

# Haldimand County Economic Development Strategy



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**McSWEENEY**  
inspiring economic sustainability®

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Haldimand County  
Economic Development Strategy



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## 1 Haldimand County Economic Strategy

Haldimand County is poised to move forward with a more focused economic development program. The County is in an enviable position, located along the shores of Lake Erie and with easy access to major Southwestern Ontario markets and United States borders. This rural community has numerous avenues to grow its tourism product and further develop employment lands. Largescale residential development in Caledonia speaks to the opportunities the community will soon be presented with.

Important issues such as a lack of shovel ready/market ready industrial land and buildings, a lack of a community image, absence of outside perception, limited high-speed broadband and low population density need to be recognized and addressed. A low unemployment rate indicates lots of residents are working but also suggests certain skillsets are difficult for businesses to find. Geographically, Haldimand is close to many great markets, but it also must compete with those same markets for talent and investment.

Through consultation and research, it has become clear that Haldimand has the economic development resources necessary to deliver a sophisticated economic development product, but there is still work to be done. The County will need to focus its economic development and tourism efforts and ensure it has all the baseline information and foundational work completed. The County needs to reassess some of its tools and approaches and make a concentrated effort to become investment ready. Acting strategically, Haldimand County can take advantage of the many opportunities that lay before it.



## 2 Process Methodology

Essentially, the process to create a new Economic Development Strategy for Haldimand County began with an Economic Development High Level Service Review.

Upon completion of the draft Service Review, the strategic planning process began and ultimately included:

- A review of Haldimand County’s economic development strategic reports/studies
- A detailed statistics and data analysis
- A review of Haldimand County’s competitiveness in investment attraction, foreign direct investment, industrial land development and business visitations
- A comprehensive consultation program consisting of –
  - a review of the 2015 Haldimand County Business Survey
  - one-on-one interviews
  - an online survey
  - several focus groups with business owners, elected officials, staff and economic development stakeholders and support agencies.

The following diagram has been created to visually demonstrate the process followed during the preparation of Haldimand County’s Economic Strategy:





### 3 Haldimand’s Statistical Analysis Summarized

The Statistical Analysis is a snapshot of Haldimand County. It helps to paint a picture of what the County looks like, purely from a number standpoint. It does not seek to provide answers or direction; it is simply what is. Using this information as a foundational basis helps ground the information further received through consultation and interviews.

The following section highlights some of the observations and data found in Haldimand’s Situational Analysis. For a more detailed compilation please refer to Haldimand’s Situational Analysis.

#### 3.1 Demographics

The following information is derived from Manifold SuperDemographics 2016. Detailed data can be found in the Haldimand County Situational Analysis.

##### 3.1.1 Population

Haldimand County’s 2016 population is approximately 46,000 residents. Looking at the past three census records, 2001, 2006 and 2011, there has been slow population growth. Over the same Census periods, Ontario has shown 13% growth rate from 11,410,046 to 12,851,821. The rate of growth of the County has been decreasing since 1996, however, Manifold data estimates predict growth for 2016.

**Table 1: Population Growth, 2001-2015**

	2001	2006	2011	2016
<b>Haldimand County Population Count</b>	43,728	45,212	44,876	45,738
% Change from Previous Census	4.0	3.4	-0.7	N/A*
<b>Ontario Population Count</b>	11,410,04	12,160,282	12,851,821	13,916,032
% Change from Previous Census	6.1	6.6	5.7	N/A*

Source: Statistics Canada 2001, 2006, 2011 and Manifold SuperDemographics 2016. \*Estimated McSweeney & Associates from Manifold Data Mining Inc. SuperDemographics 2016 and not directly comparable to Census data.

