Clarington Main Street
Business Retention and Expansion Report
October 2016

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Introduction

Clarington is growing at an unprecedented rate. Therefore, understanding the current business climate is essential to ensuring local and future businesses are well positioned to take advantage of the many opportunities rising in Clarington. The Municipality of Clarington's own strategic plan clearly identifies job creation and economic development as its number one priority for this term of Council.

With three of Canada's top 100 infrastructure projects in progress today in Clarington it is key to have a clear understanding of the existing business base, talents and services. These projects will bring thousands of jobs to Clarington. Whether this workforce is moving to Clarington permanently or here only from Monday to Friday, they will need products and services available to them. Ensuring a clear path from them to the local business is fundamental to boosting the Economy.

The Clarington Board of Trade (CBOT) and the Office of Economic Development have existing relationships and respect within the business community. These trusted relationships have allowed for the deployment of a team of volunteers to attract a diverse cross section of business to participate in the business retention expansion interviews.

This project utilized all staff at CBOT plus the Board of Directors and many volunteers.

CBOT Team

Name	
Sheila Hall	Executive Director
Bonnie Wrightman	Business Development Manager
Laura Knox	Previous Economic Development Coordinator
Tanya Albis	Membership Coordinator
Jessica Sommerville	Economic Development Coordinator
Supported by	
Faye Langmaid	Clarington Planning
Carlos Salazar	Clarington Planning
Carolyn Puterbourgh	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs
Robert Humphrey	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs
Ryan Narpes	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs
Stephen Morris	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs

Leadership Committee:

Name	Company	Area
Marsha Scott	Retired manager at WhiteCliffe Terrace	Courtice
Laura Sciore	Cooperators	Bowmanville
Ron Hooper	Hooper's Jewellers	Bowmanville
Masood Vatandoust	Keller Williams Real Estate	Newcastle
Helen Vatandoust	Keller Williams Real Estate	Newcastle
Sharon McCartney	Orono Town Hall	Orono
Peter Hobb	Collins Barrow	Courtice
Faye Langmaid	Clarington	

Volunteers

Name	Company	Area
Marsha Scott	Retired WhiteCliffe Terrace	Courtice
Laura Sciore	Cooperators	Bowmanville
Ron Hooper	Hooper's Jewellers	Bowmanville
Masood Vatandoust	Keller Williams Real Estate	Newcastle
Helen Vatandoust	Keller Williams Real Estate	Newcastle
Sharon McCartney	Orono Town Hall	Orono
Peter Hobb	Collins Barrow	Courtice
Lindsay Coolidge	UOIT	Oshawa
Allison Fellowes Strike	Strike Insurance	Bowmanville
Sharon Vanderduim	Neighbourhood Dominion Lending	Bowmanville
Megan Campbell	Communications Graduate	Bowmanville
Melanie Antaya	Neighbourhood Dominion Lending	Bowmanville
Melanie Seymour	Adecco	Oshawa
Luke Price	Volunteer	Newcastle
Delores Berendt	Strategic Property Solutions	Bowmanville
Kirby McAllister	Nine to Five Business Interiors	Newcastle
Brenda Miller	RBC Wealth Management	Oshawa
Mike Weatherbee	Veridian Connections	Ajax
Brad McIlroy	Three Six Kitchens	Bowmanville
Rowena Sauve	SunLife	Bowmanville
Kevin Stewart	SunLife	Bowmanville
Barb Yezik	Metroland Media	Oshawa
Shelley Allin	Petley Hare Insurance	Bowmanville
Wendy Johansen	Retired School Teacher	Solina
John Baynham	SunLife	Bowmanville

Executive Summary

The Clarington Board of Trade and Office of Economic Development (CBOT) has delivered the role of Economic Development for the Municipality of Clarington for the past 18 years. CBOT proudly represents all business within the borders of the Municipality of Clarington. CBOT is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of 18 business leaders from all areas of the Municipality with a diversity in sector, size and skills to provide a fair representation of the business community.

The Clarington Business Retention and Expansion Main Street Study has provided insight into the commercial/retail sector focused on 6 modules including:

- **Business Climate:** sharing information on demographics of individual business
- **Business Information:** sharing information on how individual business are doing and support needs for growth
- **Workforce:** identifying current and predicted workforce requirements
- **Future:** discussing future growth/expansion plans
- **Community Development:** discussions on the physical and functional aspects of the community
- **Downtown:** more direct discussion for downtown cores and BIA's

CBOT determined that sector focused BR+E projects would be the best course of action. Clarington's strategic plan has a strong focus on job creation and maintaining healthy downtown cores. Therefore, CBOT chose to launch the BR+E initiative with Clarington Main Street business. These businesses are predominantly retail, personal and professional services. The Clarington BR+E project was initiated in February of 2016. Through several resources, CBOT compiled a comprehensive list of businesses in the above-mentioned sectors that operate in the main street areas both inside and outside of traditional BIA boundaries. Approximately 400 letters were then mailed inviting these business owners to participate in interviews. With 66 of the 400 businesses interviewed the response rate was 20% which according to OMAFRA is a quality sample size that fairly represents the community.

The results were extracted concentrating on the Clarington community as a whole, in addition to each of the areas inclusive of Courtice, Bowmanville, Newcastle and Orono.

The Clarington BR+E project demonstrates the commitment to reinforcing and strengthening the local business community, as it continues to grow. The survey results collected serve to reflect that Clarington is a desirable place to do business.

Community Overview

Cresting the eastern gateway of the GTA, the Municipality of Clarington continues to experience rapid growth. Clarington hosts a variety of lifestyle options stemming from rural to urban in nature. It is divided into 4 core centers: Courtice, Bowmanville, Newcastle and Orono, in addition, there are over a dozen smaller hamlets that contribute to the Clarington landscape, lifestyle and economy. Clarington's 2016 population is estimated at 93, 622 providing an available workforce of 50,729. According to Statistics Canada (2015 Census) there are close to 4,000 jobs in retail, professional and personal services in Clarington, representing approximately 8% of Clarington jobs.

With the close proximity to the city centre of Toronto, surrounding populations are also notable. Ongoing projects such as the Highway 407 extension represent a probable growth and therefore have the potential to further support the economic development of Clarington as a whole.

Figure 1 is representative of the varied business sectors within the municipality of Clarington as well as some relevant numbers, such as regional employees.

Figure 1: Labour Flows (based upon 2011 NHS data)

Description	Employed in Region	Resident in Region	Net Import
Utilities	3,055	2,165	890
Retail trade	2,470	5,105	-2,635
Health care and social assistance	2,125	5,110	-2,985
Accommodation and food services	1,555	2,090	-535
Educational services	1,530	3,225	-1,695
Manufacturing	1,265	5,030	-3,765
Professional, scientific and technical services	1,035	2,310	-1,275
Construction	1,000	3,165	-2,165
Public administration	795	3,150	-2,355
Other services (except public administration)	755	1,765	-1,010

Clarington BR+E Businesses

The Clarington BR+E project was well received in the local business community. With 66 businesses participating in the survey out of the 400 businesses to whom the invitation was extended, representing a roughly 20% participation rate (Figure 2). These businesses embody a cross section of the local business community by size, location, and industry. The community of Bowmanville represented 216 of the 400 invited, with 33 opting to take part, resulting in a 15% participation rate. Courtice had 104 invitees, with 15 opting to take part, resulting in a 15% participation rate. Newcastle had 53 invitees, with 6 opting to take part, resulting in a 11% participation rate. Orono had 21 invitees with 12 opting to take part, resulting in a 57% participation rate.

Figure 2: Survey Participation

Survey Participation Rates			
400 Total	**Invited**	**Participated**	**Participation Rate**
Clarington	**400**	**66**	**20%**
Bowmanville	216	33	15%
Courtice	104	15	15%
Newcastle	53	6	11%
Orono	21	12	57%

Profile of participants (Business Information)

The majority of the participation was from the Main Street business sectors. These businesses are predominantly retail and professional or personal service. In addition to the traditional BIA boundaries, the reach was extended to commercial pockets within the cores of the municipality to be inclusive of the sector. Of the 66 participants, 53% are locally owned and operated with one location, 17% are locally owned with more than one location, 12% are franchised and 18% are branch or division businesses (Figure 3). Of these businesses, the majority are relatively well established, with 33% having been owned and operated for between 11 and 25 years, followed by 25% for 4 to 10 years, and 20% for 1 to 3 years (Figure 4). The majority of respondents are small business with 72% of these businesses having under 10 employees. 91% of owners are involved in the day to day operations of their businesses. 75% of these businesses have business plans, with 71% of those having been updated within the past year. 95% of them recognize their primary markets as local and regional. 65% of business owners in Clarington live within the community.

