groups and local business;
- Building the project's profile in the local media;
- Communicating information about the project and its progress to various audiences on an ongoing basis;
- Reporting to various audiences on the project's findings and proposed strategic action plan for local economic development;
- Providing periodic progress reports to various audiences on the project's results and implementation.

Challenges

Communication challenges associated with the BR+E project include:

Complexity – The project is process-oriented and multi staged. It takes time to explain the program, how it works, its goals and potential benefits.

Apathy – Individuals and organizations can be apathetic or cynical about various business development processes and programs, particularly if they can't easily see "what's in it for them".

Confidentiality Concerns – Local businesses may have concerns about revealing certain information to the interviewers.

Effective Vehicles – It can be difficult to identify communications vehicles that reach a broad local audience. The BR+E project has a limited media audience, i.e. it is of interest only to community media, i.e., print media. Many individuals do not rely on local print media for their news and information.

Opportunities

The BR+E project can also take advantage of a number of communications opportunities, including:

Partnership – agreement between the Municipality of North Grenville and the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce around the BR+E project permits us to take advantage of both organizations' communications networks. Further partnerships with other business organizations such as BIA, BNI, NGBB could further expand our reach.

The Opportunity to Deliver a Positive Message – The BR+E process has a proven track record. Its findings will benefit local business in both the shorter and longer term. We can answer the question "What's in it for me?" We can use both the Municipality of North Grenville's experience from the BR+E of 1999 reporting results and provide testimonials of other communities' successes with implementation.

Competition Among Local Media – Kemptville Advance, EMC and Leeds and Grenville Business News coverage enhances our exposure and builds awareness. It creates more local media space and attention, which enhances opportunities for coverage of the BR+E project.

Ongoing Communications – A successful communications program for the BR+E project will lay the foundation for ongoing communications to the business community and other local groups.

Target Audiences and Key Allies

Because a key component of the BR+E project is a survey of local businesses, the success of the project relies on "buy-in" from local businesses and other individuals and community groups. Therefore, the primary target audiences and key allies for the project are:

- Local businesses
- Volunteers (to conduct interviews and take on other roles, Task Force)
- Key local elected and non-elected officials (Mayor, Councillors, MPP, Wardens)
- Community leaders – i.e., stakeholder groups, ratepayer groups, service clubs, community organizations
- Local media

Key Messages

An "Elevator Pitch" is a concise, carefully planned, and well-practiced description about your company that your mother should be able to understand in the time it would take to ride up an elevator.

Ideally, the key messages and content for an "elevator pitch" would be developed and refined in consultation with the Leadership Team. Based on the materials reviewed to date, key messages for the initial phase of the project could include:

- BR+E works because it asks local businesses what they want and need, which leads to concrete action to address specific issues and concerns.
- Majority of new jobs (80%+) come from existing businesses.
- Building on the foundation of a successful BR+E delivered by the Municipality of North Grenville in 1999 and with almost 100 projects being completed in communities across Ontario since then, the BR+E has a proven track record of success.
- BR+E is a community-based, volunteer-driven economic development tool that encourages growth and stability of local businesses and brings the community together towards a common goal of supporting the local economy.
- BR+E Program follows **strict confidentiality** guidelines and requires all participants and volunteers to sign a contract to ensure that information collected is treated as confidential and is not disclosed to others except in the context of the work for which it was intended. Data is reported in aggregate only, with no individual information disclosed or published.
- The BR+E will improve communications between the Municipality of North Grenville and local businesses. Business-to-business networks will also improve.
- A strong local economy means a strong community in which to live, work and raise a family. BR+E helps local businesses, local government and others in the community work together, on an ongoing basis, to identify ways to preserve and expand existing businesses.
- Participating in the BR+E program is a smart investment of time– for your business and your community.

These key messages (and any accompanying sub-messages) would be customized for each target audience. New and/or additional messages would be developed as the project progresses. New messages would also need to be developed to communicate the project results and follow-up actions.

Recommended BR+E Communications Program

Overview

The recommended BR+E communications plan envisions a co-ordinated program of letters to community and business leaders and local businesses, a launch event, information kits for businesses, community organizations and media, presentation materials, ongoing media coverage and regular updates to local businesses and other groups via email and mail. The program does not include paid advertising, most coverage can be done through press releases, though be prepared to spend advertising \$\$ if needed for certain events, such as the launch event and the public meeting to communicate the project's results.

The program is designed to communicate directly with local businesses and other key audiences, informing them of the project and its benefits and inviting them to the launch event. The launch event would provide further details of the project, via information kits and a presentation. Kits could be emailed/mailed to those who do not attend the event. As well, the presentation could be made to other groups, such as ratepayer associations, service clubs, etc. It is crucial that local businesses and others in the community be kept informed of the project's progress and results. Therefore, the program should also include regular updates via media, email/mail.

Materials and Events

It is recommended that an accurate and up-to-date list of mail and email addresses for local businesses and other key groups/individuals be developed (contact list).

The execution of this plan would also require the development of a number of other materials, including:

Introductory Letter/Invitation – This letter would be sent to a comprehensive list of businesses and other key groups individuals, informing them of the project and inviting them to the launch event. Different versions of the letter could be developed for different audiences.

Admail Campaign – A flyer would be sent via Canada Post Admail to all businesses in North Grenville inviting them to the launch event.

