



# Saugeen Shores Strong

## Economic Recovery Strategy



**April 2021**

**Invest**  
SAUGEEN SHORES

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# Message from the Mayor

**The impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic are being felt everywhere, including in the Town of Saugeen Shores.**

As our community reacts and responds to the emerging changes due to the pandemic, it has always been clear that Saugeen Shores would stand together to support one another, weather the storm, and resolve to emerge stronger on the other side.

We have seen the local business community adapt and change the way they do business and deliver services. We always knew Saugeen Shores was a strong, resilient and innovative place to live—and this is just further proof of that fact.

As a community we have followed the advice of our local Medical Officer of Health and continue to follow and exceed best practices when it comes to using personal protective equipment, abiding by physical distancing guidelines and staying home whenever possible in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Now is the time to focus our attention on recovering from the impact of these efforts to ‘flatten the curve’.

We’ve reached out to businesses, local organizations and community stakeholders to develop a plan for recovery that we believe will help our community recover and continue to thrive well into the future.

Because together, we are Saugeen Shores Strong.



Mayor Luke Charbonneau





# Background

**During the COVID-19 outbreak (beginning March 2020 in our region),** elected officials and staff have heard from many concerned business owners as well as business associations regarding closure of non-essential services (provincial order), workforce challenges, and revenue loss.

Without doubt, the Town of Saugeen Shores acknowledges that the global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the local economy. This outbreak has changed the way that the community is doing business, and will certainly

change the landscape in the community for months, and years, to follow.

Although the community remains in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, economic development staff recognize the required shift in annual work plans, and staff are responding quickly to current and emergent needs.

In Saugeen Shores, the business community is innovative, adaptable, and has proven its agility. Many have turned to non-traditional sale methods, such as online purchase and



**In Saugeen Shores, the business community is innovative, adaptable, and has proven its agility.**

curbside pickup. However, local businesses and their workforces continue to experience financial difficulty due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Provincial orders have caused some local businesses to not operate at all (service specific), where others are able to modify their processes.

The Economic Development Officer (EDO) for the Town of Saugeen Shores is actively responding to business inquiries, consulting with community partners, working with stakeholders to deliver information to the

business community, and has advanced a marketing campaign to promote local spending. Additionally, the EDO will lead the implementation of the Economic Recovery Strategy for the Town.

The Economic Recovery Strategy is built on local experience and knowledge. This is a working document that will change and evolve over time. Additional research will continue to occur, including but not limited to data analysis, survey result overview, content analysis, and workforce analysis.

# Research



Orange light bulbs indicate ideas coming directly from the Mayor's Task Force on Economic Recovery.

## Surveys

Town staff will review the survey data provided from the following sources to develop action plans in support of the business community.

### The Bruce County Economic Task Force Survey

- Survey focus: Business owner/operator perspective relating to COVID-19
- Follow-up survey planned for fall 2020

### The Saugeen Shores Chamber of Commerce Survey

- Survey focus: Business response to COVID-19

### Developer/Staff Working Group Survey

- Survey focus: Impact of COVID-19 on local builders and developers

### Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Survey (OMAFRA Pilot Program)

- Survey focus: To quantify the impacts of COVID-19 on rural businesses
- Note: OMAFRA has chosen Saugeen Shores as one of the first to roll out their new BR&E survey and provide feedback prior to its roll out to communities across Ontario.

- Secondary business community survey to be conducted in Stage 3 of reopening in partnership with a community stakeholder

- Consider surveying resident associations to gather data on possible seasonal resident changes

### Facebook and Instagram Polls

- Polls offered a variety of ways to re-engage in local activities to test the level of comfort in the community during stage 3.

We asked:

**This summer, do you plan on...**

(Poll completed Spring 2020)





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## Focus groups

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**The Mayor's Task Force on Economic Recovery** is a group of professionals and community partners that the EDO will solicit for feedback and ideas surrounding recovery efforts.

**The Community Partners Group** is comprised of the Town EDO, Mayor and representatives from Port Elgin BIA, Southampton BIA and the Saugeen Shores Chamber of Commerce. This group met once a week from March to June to share updates and challenges. The EDO used this opportunity to gauge interest and feedback on recovery efforts from members.