Figure 3: Ownership

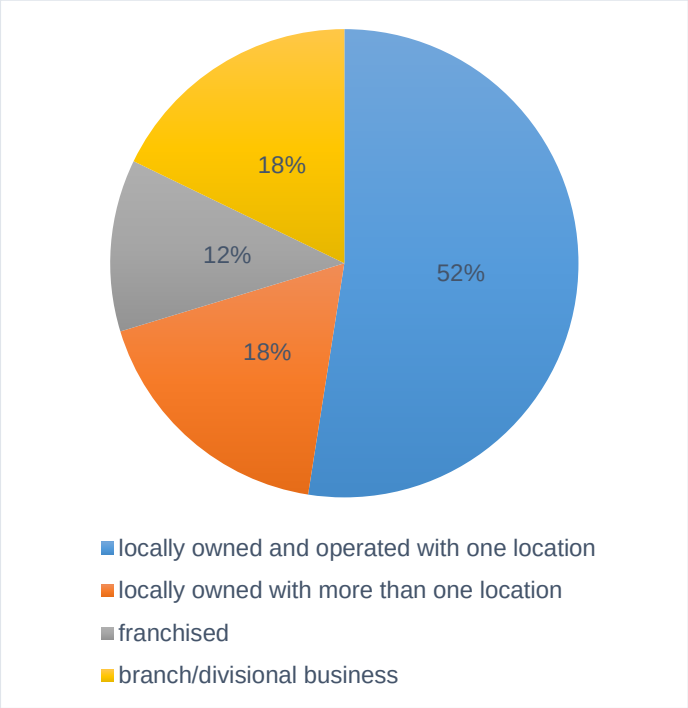
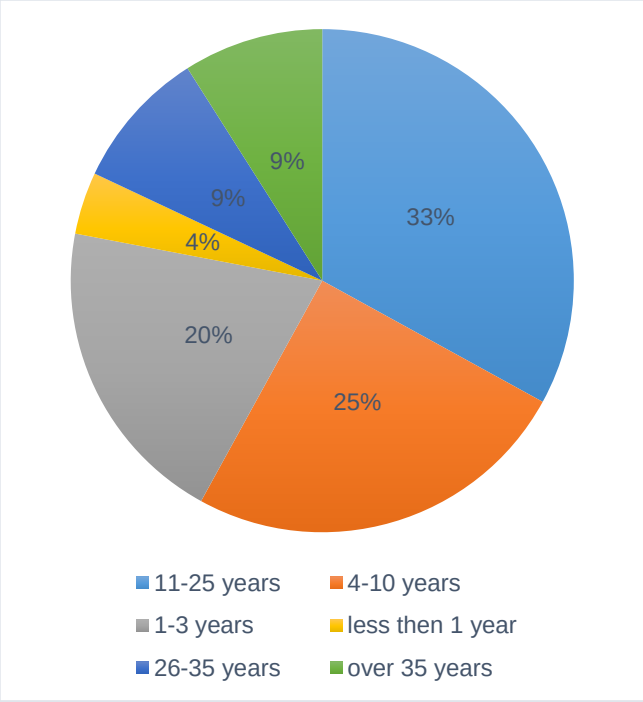


Figure 4: Years in Business



Business Information Conclusions

From these statistics, it is fair to say that the West-end of Clarington is made up of mostly branch, divisional, or franchised businesses, whereas the more Eastern parts of Clarington are comprised of mostly independent and locally owned businesses.

Proposed Actions

1. Create unique marketing opportunities for each community with the goal to encourage diversity in business
2. Create programming for new businesses (1-3 years) to ensure longevity.
3. Create programming for established businesses (26+ years) to ensure succession plans are in place.

What Was Learned (Summary of Results)

Business Climate

Business climate refers to the conditions within a community that have the potential to effect local business operations and overall success of these businesses. This can include services and local facilities as well as conditions of the community. As a business centre, Clarington has been perceived as a great place to do business as approximately 82% of survey respondents recognize the business climate here as good or excellent. The advantages of doing business in Clarington are presented in Figure 5, with the top three advantages being the friendly, small town atmosphere, the location, and the support from other businesses. Alternatively, Figure 6 illustrates the top disadvantages of Clarington as a place to do business, with the top three being Municipal services (i.e. planning, permits, etc.) parking, and then lack of specific businesses, too small a population size, and lack of infrastructure.

Figure 5: Community Advantages as a Place to do Business

What are the community's top three advantages as a place to do business?		
149 Responses	**# of responses**	**Percentage**
Friendly Small Town Atmosphere	46	31%
Location	41	28%
Support from other businesses	21	14%
Community growth	20	13%
Cost (i.e. rent, lease rates)	6	4%
Lifestyle	5	3%
Infrastructure	4	3%
Customer Base	3	2%
Other	3	3%

Figure 6: Community Disadvantages as a Place to do Business

What are the community's top three disadvantages as a place to do business?		
122 Responses	**# of responses**	**Percentage**
Municipal Services	14	11%
Parking	13	11%
Lack of specific businesses	9	7%
Population size too small	9	7%
Lack of Infrastructure	9	7%
Location	8	7%
Traffic	7	6%
Transportation	7	6%
Cost (housing, taxes, electricity, etc.)	6	5%
Community awareness ("nobody knows we're here")	6	5%
Lack of available space	5	4%
Other business' hours	5	4%
Social issues	4	3%
Competition with large "box" stores	2	2%
Public washrooms	2	2%
Accessibility	2	2%
Workforce	2	2%
Beggars Downtown	2	2%
Other	10	10%

Additionally, over the past three years, 39% have experienced a positive attitude change towards Clarington as a place for business. 45% of survey respondents rated the local workforce as good or excellent.

In terms of land and building availability and building processes, 37% rated availability of space for rent or lease as good or excellent, leaving some room for improvement, and 54% rate adequate housing as good or excellent. For many factors, there was a high no response rate on their impact on the business climate, such as the availability of serviced lands, cost of lands, development permit process, development charges, Municipal property taxes, and water and wastewater capacity and fees. Availability of natural gas was rated by 72% as good or excellent. Availability of adequate electricity has been rated as good by 55% of respondents. Cell service received an 88% rating as good or excellent, and internet service a rating of 65% as good or excellent. Cost of electricity though has been viewed as too high by 45% who rate it as poor.
In order to provide a good business climate, Clarington must also serve as a desirable place to live so as to support population growth. The success in achieving this goal was proven by the survey as 86% of respondents rate the quality of life in this community as good or excellent. This encompasses several different aspects and services provided, many of which can be seen in Figure 7 on both a large scale and as per each individual community.

Figure 7: Service Satisfaction Ratings

	Clarington	Bowmanville	Courtice	Newcastle	Orono
Parking	43%	23%	64%	83%	0%
Child Care Services	75%	100%	100%	100%	0%
Schools	91%	92%	100%	100%	71%
Post-Secondary Education	87%	92%	100%	80%	75%
Workforce Planning/Development Board	54%	63%	-	60%	40%
Board of Trade	80%	82%	100%	83%	56%
BIA	33%	60%	-	40%	33%
Community Futures Development Corp.	22%	67%	-	-	-
Small Business Enterprise Centre	38%	100%	-	-	50%
Planning/Engineering/Zoning Permits	42%	29%	60%	40%	40%
Economic Development Services	48%	60%	67%	40%	25%
Health Department/Health Unit Approvals	72%	65%	83%	80%	60%
Police Services	80%	90%	100%	75%	55%
Fire Services	99%	96%	100%	100%	100%
Recreation Facilities	86%	95%	100%	83%	67%
Cultural Facilities	45%	67%	0%	75%	38%
Parks	96%	84%	100%	100%	100%
Street/Road Repair	67%	75%	100%	80%	11%
Snow Removal	64%	61%	89%	60%	44%
Garbage/Recycling	86%	93%	50%	100%	100%
Public Transit	52%	83%	75%	50%	-

Respondents were also asked to rank road conditions and proximity to railways and airports. 77% rated condition of local roads and streets and Regional/Provincial roads and highways as good or excellent, with 67% being satisfied with repairs to these roads. 35% rated proximity to rail and airports as good but also forecasted that their business would benefit significantly from the extension of the GO train to Clarington, with a 78% positive rating. Their reasons for believing this to be true varied. Roughly 29% cited that it would aid in their businesses success because it would provide easier transportation and access to labour force. 24% said that it would increase visitors as a unique shopping destination, 22% said it would bring increased visibility, and 24% cited other reasons.