Email Blasts – send email blasts through Chamber, BIA, Service Clubs inviting them to Launch event.

Launch Event – The launch event would provide further details of the project and provide an opportunity for informal discussion and questions. It would also provide opportunity to recruit volunteer Task Force members (have application forms available for completion).

Information Kits – These kits would include additional details about the project, such as timelines, testimonials from other communities, FAQs, etc. Content would be developed in consultation with the BR+E Committee and could be customized for various audiences.

PowerPoint Presentation – This brief presentation would provide an overview of the project and its benefits. It would be used at the launch event and for other groups. The benefit of using such a presentation is that it ensures a consistent message and can be narrated by different individuals. Consideration should be given to the development of another PowerPoint deck for the public meeting at which the project's results will be presented.

Media Outreach – Because of the limited number of local print media, it is recommended that one or more representatives of the BR+E Committee schedule meetings with them to introduce the project and answer questions, Kemtville Advance, Kemtville EMC, L&G Business News. These media outlets could receive an information kit (news release, background) and would also be invited to the launch event. They would receive periodic updates, via news releases and interviews. As well, information and updates could be included in the Municipalities regular column in the *Advance (NG Updates)*.

Once the project is launched and underway, consideration should be given to asking a member of the business community to write a supportive letter to the editor of the *Advance* about the project (pillar of our community, a community champion).

Regular Updates – Local businesses and others would receive brief, regular updates on the project via email or regular mail. These would occur once a month. These updates will promote awareness of and interest in the project, and encourage feedback.

Web Site – Set up through Municipal homepage under Business link www.northgrenville.ca/BR+E. To be populated with content as developed. Add to Green and Growing as Economic Development Tool as well.

Participant Recognition – Key participants in the program, such as Task Force members, interviewers and interviewees, should receive appropriate recognition and appreciation, e.g. a thank-you letter or certificate.

Detailed Plan and Timeline

| Event/Activity | Event Date | Materials | Deadline* |
|---|-------------------|---|---|
| Decide date, time and venue for launch. Identify who will be key spokespeople at launch and for media interviews. | Jan 28, 2010 | Powerpoint presentation, Task Force application forms, one page flyers, BR+E Brochures | Nov 25, 2009 |
| Contact media for feature article | | Kemptville Advance to do feature article | Dec 18, 2009 |
| Draft news release and other information for media kit | | Press Release | Dec 15, 2009 |
| Develop mailing list, community leaders, organizations, businesses | | Build inventory of contacts, track progress, activities | Jan-Sept 2010 |
| Draft letter/invitation to key community leaders | | Letter/invitation to launch, can be customized for other outreach | Dec 20, 2009 |
| Admail campaign to business, invite to launch | | Letter/invitation, all NG businesses | Jan 8, 2010 |
| Arrange media interviews with L&G Business News and EMC Kemptville | | Contact editors for coverage | Jan 8, 2010 |
| Draft PowerPoint Presentation | | PowerPoint slide deck | Jan 11, 2010 |
| Media interviews | | Media kit | Jan 18, 2010 |
| Draft info kits for launch | | Backgrounder, FAQ, letter, testimonials, Task Force application form | Jan 28 10 |
| Website development, launch and updates | | Link from Municipal homepage under business, BR+E link, to information page. Update with content, press releases, events, information | Launch by Jan 28 th , continue to update |
| Community Stakeholder Meeting, BR+E Launch, Track attendance | Jan 28, 2010 | Info kits, PowerPoint presentation Materials posted on Web site, track attendance, recruit Task Force | Jan 28, 2010 |
| Email/mail info kits to those who didn't attend launch (email preferred to reduce costs) | | Info kit email | Feb 8, 2010 |
| Presentations to other community groups (if necessary), may do through membership email blasts if cannot be reached | | PowerPoint presentation, info kits and/or email blasts to membership | Feb 12, 2010 |
| Task Force, volunteers chosen, businesses identified and confirmed, prep surveys | | Letters to businesses confirming participation, dates, visitation teams | March 31, 2010 |
| Survey in progress Red flag issues addressed | | | Apr-June. |
| Monthly progress reports as surveys are completed, # completed, issues identified | | Media progress reports, status, issues, successes | Apr-June 2010 |

| Event/Activity | Event Date | Materials | Deadline* |
|--|------------------|--|--|
| Volunteer recognition | | Send thank you letter to volunteer visitors | July 31, 2010 |
| Regular Updates to business community, other audiences through media coverage, NG updates in Kemptville Advance. | Every month | Media releases, NG Updates (council) progress reports, email blasts, letters | July – Dec, 2010 Monthly, as required |
| Review communications plan | | New or updated materials to be developed as required | Sept 15, 2010 |
| Task Force Recognition | | Letter or certificate, recognize at public meeting | Sept 30, 2010 |
| Recommendations/Public Meeting | End of Sept 2010 | Invite media, MPP, other officials, all businesses, major event | Sept 30, 2010 |
| Continued media coverage monthly celebrating every success, no matter how small | | Local media, email, website postings | Oct-Dec 2010 |
| Communications Plan evaluation | | Identify effectiveness of the communications plan | Dec 31, 2010 |
| Arrange follow up public meeting in 1 st qtr 2011 w/Implementation updates | | Press releases, email blasts, mail out | March 31, 2011 |

These deadlines are recommendations only and follow the timelines of the BR+E Program Work Plan. Dates may change as required to accommodate project updates.