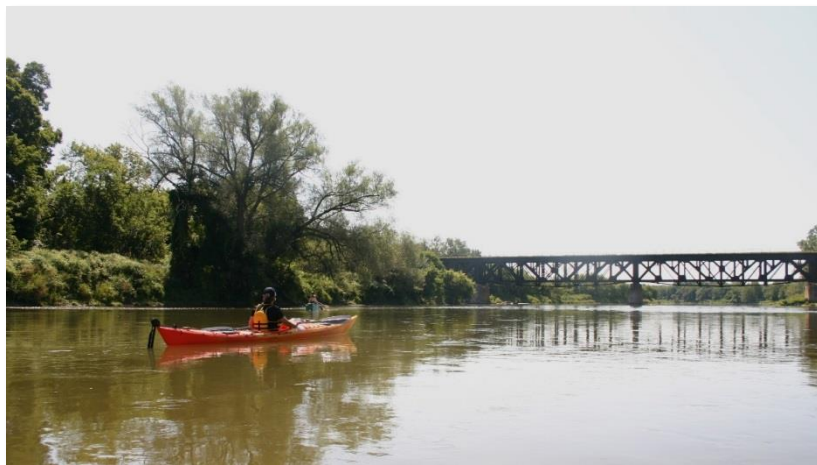
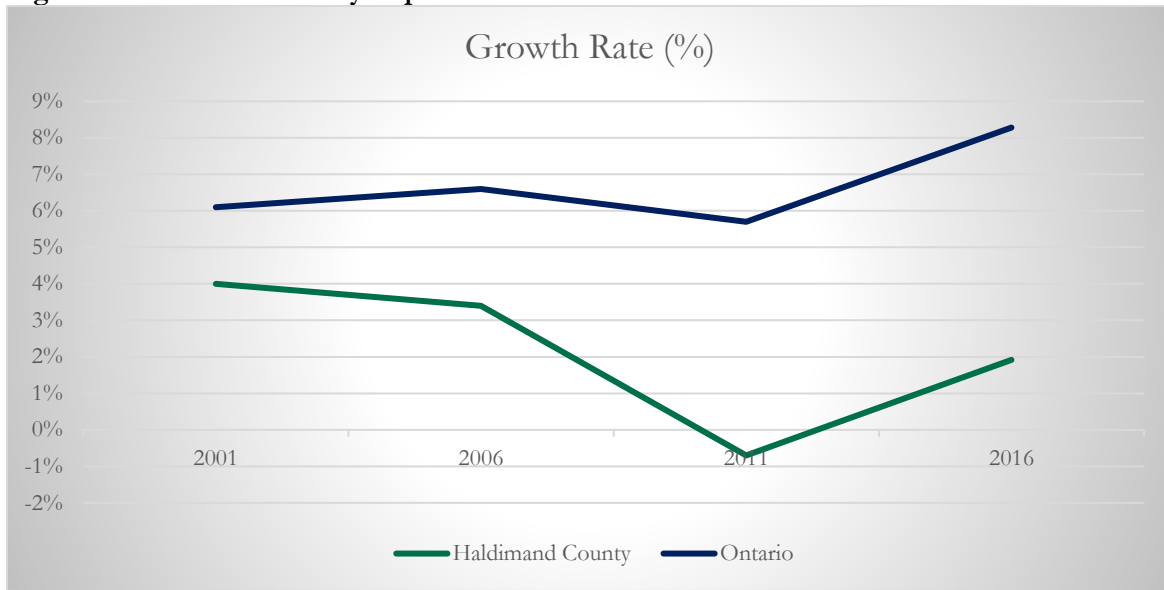


Figure 1: Haldimand County Population Growth Rates versus Ontario



Source: Statistics Canada 2001, 2006, 2011 and Manifold SuperDemographics 2016. \*Estimated McSweeney & Associates from Manifold Data Mining Inc. SuperDemographics 2016 and not directly comparable to Census data

Overall, the County’s age profile is an older population than that of Ontario. The 2016 median age of 45 is higher than the provincial median of 42, as is the average age of 43 versus the provincial average of 41.

## What We Heard

Many of the comments made during the consultation indicated that stakeholders understood that the population of Haldimand County was both stable and slightly older compared to the Province. There was also an appreciation that youth and young families were very important to the future of community and youth engagement and retention would need to be addressed.

Much of the Haldimand County economic development stakeholders, if they were living in Haldimand County, appeared to relate more to their individual communities than the larger Haldimand County area.