Childcare services, schools, post-secondary, and workforce planning all received a high no response rate, thus indicating that these particular amenities are not as highly prioritized as other aspects for these particular groups. Further, there seems to be little involvement or understanding of planning, engineering, zoning, economic development, or health department services.

Business support from outside sources received high ratings reflecting a strong community system. Support from municipality received a rating of 51% as fair to good, support from other businesses received a rating of 47% as good, and support from local residents received a rating of 85% as good or excellent.
When questioned as to what changes would be most beneficial in the future in terms of overall impact on the community as a place to do business, top answers were the GO Train and 407 projects, continued residential growth, and beautification of downtowns, among others (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Changes to Community as a Place to do Business in the next 5 Years

In terms of overall impact on this community as a place to do business, what is the most significant change you would like to see in the next five years?		
60 Responses	**# of responses**	**Percentage**
GO Train & 407	8	13%
Continued residential growth	7	12%
Beautification of downtowns	5	8%
Increased infrastructure	5	8%
Increased community promotion	5	8%
New retail/commercial businesses	4	7%
Designated Courtice downtown area	4	7%
Parking Improvements	4	7%
Transit Improvements	4	7%
Review processes at MoC for more efficient service	3	5%
Local job growth	2	3%
Decrease business costs	2	3%
Keep small town feel	2	3%
Less traffic on main street	2	3%
Internet connectivity	1	2%
Expand BIA area	1	2%
Increase business hours	1	2%

Business Climate by Community: Bowmanville

In the community of Bowmanville, for those who participated, quality of life has a 91% rating of good or excellent, and 85% acknowledge Clarington as a good or excellent place to do business. 53% of businesses are locally owned, with 68% of those owners being residents of Clarington. 68% of businesses in Bowmanville have under 10 employees working for them (Figure 9).

Business Climate by Community: Courtice

In the community of Courtice, for those who participated, quality of life has a 100% rating of good or excellent, and 100% acknowledge Clarington as a good or excellent place to do business. Only 9% of businesses are locally owned, and 50% of those owners are residents of Clarington. 55% of businesses in Courtice have under 10 employees working for them (Figure 9).

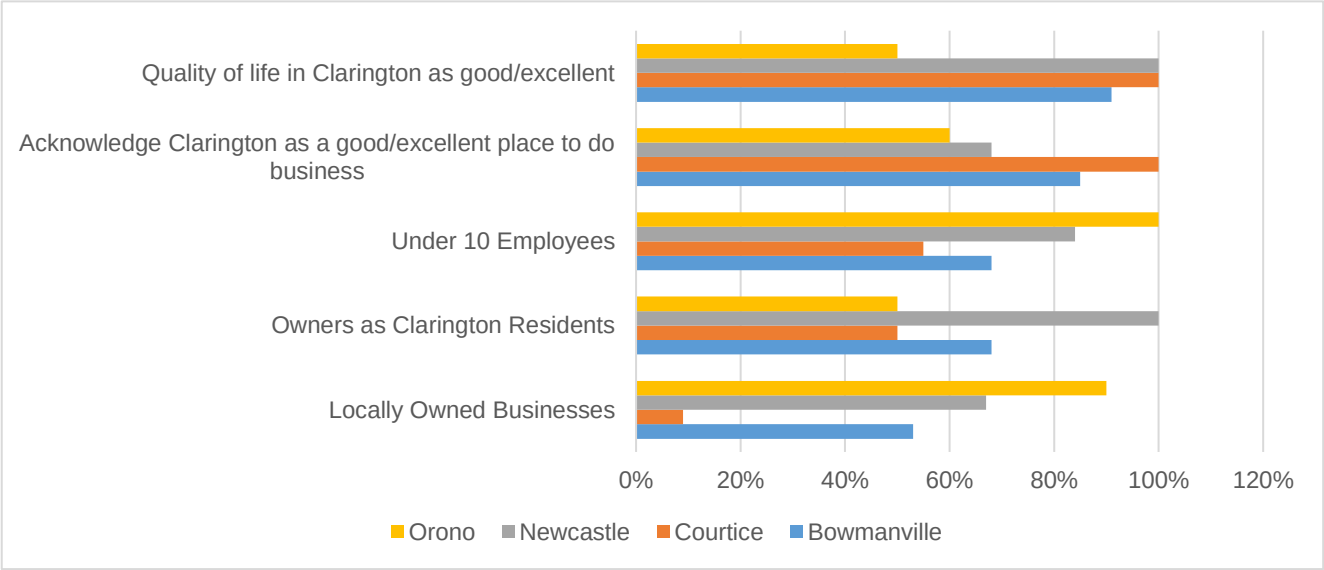
Business Climate by Community: Newcastle

In the community of Newcastle, for those who participated, quality of life has a 100% rating of good or excellent, and 68% acknowledge Clarington as a good or excellent place to do business. 67% of businesses are locally owned, with 100% of those owners are residents of Clarington. 84% of businesses in Newcastle have under 10 employees working for them (Figure 9).

Business Climate by Community: Orono

In the community of Orono, for those who participated, quality of life has a 50% rating of good or excellent, and 60% acknowledge Clarington as a good or excellent place to do business. 90% of businesses are locally owned, and 50% of those owners are residents of Clarington. 100% of businesses in Orono have under 10 employees working for them (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Business Climate by Community



Business Climate Conclusions

Overall, this sector has less direct impact from municipal services due to the high rate of business leasing versus ownership of property. This being said, there is room for improvement for parking, electricity availability and costs. Respondents have also rated availability of space to rent as poor with only a 37% satisfaction rating.

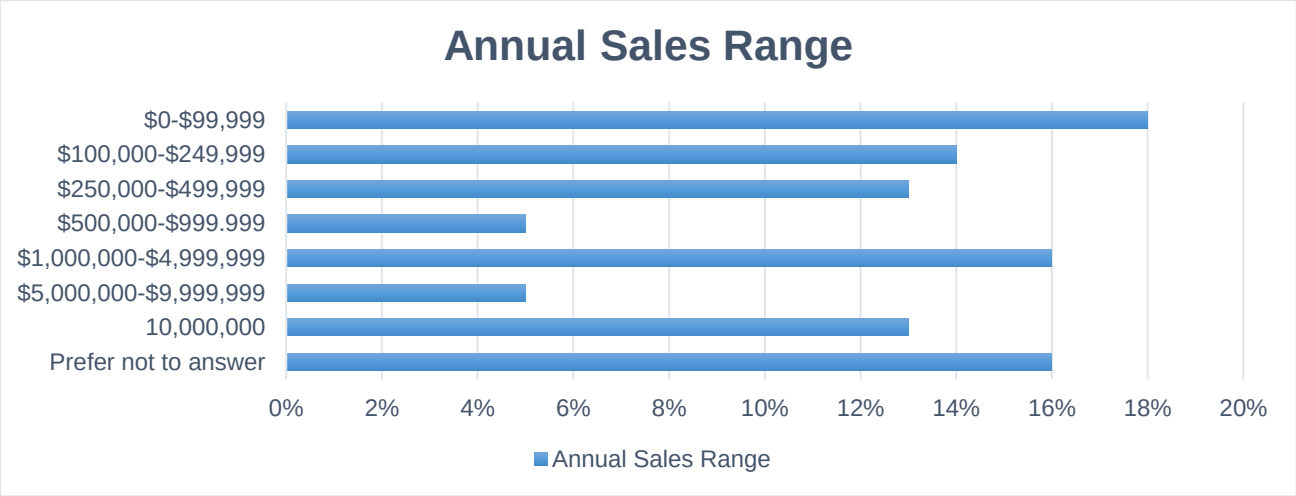
Proposed Actions

1. Undertake a comprehensive review of available commercial space
2. Conduct one-on-one interviews with businesses in ‘growth-mode’ to reconcile space requirements. Connect with landlords to share results.
3. Promote CBOT’s Economic Development programming in a more direct manner to raise awareness of CBOT’s services to this sector.

Business Development

Business development refers to the growth and development of businesses within Clarington. When asked about the outlook for their respective industries, 75% of respondents indicated their industry is growing, 20% saw it as stable, and only 5% responded as either declining or unsure. Annual sales ranges of businesses varied, as can be seen on Figure 10, but of the 47 participants that chose to share their annual sales, 50% have sales under $1,000,000. 67% of respondents believed that their projected sales would increase in the next year, with 21% saying it would remain the same, 10% being unsure, and only 2% believing their projected sales would decline.