**The Developer/Staff Working Group** holds quarterly meetings. The June 2020 meeting focused on support measures and feedback solicitation from local builders and developers.

**The weekly Bruce County Economic Development Officers** meetings held by Bruce County. This meeting is a round table format where the County and municipalities can share initiatives, ask questions and receive feedback. The discussions had at these meetings help to inform the Bruce County Economic Task Force Committee.

**The Annual Economic Development Forum** has been postponed for 2020 due to the overlap in mandate with the Mayor's Economic Recovery Task Force. The Annual Forum will resume Fall 2021 with a focus on the continuing economic impacts of COVID-19. Including a review of action items to date and recommendations for ongoing recovery efforts.



- Consider engaging with the *Nuclear Economic Development and Innovation initiative*, an existing regional advisory committee



- \* Explore opportunities to have conversations with elected officials from all levels of government



- \* Initiate conversations with the largest employers in the region



- \* Consult organizers of community events to determine the status of 2020 and 2021 annual events in the community. Dialogue covers events that will be modified, postponed or cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions and what supports are required for future successful events

# Research



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## Data collection and analysis

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Town staff are learning which data sets are available for review today as well as those that will be available in the future from economic development peers, and from economic development industry organizations.

Staff appreciate the value data brings to strategy development and will be specifically looking for data sets that snapshot our local situation including town, regional and key industry data.

Reviewing this data will support decisions and validate concepts and ideas regarding implementation of tactics.

-  • Explore municipal procurement best practices to support the local economy

### Available data for review (including, but not limited to):

#### Canadian Business Data

- Presents the economic structure of community – distributed January and June yearly

#### Property Tax Review

- Considering commercial tax revenue from 2020 to 2021

#### Workforce Development

- Four County Labour Market Planning Board's EI stats. Plan to review local CERB statistics as they are released

#### StatsCan COVID-19 data

#### Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses

#### Canadian/Ontario Chambers of Commerce impact studies

#### IPSOS Survey June 2020

- Used to gauge public comfort with resuming normal activities



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## Data collection and analysis

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### Industry review

#### Manufacturing:

- Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC)

#### Tourism:

- Destination Canada
- Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO 7) Bruce Grey Simcoe

#### Nuclear:

- Organization of Canadian Nuclear Industries (OCNI)

#### Agriculture:

- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)

#### Construction:

- Local Developers Group

#### Real Estate:

- Realtors Association of Grey Bruce and Owen Sound (RAGBOS)

#### Financial Institutions:

- Local CIBC, Meridian, RBC, TD



# Research



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## Workforce review

### Getting to Work: Investigating Labour Market Challenges in Saugeen Shores, Ontario

- A partnership with Bruce Power, the Town of Saugeen Shores and the University of Guelph

Due to the pandemic, these objectives will be considered as they relate to the impacts of COVID-19 and its long term effects on the community's workforce.

The proposed research project has three objectives:

1. To identify the economic impacts of labour market challenges at the local community-level, with a case study of Saugeen Shores, Ontario.
2. To identify opportunities for rural communities and their regional partners to engage in capacity building and economic development by supporting targeted labour force development, business planning, and collaboration among key public sector and private sector partners.
3. To build recommendations and identify opportunities for place-based rural policy and investment initiatives that support rural economic development through addressing local labour market challenges.

## Current plan review

### Content analysis on the following Town of Saugeen Shores documents:

- Economic Development Strategic Plan (2018)
- Tourism Strategy (2019)
- Corporate Strategic Plan (2017)
- \* • Community Improvement Plan (2021 updates)
- Attainable Housing Task Force Final Report & Recommendations
- \* • Review of Economic Development Recovery Plans from neighbouring counties and municipalities



# Actions



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## Marketing and promotion: small business recovery

### Radio, video and digital advertising campaign

- \* Messages from the Mayor to support local; infographic
- \* Deliver advertising outside of the region

### Local and regional billboards promoting Saugeen Shores Strong

- \* **Virtual store tours/Interactive promotion** to support virtual shopping and experiences

- \* **#SaugeenShoresStrong**: collaborative process with the Saugeen Shores Chamber of Commerce to house the “what’s available” list. (Retired in Stage 3 and replaced with the County of Bruce Business Resiliency Map.)