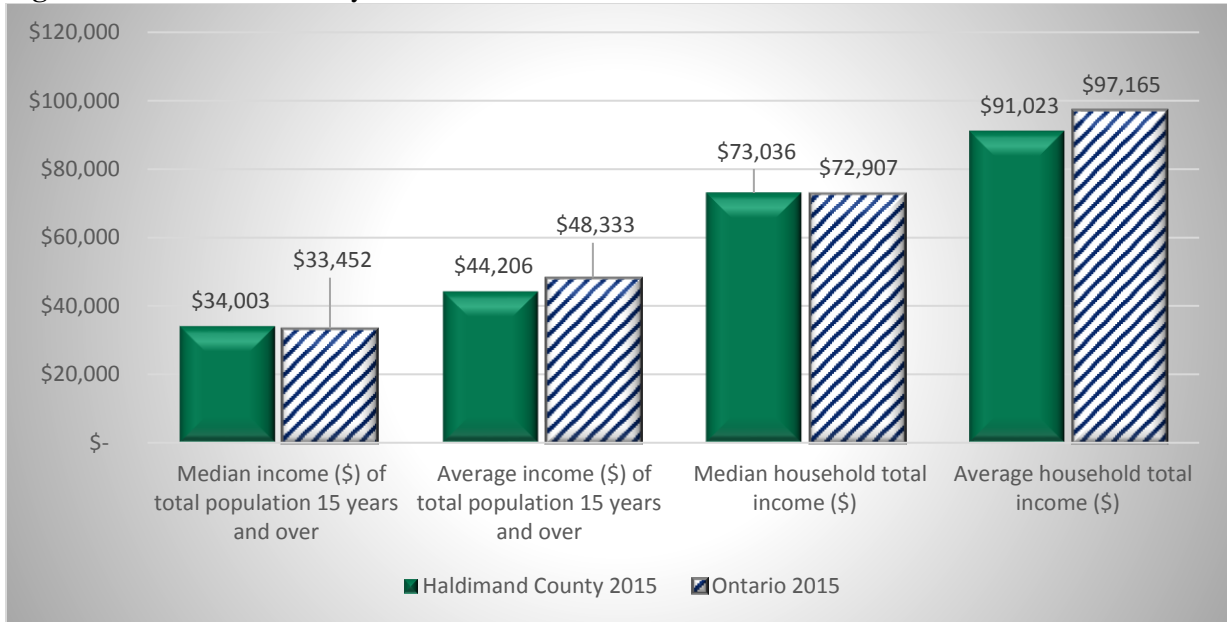
Although the population of Haldimand County has not grown as quickly as other communities in southern Ontario, there is a high probability (due to recent and proposed residential developments) that the northern portion of the County will experience growth in the very near future.



### 3.1.2 Income Levels

In 2015, the median household income was larger than in Ontario, but the average household figures were lower than those of Ontario. Compared to Ontario, the percentage of Haldimand County residents making more than \$40,000 annually was slightly smaller than that of Ontario. There has been little change in the income levels since 2010. The largest percentage of Haldimand County’s income level was the income segment between \$20,000 and \$29,999 annually. This is the same for the province.

**Figure 2: Haldimand County Income Levels Versus Ontario**



Source: McSweeney & Associates from Manifold Data Mining Inc. SuperDemographics 2016 (2015 incomes).