Figure 10: Annual Sales



In relation to use of technology in their business, there was a high rating of implementation, thus highlighting the importance of good local internet coverage. 63% of respondents also said they are not currently experiencing any barriers related to information technology requirements, while 12% said they experienced problems with internet speed. The remaining 25% was spread relatively evenly between issues such as internet access, internet cost, hardware and software support, and knowledge and training.

When questioned whether respondents would be interested in working co-operatively with other businesses in the community to pursue certain objectives 2 overwhelming responses were noted. 35% answered that it would be beneficial for networking and information sharing, and 31% said for joint marketing. 10% said for joint training, 8% said for joint product purchasing, and the final 15% cited other reasons.

In terms of leasing or owning their business facilities, 63% of Clarington businesses in this sector lease, while 37% own. For those who lease, lease expirations ranged from this calendar year to over 3 years from now, and 88% responded that they did not anticipate any problems in renewing their lease.

Business Development by Community: Bowmanville

In the community of Bowmanville, for those who participated, 84% see growth in their industries, and 65% are projecting increased sales in the upcoming year. Space is leased rather than owned for 67% of businesses. Networking and joint marketing rank high on their wish list (Figure 11).

Business Development by Community: Courtice

In the community of Courtice, for those who participated, 64% see growth in their industries, and 82% are projecting increased sales in the upcoming year. Space is leased rather than owned for 64% of businesses. Networking and joint marketing rank high on their wish list (Figure 11).

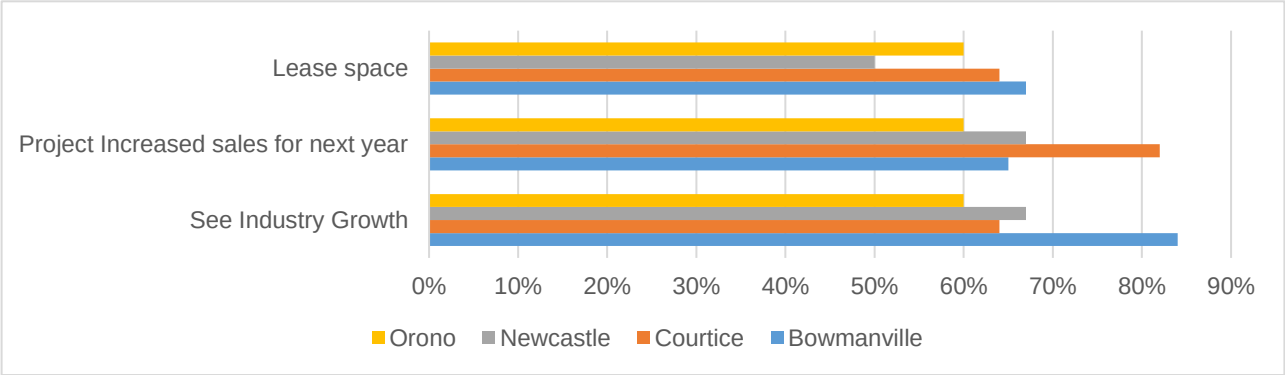
Business Development by Community: Newcastle

In the community of Newcastle, for those who participated, 67% see growth in their industries, and 67% are projecting increased sales in the upcoming year. Space is leased rather than owned for 50% of businesses. Networking and joint marketing rank high on their wish list (Figure 11).

Business Development by Community: Orono

In the community of Orono, for those who participated, 60% see growth in their industries, and 60% are projecting increased sales in the upcoming year. Space is leased rather than owned for 60% of businesses. Networking and joint marketing rank high on their wish list (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Business Development by Community



Business Development Conclusions

Overall, there is a positive forecast for business growth, and a strong understanding of the importance of technology for growth in this sector. Communities in Clarington are all seeking more networking and joint marketing between businesses.

Proposed Actions

1. Creating & implementing a joint marketing program to encourage local shopping
2. Provide training opportunities to incorporate online enhancements to sales

Workforce

Workforce refers to all aspects of employment, including factors such as the availability of qualified employees in Clarington and the ability to retain employees. When respondents were asked whether the number of people they employ in their business has increased, decreased, or stayed the same over the past three years, 48% said their employee count had remained the same while 40% said theirs had increased, leaving only 12% saying that the numbers of employees in their business had decreased. This represents the ongoing growth of businesses in Clarington. Availability of workers in Clarington received a rating of 44% saying good or excellent. 62% of respondents felt that the stability of the workforce here is good or excellent.

In terms of attracting new employees and retaining employees, these received ratings of 49% and 60% as good or excellent, respectively. 72% of businesses were not currently experiencing any difficulties with hiring, but for the 27% that were reasons ranged, with 32% citing lack of appropriate skills or training, 29% citing too few applicants, and 21% citing lack of relevant experience. Hiring challenges were identified as being industry related by 57% respondents compared to a 43% rate due to community. Only 13% of businesses were experiencing challenges with retaining employees, 45% of those attributed their challenges to wages. One respondent suggested a solution to hiring challenges could an online board where resumes could be posted and easily found by those looking to hire.

Employees were being recruited in a variety of different ways. The two most popular methods were through personal networks and through referrals from friends or current employees, with both receiving a response rate of 20%. A response rate of 11% was given for both through unsolicited resumes and social media applications, marking these as the next two most popular methods for recruiting.

When asked if their businesses currently participated in any co-op, internship, or apprenticeship programs, 45% said they did. 51% also said that they do use external training. 33% of businesses said there were training programs and topics that would be beneficial to their employees.

Workforce by Community: Bowmanville

In the community of Bowmanville, for those who participated, 65% agree or strongly agree that there is a good workforce in Clarington for this sector. Over the past 3 years 45% of businesses in this sector have increased the number of people they employ (Figure 12).

Workforce by Community: Courtice

In the community of Courtice, for those who participated, 100% agree or strongly agree that there is a good workforce in Clarington for this sector. Over the past 3 years 36% of businesses in this sector have increased the number of people they employ (Figure 12).

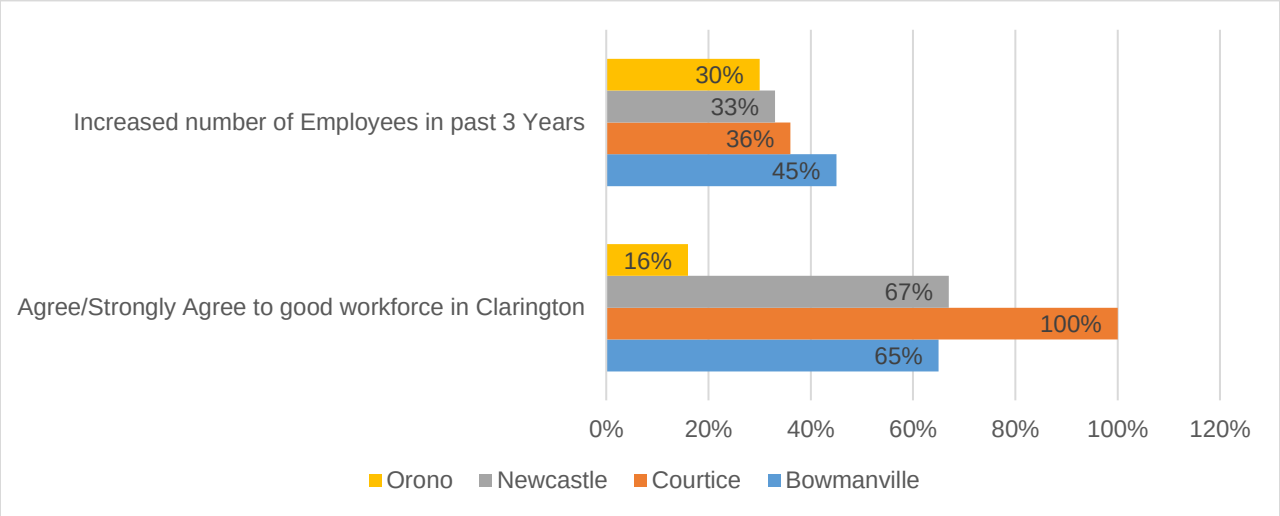
Workforce by Community: Newcastle

In the community of Newcastle, for those who participated, 67% agree or strongly agree that there is a good workforce in Clarington for this sector. Over the past 3 years 33% of businesses in this sector have increased the number of people they employ (Figure 12).