Evaluation

If the BR+E Committee proceeds with this plan, its effectiveness should be evaluated. This could be accomplished by tracking media coverage, tracking event attendance and tracking participation by businesses, volunteers, etc. *As well, a question could be built into the survey instrument to ask businesses how they heard about the project, whether they have seen any media on it, etc.*

Schedule "C"

Business Retention + Expansion Program (BR+E) Volunteer Task Force Application Form

The Municipality of North Grenville, through partnership with the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce and partial funding by the Ontario Rural Economic Development Program (RED), will be delivering the Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Program to our local business community.

We are looking for community and business leaders to become involved by volunteering to join our task force and share their expertise. A successful BR+E needs to involve the community and demonstrate a pro-business attitude. The process involves determining needs and opportunities for local business through a systematic approach using surveys and interviews and then developing and implementing an action plan to address those needs and opportunities.

Task Force members and other volunteers pair up to create Visitation Teams that interview the businesses and conduct the surveys.

If you would like to participate in this exciting project, please indicate by completing below.

Completion of this form does not guarantee inclusion in the program or on the task force. Decisions are solely at the discretion of the Leadership Team without bias and based on the criteria of the BR+E Program.

I am interested in volunteering as a Task Force Member for the Municipality of North Grenville Business Retention + Expansion Program (BR+E).

Qualifications and Skills

- Basic understanding of the local economy, business climate
- Professionalism, representing the community for the BR+E project
- Able to respect and exercise confidentiality
- Team player
- Willing to commit 20-30 hrs over several months for interviews and additional time for meetings, including Task Force Retreat to review survey results and identify action items

Name: _____

Business (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

Qualification/affiliations (brief background of 2-3 sentences):

Please send form back to Teri Devine, BR+E Coordinator at tdevine@northgrenville.on.ca or deliver to our offices at the North Grenville Municipal Centre, 285 County Road 44, Box 130, Kemptville, Ontario, K0G 1J0.

Call Teri at 613-258-9569 x 115 if you have any questions and/or visit our website at

www.northgrenville.ca/BRandE.cfm

Business Retention + Expansion Program (BR+E)

Volunteer Visitor Application Form

The Municipality of North Grenville, through partnership with the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce and partial funding by the Ontario Rural Economic Development Program (RED), will be delivering the Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Program to our local business community.

We are looking for community and business minded individuals to become involved by volunteering to join our Business Visitation Teams. The process involves determining needs and opportunities for local business through a systematic approach using surveys and interviews. Volunteers pair up to create Visitation Teams to interview businesses and conduct the surveys.

If you would like to participate in this exciting project, please indicate by completing below.

I am interested in participating as a Volunteer Visitor for the Municipality of North Grenville Business Retention + Expansion Program (BR+E).

Qualifications and Skills

- Enthusiasm and reliability
- Professionalism, representing the community for the BR+E project
- Good listening and recording skills
- Able to respect and exercise confidentiality
- Willingness to work within project timeframe

Time Commitments

- Mandatory attendance at a training session, which will take approximately 2–3 hours
- Interviews will be conducted over a three month period, probably from April to June, 2010.
- Total time commitment of 9–12 hours, including training session over 6-7 mths.

Name: _____

Business (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

Qualification/affiliations (brief background, community involvement, skills, 2-3 sentences):

Please send form back to Teri Devine, BR+E Coordinator at tdevine@northgrenville.on.ca or deliver to our offices at the North Grenville Municipal Centre, 285 County Road 44, Box 130, Kemptville, Ontario, K0G 1J0.

Call Teri at 613-258-9569 x 115 if you have any questions and/or visit our website at

www.northgrenville.ca/BRandE.cfm



Schedule "D"

To view the BR+E surveys, refer to BR+E website under Program Overview at

<http://www.northgrenville.ca/breoverview.cfm>

Schedule “E”

Business Retention and Expansion: Overview of Program and Summary of Results

Overview

Through partial funding from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and in partnership with the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce, the Municipality of North Grenville is delivering a Business Retention + Expansion Program to North Grenville.

The Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) program is a volunteer-driven, community-based economic development tool that utilizes local business visits to identify business opportunities and barriers and to develop an action plan to address those concerns to retain and expand business in our community.

The Municipality of North Grenville’s 2010 BR+E Program has developed strong partnerships with local businesses, business support organizations and the community to achieve real results.

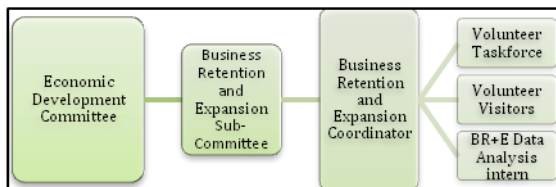
This project has given the Municipality:

- vi. A better understanding and appreciation of what it is like operating a business in the Municipality and the challenges they face.
- vii. Strong input and direction from businesses on how to proceed further with business and economic development
- viii. An understanding of business needs, including the necessary information and resources required from professional organizations to address those needs.

It should be noted that all of the volunteers who participated in the Program signed confidentiality agreements to make certain that the information shared could not be linked to individual businesses. The information presented in this report and in the full dataset ensures confidentiality.