- \* **SaugeenShores.ca/SaugeenShoresStrong webpage** providing resources for businesses

- \* **County of Bruce Business Resiliency Map** leveraging data from Saugeen Shores

- \* **Grey Bruce Huron Strong website/app** promotion, hosted by NII and NPX

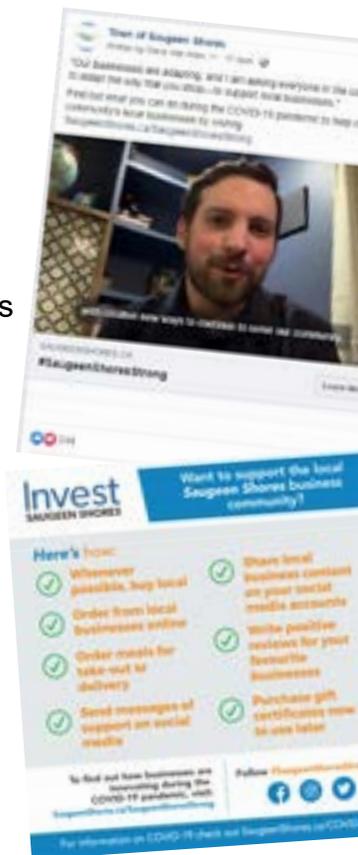
- \* **Posters and print materials**: safe practices and procedures for local businesses to use and display for staff/customers

- \* Actively promote regional and County supports for small businesses
- \* Videos highlighting local experiences with stage 3 precautions in place to reduce consumer anxieties
- \* Launch the Saugeen Shores Business Recognition Campaign for adaptability and resiliency during the COVID-19 pandemic

### Shore Report podcast episodes

- \* Financial supports available presented by IG Wealth Management
- \* Local business owner speaks to precautions taken in store for customer and staff safety

Task Force  
priority areas



\*Tactic has advanced

# Actions



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## Marketing and promotion

### INVEST Saugeen Shores

**Target audience:** Investors, entrepreneurs and new business owners

- \* Utilize digital marketing, including social media influencers
  - Consider RTO7 funding program
- \* 2021 Community Profile Booklet
  - Refresh of the brochure to focus on the new ways of living, working and playing in Saugeen Shores

Task Force  
priority areas

INVEST-branded Zoom episodes (see page 13 for details)

Local and regional billboards promoting Saugeen Shores Strong

- \* INVEST video update to include current information

### Tourism

**Target audience:** Focus marketing on local and surrounding areas, targeting visiting friends and family market, as outlined in the Tourism Strategy. Capitalize on the industry trend seeing expanded hours tourists are willing to drive to destination due to reduced air travel (10 hours\*). Focus marketing efforts within a 10-hour drive of Saugeen Shores.

- \* Virtual Tourism: connecting those who love to visit with local virtual tours
- \* Keeping tourism messaging consistent (Town, Chamber, BIAs and Tourist Town website)

\*From Eva Gutsche, Stem Consulting, Destination Northern Ontario webinar



# Actions



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## Business support services

### INVEST Saugeen Shores

**Target audience:** business community and event planners

-  \* Leverage County initiatives such as ShopHERE, Spruce the Bruce, Business Sustainability Loan, and the Business Pivot Grant programs
-  \* Leverage RTO7 funding opportunities to the business community
-  \* Pursue development of employment land (Concession 6, adjacent to Lamont Sports Complex)
- \* **Provide provincial and federal granting program information** in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce
- \* **Partner with BIAs** to deliver physical distancing floor decals and signage for customer procedures to local businesses
-  \* **Support new opportunities** for business creation due to the pandemic
- \* **Distribution of infographic of closing and reopening phases**
- Saugeen Shores webinars via Zoom.**
  - \* • Grant writing 101- Sharing grant writing techniques for not-for-profits
  - \* • Innovation in Times of Crisis Part 1 & Part 2 - Sharing creative solutions for business and not for profits
  - \* • Idea Board - Sharing Tourism ideas for our area focusing on the visitor profiles

Task Force  
priority areas

Additional episode topics to consider: Mayor's Task Force, Chamber of Commerce response, financial resources available, Bruce County Task Force, tourism RTO7, how to host a social media contest, Google optimizing your business, sanitation measures and best practices, and returning to work.