Workforce by Community: Orono

In the community of Orono, for those who participated, 16% agree or strongly agree that there is a good workforce in Clarington for this sector. Over the past 3 years 30% of businesses in this sector have increased the number of people they employ. This contradicts to the other communities because despite the perceived availability of workers in Orono, which is much less then the other communities, the increase in employment rate is still similar to theirs (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Workforce by Community



Workforce Conclusions

Availability of workforce satisfaction is representative of population density and access to public transportation. There is a low rate of declining employment in this sector, but there is a need for improvement for employee retention.

Proposed Actions

1. Create an employment portal to assist employers in their search for prospective employees and job-seekers in their search for employment opportunities
2. Collaborate with employment agencies and high schools to promote skill requirements in this sector
3. Educate businesses on training programs and funding

Future & Community Development

Future

This section seeks to identify Clarington business' thoughts and plans for the future, involving topics such as expansion, relocation, and retirement. In the next 18 months, and as seen in Figure 13, 62% of businesses plan on remaining the same, 25% plan on expanding, 8% plan on relocating, and 5% plan on selling. For those looking to relocate their business, as seen in Figure 14, 60% still intend to remain in the community, only 20% are looking to move outside the community, and the other 20% are still exploring their options. For those looking to sell their businesses, as seen in Figure 15, 40% cite their reason as retirement, while another 40% are looking to pursue other opportunities, and the remaining 20% cited other reasons. 33% of businesses have a succession plan for their business, while 67% of businesses do not and are not looking for assistance in developing one. 50% of respondents looking to sell are seeking information on doing so.

Figure 13: Businesses Future Plans

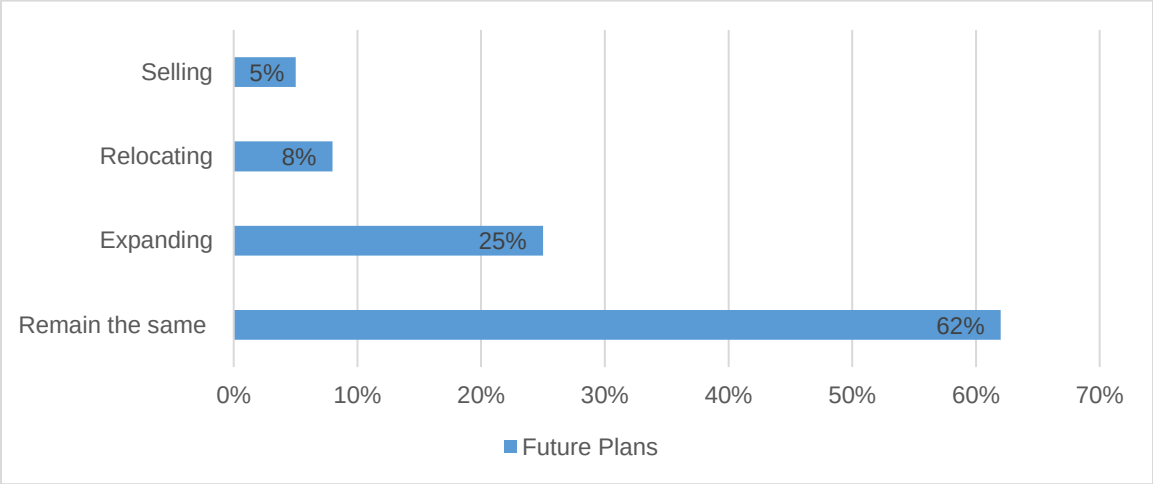


Figure 14: Relocating

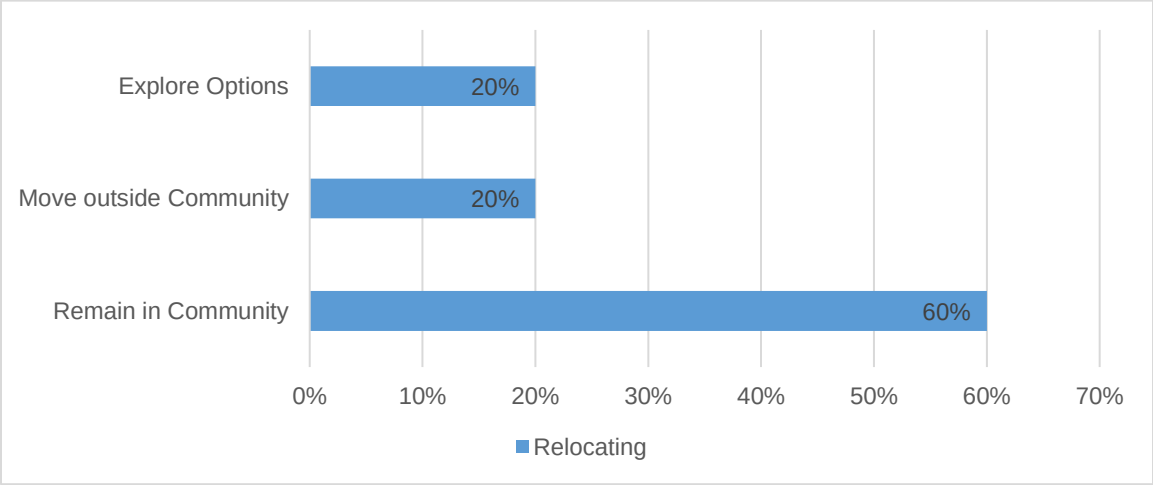
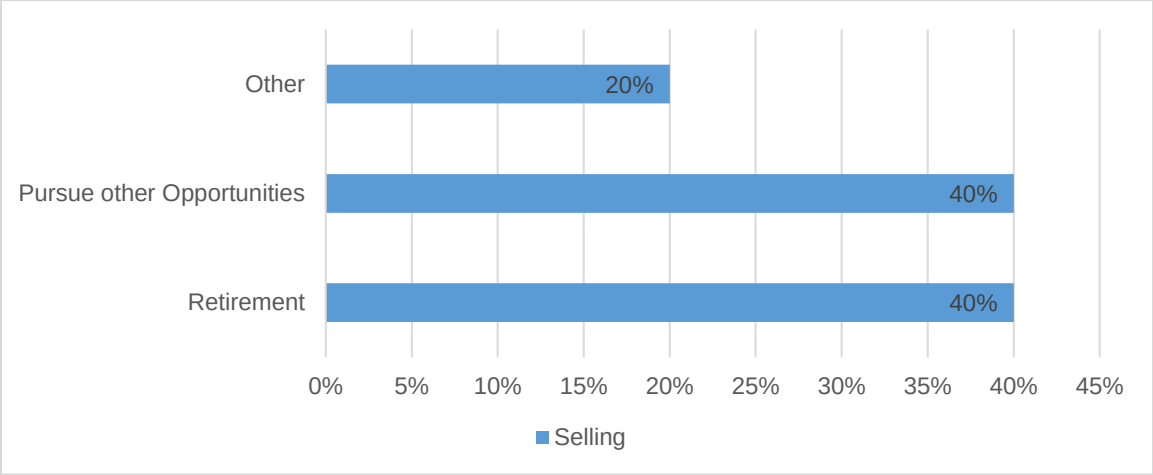
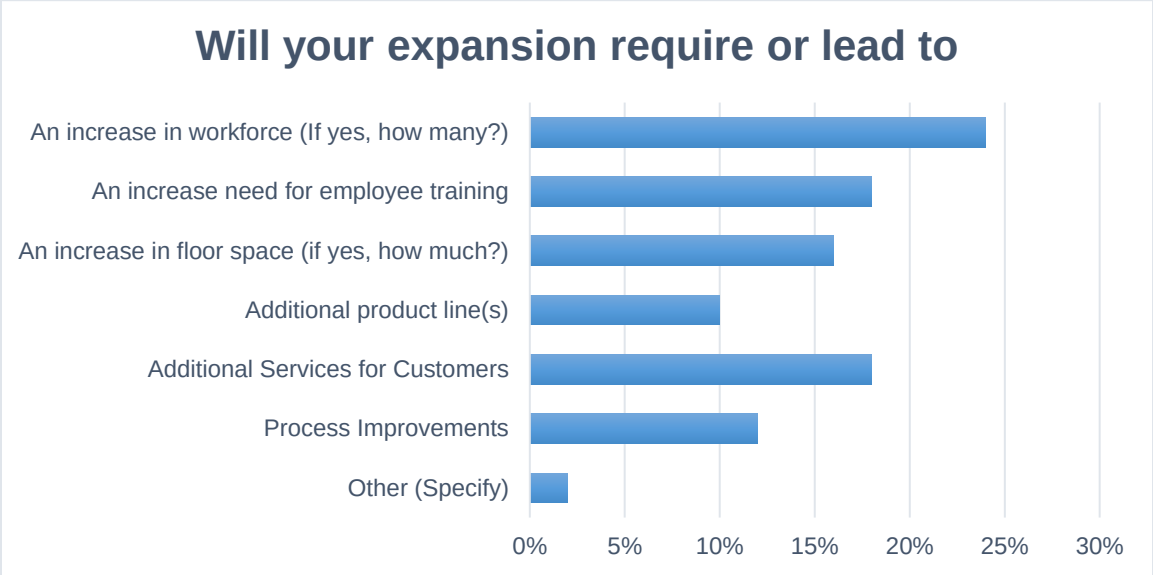


Figure 15: Selling



For those looking to expand 24% believe their expansion will lead to an increase in workforce (see Figure 16), 18% will see an increased need for employee training, and 18% will provide additional services for customers. 16% will see an increase in floor space, with an estimated additional 38,140 square feet. 12% will have process improvements, and 10% will provide additional product lines.