The Municipality wishes to thank all of the volunteers and the 80 businesses that made this project a success. For information on this project visit www.northgrenville.ca/BRandE.cfm or contact the Business Retention and Expansion Coordinator Teri Devine at 613-258-9569 ext. 115.

BR+E focuses on *existing* business in our community. While the attraction of new business is an important aspect of overall economic development strategies, BR+E recognizes the need to do more to assist existing business, helping them survive and grow. This is in recognition of the fact that up to 80% of new jobs in a community are created from existing businesses.



The Leadership Team is comprised of members of North Grenville’s Economic Development Committee’s Business Retention and Expansion subcommittee. It is made up of community leaders who have volunteered their time to oversee the project. Their leadership, dedication to the project,

insight of North Grenville and a desire to improve the community allowed this program to achieve its goals and objectives.

The leadership team canvassed community and business leaders from a wide variety of backgrounds to become part of the Volunteer Taskforce. Volunteers were selected through an application process by the Leadership Team in February 2010.

A total of forty-four volunteers were recruited during our BR+E Community Stakeholder meeting and Program launch at the end of January 2010, to conduct business visits. Throughout this process the BR+E team has had the full support of OMAFRA BR+E consultant Brian Ritchie. As well, training was provided to the Volunteer Taskforce and the Volunteer Visitors to ensure that the best possible results could be gathered. To tailor the main business survey specifically to North Grenville the BR+E taskforce submitted Community Questions to the Leadership team who had the final decision of which to include in the final survey.

Short-Term Objectives:

- Provide community support for local business through volunteer involvement
- Identify and address immediate concerns of individual business
- Let local business know how much they are valued in the community

Long-Term Objectives:

- Increase the competitiveness of local businesses
- Develop and implement action plan and implementation strategy
- Help local business manage change in the local economic environment

After building a comprehensive business inventory and developing a sampling plan, a total of 80 businesses from a variety of sectors were randomly selected for business visits within North Grenville. The 80 businesses represented a fair and equitable sampling giving the survey statistical significance. Below is the final stratified table indicating the goal amount of businesses from each sector to be surveyed and the actual number of businesses surveyed.

| Sector | Goal | Total confirmed |
|--|-----------|-----------------|
| 11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | 4 | 4 |
| 23 - Construction | 12 | 11 |
| 31-33 - Manufacturing | 2 | 2 |
| 41 - Wholesale Trade | 4 | 3 |
| 44-45 - Retail Trade | 10 | 12 |
| 48-49 - Transportation and Warehousing | 3 | 2 |
| 51 - Information and Cultural Industries | 1 | 1 |
| 52 - Finance and Insurance | 2 | 3 |
| 53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 3 | 4 |
| 54 - Professional, Scientific and Technical Services | 14 | 13 |
| 56 - Administrative and Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services | 4 | 2 |
| 61 - Educational Services | 1 | 2 |
| 62 - Health Care and Social Assistance | 5 | 5 |
| 71 - Arts, Entertainment and Recreation | 2 | 2 |
| 72 - Accommodation and Food Services | 4 | 6 |
| 81 - Other Services (except Public Administration) | 9 | 8 |
| Total Business Visits | 82 | 80 |

In July 2010, after more than 200 volunteer hours and 100 hours committed by the participating businesses, the interviewing process ended with 80 local businesses visited. The data was inputted into the data collection program *Executive Pulse* which developed our data sets. This information has provided strong input and direction on improving the economic climate of in North Grenville. This report contains the business data related to the strategies developed.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Business Climate

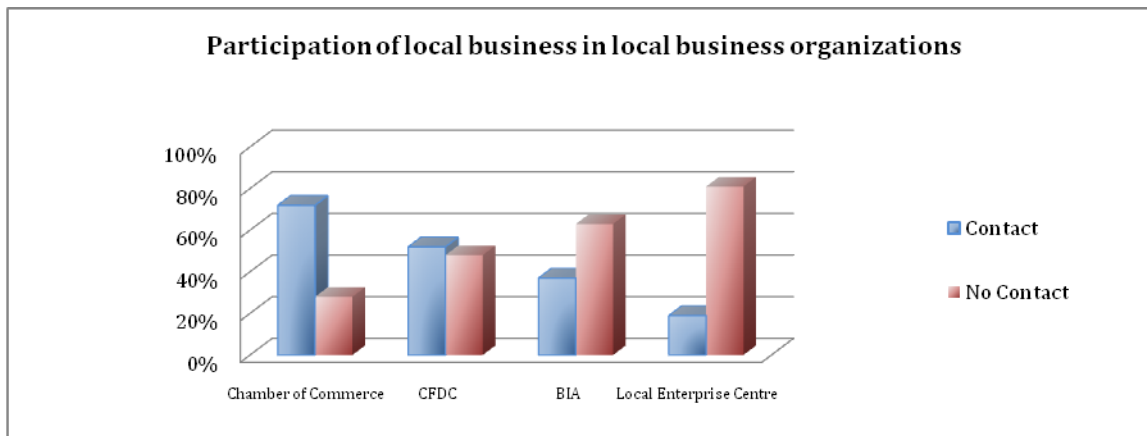
Overall, the businesses surveyed agreed that the Municipality of North Grenville is a good or excellent place in which to do business (83%).