#### Financial impact of actions

Individual action items will undergo a financial review as part of their recommendation to Council prior to implementation.

# Actions



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## Municipal pivoting

**Target audience:** Permanent and seasonal residents, local business owners and event planners

- \* • Consider temporary (2020/2021) rent relief for municipal properties as well as facility rentals for user groups, nonprofit organizations, seasonal businesses, and community events with assumed economic impact
- \* • Sidewalk Café and Sidewalk Patio Encroachment Temporary Revisions (2020 & 2021); zoning by-laws. Consider keeping revisions for the longterm to support businesses
- \* • Review and rewrite of Community Improvement Plan and incentives. Provide incentives for new businesses in town and for existing businesses expanding

Task Force  
priority areas

### Financial supports

- \* • Suspended penalties on 2020 property taxes for 90 days from original due date of May 21
- \* • Matched the County of Bruce's policy for the August 20 property tax due date
- \* • Suspended penalties on water and sewer billing for 90 days past the original due date for the billing cycles due April 30 and June 30
- \* • All Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) charges will be waived until September 30, 2020
- \* • Offer the deferral of development charges
- Consider offering local businesses municipal facilities or outdoor spaces to accommodate programming with physical distancing practices in place

### By-law and policy review and temporary revisions

- \* • Amendments to the Parking by-law to allow for flexibility on main streets
- \* • Amendments to the Zoning by-law (approved July 20, 2020)
- \* • Review of the Signage bylaw, and other bylaws deemed relevant to recovery

### Incentives and grant programs

- \* • Promote Bruce County's new and revised grant programs designed to offer businesses additional financial support
- \* • Promote Bruce County's \$750,000 Business Sustainability Loan Program through Community Futures

# Next steps



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## Community Recovery

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- Promotion of available mental health resources
- Messaging in partnership with Grey Bruce Health Services to help with local vaccine hesitancy
- Support for local not-for-profits

## Long-term planning: 6-18 months post pandemic

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### **Create a Business Attraction Action Plan to address the following:**

- Newly vacant store fronts – particularly in the downtown cores
- Identify gaps left by businesses lost
- Recruitment efforts to fill existing gaps in the business community
- Consider criteria for tenants to ensure adequate business mix
- Explore opportunities to increase internet connectivity
- Support businesses in succession planning

### \* **Create new content for 2021 Community Profile Booklet and Economic Development Promotional video**

Address changes to the Town's economy:

- \* • Promote working remotely (include testimonials)
- Focus on workforce/ resident attraction

### **Establish Tourism Stakeholder Groups**

- \* • Share resources and information with other Tourism professionals in the area as recommended in the Tourism Strategy.
- \* • Advance a collaborative discussion between local tourism partners/operators.
- \* • Gather local business and event information for local directories and websites.

### **Conduct a Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program**

- Follow-up to OMAFRA's COVID-19 BR&E Survey pilot project conducted in summer 2020. A BR&E is identified as an action item in the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

# Next steps



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## Preparing for future outbreaks

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Share an infographic of closing and reopening phases

Back up all implemented measures during COVID-19 for re-use and redeployment if necessary, including:

- Webpages
- Radio and social media campaigns
- List of trusted resources

Maintain relationships to ensure a united front for crisis management

- With the County of Bruce, municipal partners, Grey Bruce Health Unit, Saugeen Shores Police Services, industry leaders and community partners

Create a list of PPE suppliers locally and provincially

- Work with the Department of Protective Services to ensure appropriate sourcing of PPE





# Evaluation

**The Economic Recovery Strategy is a living document.** The research and actions proposed in this document will act as a guide to Town staff as the community navigates through the re-opening of the local economy.

The Mayor's Task Force on Economic Recovery will continue to play a role in the implementation of this strategy, by continuing to provide feedback and insight to staff.

Staff will utilize best practices and tactics acquired through OMAFRA's Performance Measurement program, and will consider input, activities, outputs and outcomes.

Formal research, such as surveying, will also help Council, the Mayor's Task Force and staff understand the impact of actions.



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**“There’s no playbook for how to operate in the era of COVID-19. But together we can support our business community—because together, we are Saugeen Shores Strong.”**  
**--Mayor Luke Charbonneau**



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