Figure 16: Expansion Expectations



58% of respondents plan to utilize Federal or Provincial programs and services to assist them with their expansion and 71% requested information regarding such government programs and services. 58% of those looking to expand are not experiencing difficulties, but 75% believe that the community could provide support with their expansion.

Future by Community: Bowmanville

In the community of Bowmanville, for those who participated, 21% plan for expansion in the next 18 months, and 50% of those planning to expand are experiencing difficulties in doing so (Figure 17).

Future by Community: Courtice

In the community of Courtice, for those who participated, 18% plan for expansion in the next 18 months, and 0% of those planning to expand are experiencing difficulties in doing so (Figure 17).

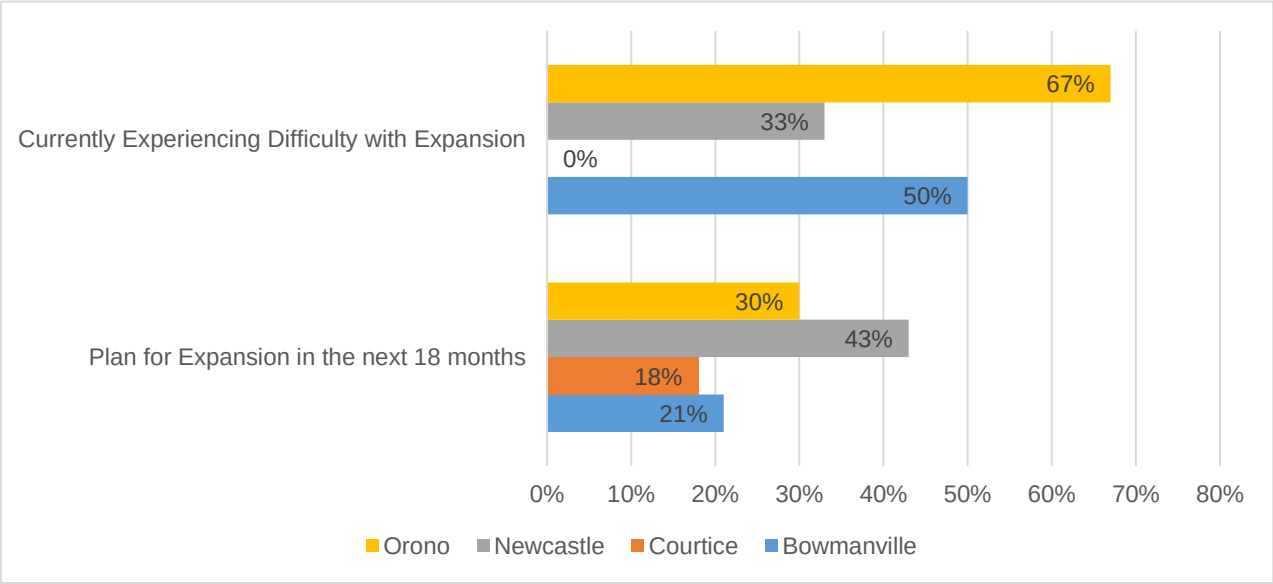
Future by Community: Newcastle

In the community of Newcastle, for those who participated, 43% plan for expansion in the next 18 months, and 33% of those planning to expand are experiencing difficulties in doing so (Figure 17).

Future by Community: Orono

In the community of Orono, for those who participated, 30% plan for expansion in the next 18 months, and 67% of those planning to expand are experiencing difficulties in doing so (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Future by Community

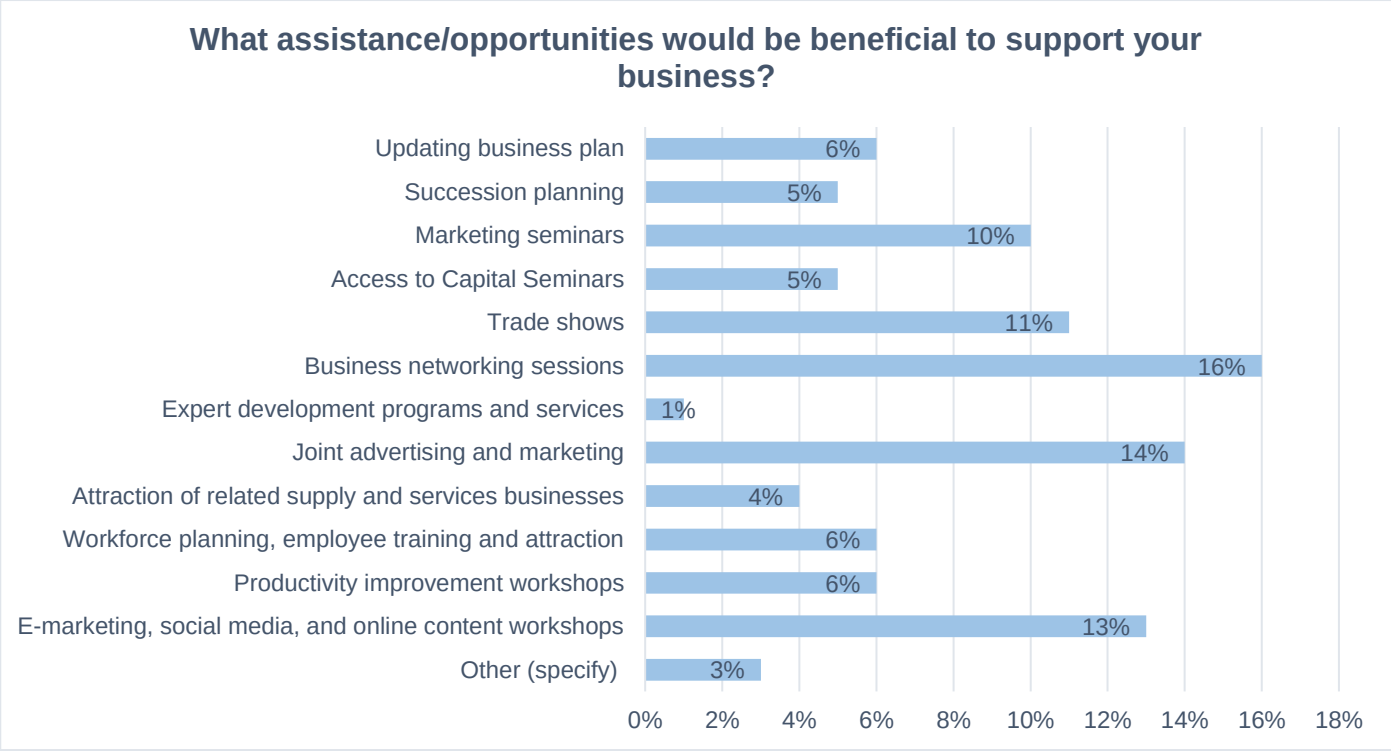


Community Development

In response to the survey question pertaining to what assistance or opportunities would be beneficial to support the businesses of the community, five top answers were identified as:

- Business networking sessions.
- Joint advertising and marketing
- E-marketing, social media, and online content workshops
- Trade shows
- Marketing seminars

Figure 18: Business Support Opportunities



Future & Community Development Conclusions

This sector is trending towards stability, expansion and employment growth. It would be beneficial to implement one-on-one meetings with companies, as identified in surveys, to discuss specific needs. In relation to business support programs, of the top 5 business support programs this sector is looking for, CBOT already provides them.