Successes and Areas for Improvement

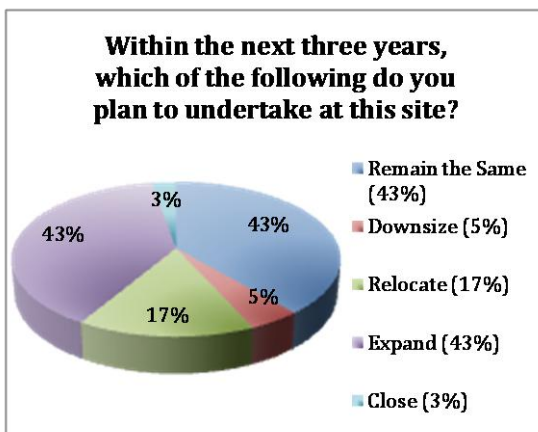
The survey highlighted key successes and areas that need to be improved within the Municipality. The business community overwhelmingly believes that key services provided in North Grenville are excellent. These services include: schools, the hospital, fire services, the OPP, recreational facilities, snow removal and garbage removal services.

Although the survey findings show an overwhelming proportion of business owners are happy with North Grenville as a place to do business there are still key factors and barriers that should be addressed. In general, the business community felt that the availability of skilled labour, water/sewage capacity, availability of financing, lack of proactive business recruitment, road and highways, lack of serviced land and a lack of available and properly zoned land.

This graph depicts the utilization of local business organizations including the Chamber of Commerce, the BIA, the CFDC and the local Enterprise Centre. Although these organizations are being used, there is significant room for improvement.



Future Plans



Over the next three years, 43% of businesses within the Municipality of North Grenville are planning on remaining the same and another 43% of businesses are planning to expand.

Of those businesses that are expanding and relocating within the community, 97% include an increase in their workforce, while 76% will include additional investment in equipment and technology and 79% in additional services to customers.

Key concerns for business expansion and relocation are:

4. Financing
5. Labour Availability
6. Training

Of the 17% of businesses relocating three quarters are relocating within North Grenville. Key reason for relocation is inadequate facilities in terms of building space and expansion limitations at the current site.

The 4 businesses planning to relocate outside of the community indicated there was nothing that could be done to prevent it. Similarly, there were two businesses who indicated their plans to close, but stated there was nothing that could be done to alter the situation as both business owners planned to retire with no plans for succession.

Company Information

It was highlighted throughout the business visit portion of the BR+E Project that an overwhelming majority of the respondents are small-scale, independently owned and operated businesses with 97% of business owners involved in the day-to-day operations of their businesses.

It is also important to note that 79% of business owners also reside in North Grenville. In addition, 76% of the workforce employed by local business resides within the community.

An overwhelming amount of the businesses surveyed have been in the community for a significant amount of time. Of the businesses surveyed, 69% have operated in the community for over 4 years, with 36% of the businesses operating in North Grenville for over 11 years. This, once again, emphasizes the importance for an effective BR+E Program and retaining the businesses that are currently located in North Grenville.

Construction is a key employment sector within North Grenville, comprising 23% of the workforce. Professional and Scientific Services is another key employment engine making up 22% followed by Educational Services with 12% and Retail with 10%.

Business Development

Over 78% of businesses surveyed highlighted local market development as the most important business factor to ensuring they remain competitive.

Other factors highlighted include:

1. Improved customer service
2. Availability of DSL (Digital Subscriber Line)
3. Availability of labour
4. Workforce skills training
5. Energy costs

Over 80% of businesses surveyed are small businesses with only a single location. Approximately 56% are completely satisfied with their business' current location in the community.

Of the 44% of businesses that are dissatisfied with their location 34% cited the location as being in disrepair, too small and inconveniently located for their customers.

Approximately 60% of the businesses surveyed lease their facility and of these, 46% have a long-term lease of three years more. Only 7% of the respondents anticipate problems with renewing their current lease.

Though a majority of businesses use hydro as their main source of energy, many businesses are extremely interested in using alternative sources of energy including wind, bio-diesel and solar to power their businesses. Roughly 51% of business that would prefer to use alternative sources of energy cited the cost of installation as the key factor in *not* implementing these energy sources; other reasons include the lack of availability both on site and in the community.

The most common concern about energy overall was the cost.

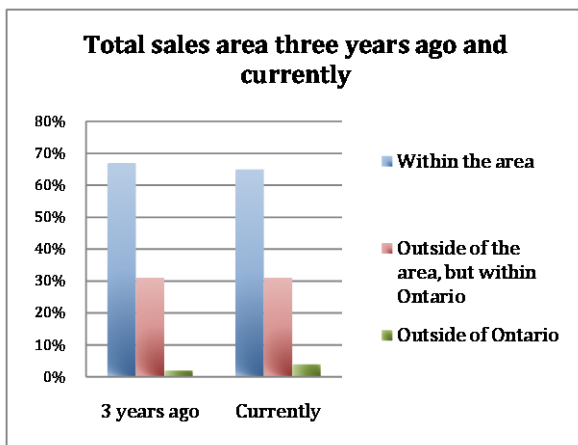
In terms of Information and Communications Technology (IT) 90% of businesses have some form of high speed internet (DSL, wireless, cable, satellite), though 28% of businesses would prefer to use DSL (high-speed communications over telephone lines), but do not have access to that technology.

The majority of businesses use the internet as a tool for business development with 70% of those surveyed currently using their own websites as a business development tool.

Business Development: Markets

The *Business Development: Marketing* section highlights the importance of collaboration as a marketing tool. A total of 57% of the respondents are interested in collaboration, networking and information sharing, while another 45% being interested in joint marketing ventures.

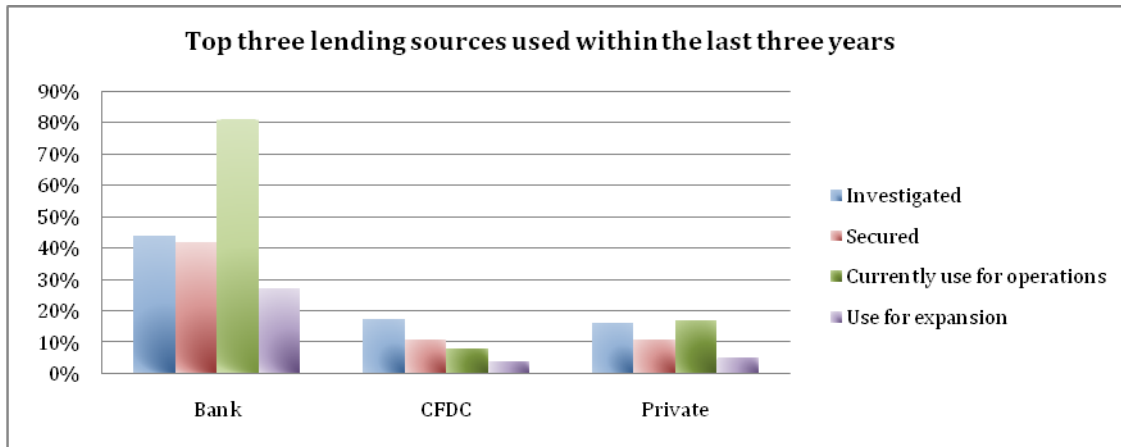
Local markets were deemed extremely important to local business with 65% of business sales coming from the local market.



Note: 16% of businesses surveyed requested information/assistance on marketing. This data is being shared with local service providers for future program development.

Business Development: Financial

Indications show high use of banks which is good but lack of CFDC resources may indicate the community is not aware. One of the key issues for expansion was the lack of financing available for business, greater use of the CFDC could mitigate this problem.



Workforce Development

Over the past 3 years 51% of businesses have maintained a stable workforce with an additional 37% of businesses increasing their workforce. On average the businesses that have grown have expanded by 5 employees; tallying a total of 108 jobs created by the 29 businesses over the past 3 years.

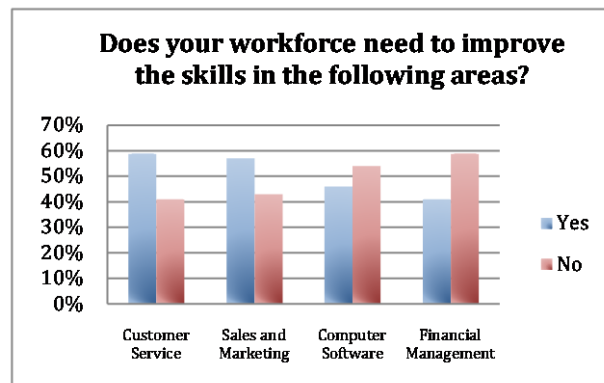
In addition to these numbers, when asked about their workforce predictions for the next three years 52% of business predict their workforce will increase, adding, on average, 3 workers per business and creating another 124 jobs.

Although these statistics emphasize the growth of the Municipality of North Grenville it must be noted that 34% of businesses have difficulty recruiting sufficient, qualified workers.

Overall, the businesses felt that the lack of qualified workers was a local issue rather than a sectoral problem.

Many of the respondents would like to improve skills development and indicated the need to increase the skills of their current workforce in the following areas:

1. Customer Service
2. Sales and Marketing
3. Computer Software
4. Financial Management



Though businesses are interested in increasing the skills of their labour force, the majority indicate a lack of funding and availability of local training as a barrier.

Roughly 70% of the businesses visited believe that a business mentorship program would be a useful tool to enhance business competitiveness, especially in the key areas of marketing and finance. However, less than 43% of businesses surveyed are willing to take part as mentors.

Local Community

Of the businesses surveyed, 97% said that North Grenville is an excellent place to live in terms of quality of life.

The main community advantages highlighted were North Grenville’s sense of community, strategic location and economic growth. Below is the comprehensive results of the advantages of conducting business in North Grenville.

| Advantages to conducting business in North Grenville | # of Responses | % of Respondents |
|--|----------------|------------------|
| Community | 54 | 28% |
| Location | 48 | 25% |
| Growth | 36 | 19% |
| Size of Community | 18 | 9% |
| Transportation | 14 | 7% |
| Lower Cost of doing business | 12 | 6% |
| Customer Loyalty | 5 | 3% |
| Rideau River | 2 | 1% |
| Lack of commercial property | 1 | 1% |

The main community disadvantages highlighted were North Grenville’s traffic and roadways, the increased cost of doing business and Municipal issues (such as lack of communication, development fees and high taxes) that need to be sorted out in terms of conducting business in the Municipality. Below are the comprehensive results of the disadvantages of conducting business in North Grenville.

| 3 disadvantages to doing business in North Grenville | # of Responses | % of Respondents |
|--|----------------|------------------|
| Traffic | 25 | 22% |
| Increased Cost of doing business | 22 | 19% |
| Municipality | 19 | 16% |
| Size | 14 | 12% |
| Too Old Fashioned | 14 | 12% |
| Serviced Land | 11 | 9% |
| Lack of Marketing | 8 | 7% |
| Location | 3 | 2.50% |

Although 76% of respondents know that the Municipality has a plan for economic development, over half do not think enough is being done and/or do not know what is being done by the Municipality in terms of business and economic development.