Proposed Actions

1. Promote CBOT services and programming more effectively and provide options that are convenience to schedules.
2. Approach CBOT's communication techniques with more individual processes and become more involved in BIA initiatives

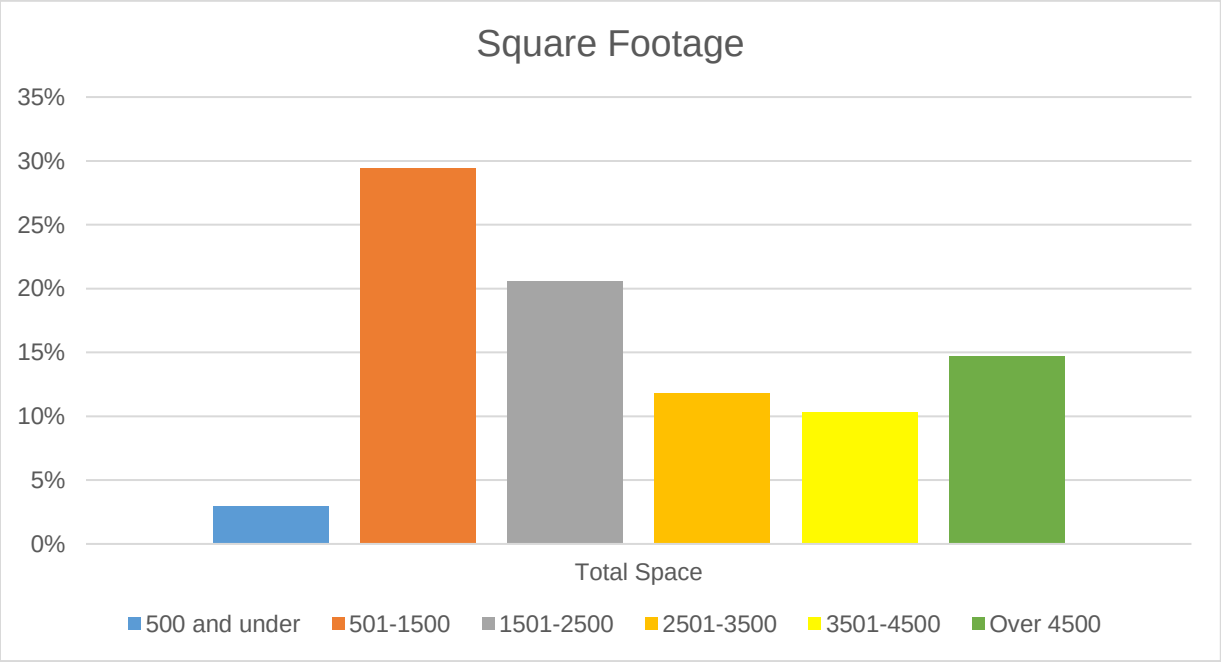
Downtown

Main street businesses serve as the heart of the Clarington communities, boasting its main shops and unique character. Figures 19 and 20 are illustrative of the percentage of Clarington's downtown square footage. The majority of the space is used for sales, storage, and office. Most of these spaces fall in the range of 501-1500 square feet.

Figure 19: Main Street Square Feet

	Percentage of square feet devoted					
Square Feet	**Sales**	**Office**	**Production**	**Storage**	**Unused**	**Total Space**
500 and under	9%	37%	7%	44%	7%	3%
501-1500	35%	9%	13%	13%	1%	29%
1501-2500	21%	4%	0%	4%	1%	21%
2501-3500	3%	4%	0%	1%	0%	12%
3501-4500	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%
Over 4500	6%	6%	3%	0%	0%	15%

Figure 20: Main Street Square Feet



As downtowns serve as the defining character of the community, the maintenance and visual appeal of such areas remains critical to enticing consumers and future businesses. Clarington, for the most part, bodes well in maintaining its downtown centres as can be seen in Figure 21. The aesthetic of downtowns, such as sidewalks and pedestrian environments, window displays, and exterior appearances, are generally rated quite well, where practical things such as parking, accessibility, and public amenities are items identified where improvements could be made. Figure 22 and 23 separate community features by those rated good or excellent and those that need improvement.

Figure 21: Main Street Excellent/Good Features

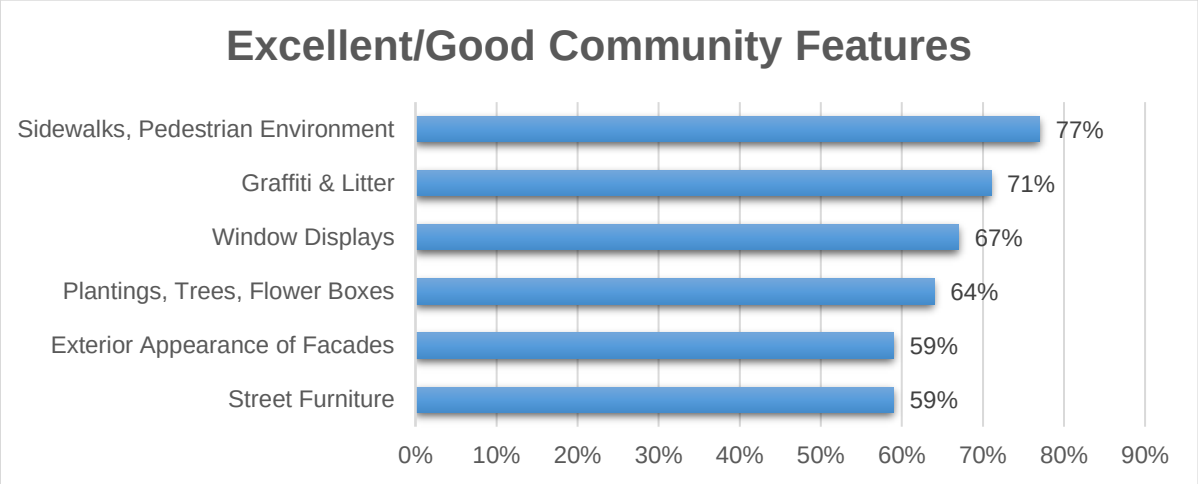
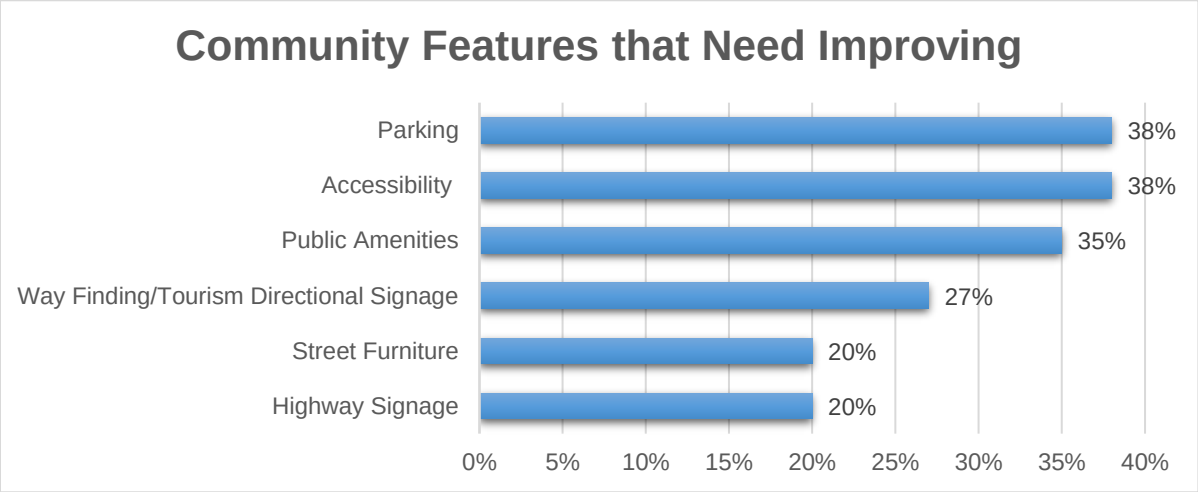