When asked how local economic development offices could best assist local business the top five responses given were:

1. Business networking sessions
2. Joint advertising and marketing
3. Marketing seminars
4. Attraction of related supply and service businesses
5. Workforce planning, employee training and attraction

Over 40% of the businesses surveyed were interested in a Business Ambassador Program for North Grenville however many did not know what this program entailed.

Community Questions

Businesses were asked what the three most significant actions that the Municipality could take to improve enhance and support business development and growth in North Grenville. The top three answers were:

1. Improve communications between the Municipality and local business.
2. Provide incentives (such as tax breaks, decrease in development charges and affordable lease space for new business).
3. Market the Municipality of North Grenville in terms of business and tourism.

Similarly, the same question was asked about the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce. The top three answers were:

1. Develop joint advertising opportunities for Chamber members and promote the Chamber within and outside the community
2. Combine emails being sent to Chamber members to decrease the volume being sent
3. Collaborate with other business associations within the community and with the municipality

Finally, businesses were asked to identify the three most significant actions the BIA could take to improve the business climate. Below are the top three identified actions: (note: 3 and 4 were of the same importance)

5. Continue the beautification process
6. Provide more joint marketing/advertising programs for members
7. Create better parking signage and increase the amount of parking in the downtown
8. Actively recruit more businesses

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage of Respondents |
|--|-----------|---------------------------|
| Widen Hwy 43 | 15 | 47% |
| Traffic Lights where traffic circles are | 6 | 19% |
| Sanders St./Rideau St. Both one ways | 4 | 13% |
| More traffic circles | 3 | 9% |
| Better signage | 2 | 6% |
| Public Parking downtown | 2 | 6% |

When asked what could be done to improve the traffic situation in North Grenville businesses highlighted the need to widen Hwy. 43. On the left, is a comprehensive list of all traffic improvements brought forward by the businesses surveyed.

In addition, businesses were asked about their thoughts on the Rideau Canal being designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. The question asked was: what are the benefits to having the Rideau Canal designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. To the right is the coded list of the responses received. Clearly, many of the businesses in the community feel that there are few benefits to the Rideau Canal having World Heritage Status.

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage of Respondents |
|-------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| None | 34 | 49% |
| Tourism | 32 | 46% |
| Canal usage | 2 | 3% |
| Marketing | 2 | 3% |

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage of Respondents |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Marketing/Promotion for Tourism | 20 | 57% |
| Heighten Bridge on 43 | 13 | 37% |
| Downtown development | 2 | 6% |

Similarly, the businesses were asked what could be done to improve the opportunities of the Rideau Canal. Below is a list of responses by local business.

Local business is extremely interested in tourism initiatives with 86% of businesses participate in local events/festivals etc, with majority of contributions being financial.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION/ASSISTANCE

Throughout the BR+E survey respondents had the opportunity to ask for assistance and information on particular topics.

The chart below identifies the key areas of Requests for Information/Assistance local business community was most interested in.

| Description | Number of Responses | Percentage |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Marketing | 95 | 35% |
| Workforce Development | 39 | 14% |
| Financial | 37 | 14% |
| Energy Conservation | 25 | 9% |
| Business Planning | 19 | 7% |
| Succession Planning | 19 | 7% |
| Water/Sewer Infrastructure | 10 | 4% |
| Website Development | 10 | 4% |
| Business Networking | 9 | 3% |
| Customer Relations | 7 | 3% |

CONCLUSION

Overall, the business climate in North Grenville is very positive – businesses are growing, the workforce is expanding and development is taking place.

This does not mean, however, that there are not areas which need improvement. These have been raised throughout this summary of results. Our taskforce will now take these results and create a strategic action plan which outlines how our community can improve the local economic environment.

Schedule "F"

Municipality of North Grenville Business Retention + Expansion Program Final Action Plan & Implementation Strategy - November 2010

Key - Timelines

Short Term = within 1 year
Mid Term = 1-3 years
Long Term = 3 years or more

| Strategic Theme | Recommendations | Lead Role/Supporting Role | Estimated Resources | Progress Measures | Timing | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|------------|
| Business Development | Workforce development (recruitment of sufficient & qualified workers, skills training, including local access and financial support) | Workforce Skills and Development needs analysis study/survey. Identify needs/gaps/barriers. Review data from BR+E. Recap Staples experience. | Municipality/ 1000 Islands workforce dev board, Chamber, College, Local businesses, Enterprise Centre, Employment Centre | Staff, Consultant \$\$ tbd | Workforce Development plan completed w/actions identified to meet demand of qualified workers and skills training needed | Mid Term |
| | Market development (collaboration, networking, joint marketing/advertising, seminars, marketing plans, increase sales, attraction of related supply and service businesses) | Coordinate various business interest groups (BIA, Chamber, BNI, Municipality) and facilitate joint marketing, twice a year to share resources and funds for advertising. | Municipality/BIA, Chamber, BNI, other business groups, local and regional media. | Share resources & \$\$\$. Set up joint marketing committee to facilitate initiatives, develop budgets, marketing plan. | Two advertising campaigns in 2011 are completed | Short Term |
| | Business Expansion (key concerns are financing, labour availability, training & facility space) | Determine feasibility of Business Incubator - Business incubator Concept Document – a facility for small business with good infrastructure and reasonable rent; | Municipality Staff/Consultant | Staff, Consultant \$\$ tbd | Concept document completed and approved | Mid Term |
| | | Develop tools and resources to prepare business for expansion; (Business Expansion Tool Kit); Develop commercial office/retail/service/industrial space inventory; Skills Dev info; financing requirements (loan requests) clarified | Municipality/Banks, Workforce Dev, Real Estate, gov't programs | Staff time, Eco. Dev committee | Tool Kit completed and distributed to business | Mid Term |
| | Coordinate Business Seminars to address requests for information & assistance from business on topics of interest | Over 270 requests for information and assistance on a variety of topics including marketing, workforce development, financial planning, energy conservation, business planning & succession planning | Staff/Grenville CFDC/LGSBEC/Chamber/BIA | Staff time, event hosting, sponsorship \$\$ | Seminars delivered to business on identified topics | Short Term |
| Downtown Revitalization | OMAFRA RED Program - Downtown Revitalization Project | OMAFRA provides variety of tools, phased process (4 pillars) • Leadership and Management – a group of people willing to do the leg work • Economic Development component – What are the business gaps? What are the business opportunities? • Marketing and Promotion – festivals, events, branding • Physical Improvement – Façade improvement (This typically involves a CIP (Community Improvement Plan). A longer term initiative, ties back into Eco Dev. Strategy, can include Retail Gap Analysis, Business Recruitment, Investment, parking | Championed by Mayor and Council, make a case with OMAFRA, \$150K over 3 yrs, BR+E subcommittee, Chamber, BIA, community & business support. | Support from OMAFRA \$\$, Staff dedicated (Downtown revitalization coordinator) and budget \$\$ from Municipality | Assess by each phase/pillar completion | Long Term |
| | Deliver First Impressions Program to Downtown | Reveals the first impression a downtown conveys to outsiders, including tourists, potential investors and retirees. Volunteers from another community visit North Grenville and evaluate their experience, then come back and present their findings. Assists in identifying strengths and weaknesses to develop actions to address any issues. | Municipal Staff, BIA, Chamber, citizens, volunteers, businesses | Apply to OMAFRA for resources/tools, dedicate Municipal Staff to the project. Team of 6-8 volunteers, approx. \$500 municipal budget for basic travel expenses | Program completed, final presentations and reports rec'd, action plan developed and approved | Short Term |

| Strategic Theme | Recommendations | | Lead Role/Supporting Role | Estimated Resources | Progress Measures | Timing |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|------------|
| Community Development | Provide competitive advantage to business community (CIP) | Implement Community Improvement Plan. Provide tax assistance, grants or loans to assist in the rehabilitation of lands and/or buildings within the defined Community Improvement Project Area. | Staff to determine need, identify defined area. Get buy in from Council, find funding and HR resources for CIP project | Staff time, other existing plans as models/examples, liason with MPP, municipal staff | CIP Plan completed and implemented | Mid Term |
| | Improve local tourism, marketing and promotion (capitalize on Rideau Canal, build awareness, attract tourists) | Develop a tourism marketing strategy | Staff, consultant, current Eco. Dev Strategy, tourism component | Staff, Consultant \$\$ tbd | Tourism Strategy completed with actions identified | Mid Term |
| | Alternative Energy Opportunities | Encourage Alternative energy business investment (solar, wind), identify funding sources, market any current projects (solar farms, Hydro Turbine Project), educate the community | Council support, natural resources, provincial programs/incentives, commercial realtors, business owners, staff (research), homeowners, chamber | Staff time | Businesses informed/educated on alternatives, investments initiated | Long Term |
| | Increased availability of broadband in NG | BR+E Survey identified GAP in DSL technology, determine gaps, coordinate with Bell to meet the IT infrastructure needs of current business and future development in the community. | Staff, Bell Alliant, businesses | Staff time | Gaps identified, plan developed to fulfill current and future needs. Inform the community | Mid Term |
| Communications (relationships) | Communications Plan & Implementation Strategy | Improve communications between the Municipality and local business (Direct contact with businesses, personal visits, facilitate collaboration, increase dialogue/interaction between council and business) | Municipal Staff, BR+E Subcommittee, Eco. Dev Committee, Chamber, BIA, NGBB, GCFDC, LGSBEC | Staff time, consultant \$\$ tbd | Communications Strategy completed w/actions identified for implementation. Strategy to include Municipality, Business Organizations & local businesses. | Short Term |
| Improve communications between local businesses and business organizations. Increased memberships, networking, joint programs, recruitment strategies, info/knowledge sharing | | | | | | |
| Improve collaboration between local businesses in North Grenville. (Partnerships, networking, information/knowledge sharing) | | | | | | |