Figure 22: Main Street Features Needing Improvement



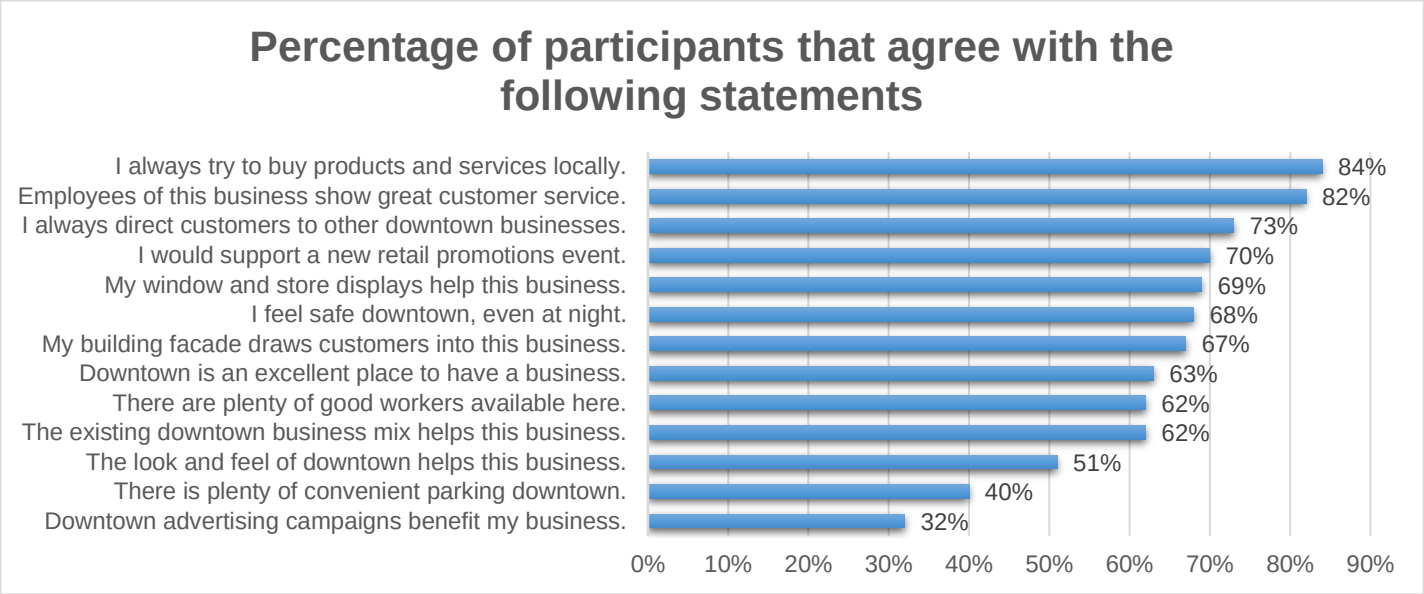
The busiest times of year for the downtown centres have been identified by months and days. The busiest days for business in Clarington are Mondays, at 19%, and Saturdays, at 25%, and the busiest months have been identified as May at 12% and December at 16%. Over the summer months, 66% of respondents said they have less than 50 customers per day or clients visit their business. Clarington business owners generally believe they are open all the hours they need to be, with 56% of respondents agreeing with this, while 13% would be open for more hours if other businesses were as well. Considering all the events and festivals that take place in Clarington, 59% of businesses do not believe that these events increase sales.

67% of the downtown businesses identified they had target markets pertaining to demographics. 67% of the businesses track where their customers are from geographically. 98% of respondents claimed to advertise. The top three most popular advertising vehicles utilized word of mouth and networking, at 17%, through websites, at 16%, and through print flyers and local

newspapers, at 14%. Most participants, around 48%, did not know of any financial assistance programs offered by the community for their business.

Figure 24 show the level of which respondents agreed with certain aspects of the downtown core. 84% of these participants agreed that they often bought products and sought out services that were provided locally, and that employees of these businesses exhibit excellent customer service. It also reflected the level of support business in these sectors have for one another, often directing customers to other businesses as well.

Figure 23: Main Street Statement Agreement Survey



Downtown by Community: Bowmanville

In Bowmanville, visual attributes of the downtown sector are rated as good, but parking and accessibility are rated as poor. The busiest days are Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays, while the busiest months are May, June, and December. 50% of businesses feel they are open as many hours as they need to be, but 22% indicate they would be open more hours if other businesses were. Festivals and events occurring downtown are estimated by 36% to help increase sales. 52% of Bowmanville's businesses are not aware of community financial programs such as CIP's (Figure 25).

Downtown by Community: Courtice

In Courtice, visual attributes of the downtown sector are rated as good, but exterior facades and public washrooms are rated as poor. The busiest days are Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays, while the busiest months are February and June. 76% of businesses feel they are open as many hours as they need to be. Festivals and events occurring downtown are estimated by 33% to help increase sales. 60% of Courtice's businesses are not aware of community financial programs such as CIP's (Figure 25).

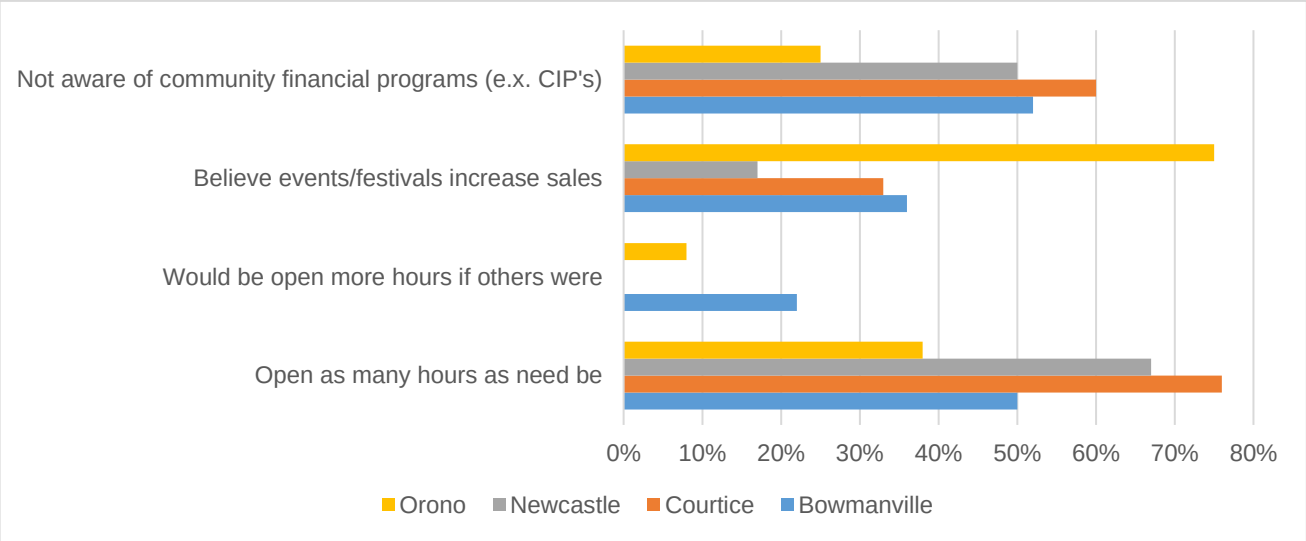
Downtown by Community: Newcastle

In Newcastle, visual attributes of the downtown sector are rated as good, but way finding, window displays, and accessibility are rated as poor. The busiest days are Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays, while the busiest months are July and August. 67% of businesses feel they are open as many hours as they need to be. Festivals and events occurring downtown are estimated by 17% to help increase sales. 50% of Newcastle's businesses are not aware of community financial programs such as CIP's (Figure 25).

Downtown by Community: Orono

In Orono, street furniture, parking, highway and way finding signage, accessibility, and public washrooms are rated as poor. The busiest days are Sundays, Mondays, and Saturdays, while the busiest months are May, July, and December. 38% of businesses feel they are open as many hours as they need to be, but 8% indicate they would be open more hours if other businesses were. Festivals and events occurring downtown are estimated by 75% to help increase sales. 25% of Orono's businesses are not aware of community financial programs such as CIP's (Figure 25).

Figure 24: Downtown by Community



Downtown Conclusions

Overall, most businesses occupy between 500-2500 square feet of space. There are high ratings of satisfaction for visual aspects of commercial areas, but there is room to improve on functionality components.

Proposed Actions

1. Continue to work with Planning and CIP programs to provide business voices to programs.

Red & Green Flags

Out of 66 interviews, CBOT identified red and green flag responses. A red flag is typically an issue of immediate concern to the business that if left unaddressed, might negatively impact the business. A green flag is a critical opportunity to aid in the growth of a business.

CBOT identified 8 red flags which included those who plan on selling their business, relocating in a different community, or who anticipate issues with their lease renewal. 15 green flags were identified and consisted of businesses who anticipate an expansion in the near future or who are relocating within the community.

Each flag is considered an action plan. CBOT staff will be visiting each of these businesses to assist with mitigating challenges and encouraging growth.

Conclusion

The Clarington Main Street BR+E project was successful because of the partnerships and participation of volunteers and local business owners. Progressing the local business climate will take a continued collaboration. The action plan from six key areas described throughout the report is an invitation for government, business organizations and local business owners to continue to work together to strengthen the Clarington economy.