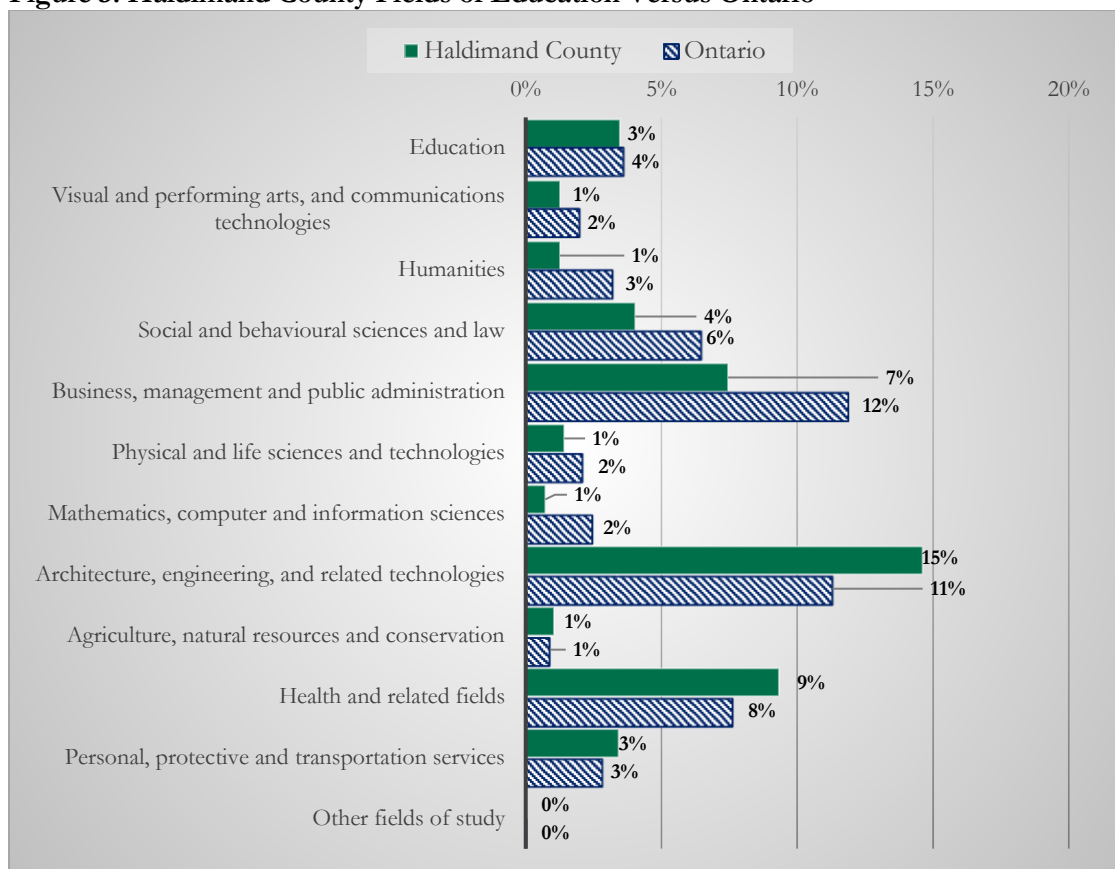


### 3.1.3 Levels of Education

In 2016, the percentage of Haldimand County residents who had only a High school diploma (30.5%) is higher than the provincial percentage (24.3%). The County has a higher percentage of residents with an Apprenticeship or trades certificate/diploma, and college education than Ontario. However, the percentage of Haldimand residents with university education is less than half that of the provincial figure.

In Haldimand County, the largest field of study by percentage was Architecture, engineering and related technologies<sup>1</sup>(this includes Constuction trades) - this percentage was higher than that of Ontario. Haldimand County also demonstrated a higher percentage of residents with education in Personal, protective and transportation services as well as Health and related fields.

**Figure 3: Haldimand County Fields of Education Versus Ontario**



Source: McSweeney & Associates from Manifold Data Mining Inc. SuperDemographics 2016

<sup>1</sup> This field includes: Architecture and related services; Engineering; Engineering technologies and engineering-related fields; Historic preservation and conservation; Construction trades; Mechanic and repair technologies/technicians; and Precision production.

## 3.2 Labour Force

### 3.2.1 Key Labour Indicators

In 2006, 2011, and 2016, the labour force participation rates and employment rates were higher in Haldimand County than the provincial rates. The unemployment rate in Haldimand has risen since 2006 and but is below the Ontario rate.

In 2016, a larger percentage of Haldimand County's resident labour force worked in the following industries as compared to Ontario:

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
- Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction
- Utilities
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Transportation and warehousing
- Health care and social assistance.

In comparison to the province, Haldimand County has larger percentages of its labour force working in the following occupations:

- Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations
- Occupations in manufacturing and utilities
- Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations.

Most the local resident labour force who worked outside of Haldimand County commuted to work in Hamilton, Burlington, or Norfolk County. In 2011, 52% of the workers living in Haldimand County had a usual place of work outside of the city, while 36% of workers declaring a usual place of work in Haldimand lived outside of the county.

## What We Heard

Sourcing skilled and unskilled labour are very real issues affecting several industry sectors in Haldimand County, most notably manufacturing and agriculture. It isn't just that it is difficult to find workers, but it is also very difficult to retain workers in the current environment.

In fact, one focus group saw several different manufacturers musing with each other that they are always watching each others employees to see which ones they can lure away to their company.

### 3.2.2 Haldimand County Residential Make Up

In 2016, the percentage of Haldimand County residents that had moved within the previous year (8%) was less than the percentage of “movers” in Ontario (12%). People moving to Haldimand County were much more likely to be relocating from other parts of Ontario as opposed to moving from outside of the country or province. The percentage of Haldimand County residents that had moved within the past five years (25%) was lower than the percentage of “movers” in the province (38%). Migrants to Haldimand County within the last five years were more likely to be relocating from within the province as opposed to moving from outside of Ontario.

The percentage of residents that speak French in the County (0.8%) is lower than Ontario (3.8%). Over 99% of residents in Haldimand County residents speak English, which is above the provincial average. Most Haldimand County residents are of North American (non-Aboriginal) and European origins.

**Table 2: Haldimand County Residents Area of Origin Versus Ontario**

Area of Origin	Haldimand County	Ontario
North American Aboriginal origins	5.0%	3.7%
Other North American origins	33.4%	24.5%
European origins	82.1%	65.4%
Caribbean origins	1.0%	3.4%
Latin, Central and South American origins	0.2%	2.4%
African origins	0.3%	3.1%
Asian origins	2.8%	21.9%
Oceania origins	0.1%	0.2%

Source: McSweeney & Associates from Manifold Data Mining Inc. SuperDemographics

Note, this represents the sum of persons who reported single ethnic origins and multiple ethnic origins in the census; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%. The County’s ethnic makeup is higher in Aboriginal residents and North American origins than the provincial figures.

The total number of dwellings in Haldimand County increased from 16,315 in 2006 to 17,718 in 2016. The average value of dwellings in Haldimand County increased from \$162,356 in 2001 to \$479,854 in 2016, which is below the provincial average for 2016 (\$626,046).

## What We Heard

Currently Haldimand County is not yet culturally diverse. This may change with the influx of residents in and around Caledonia.

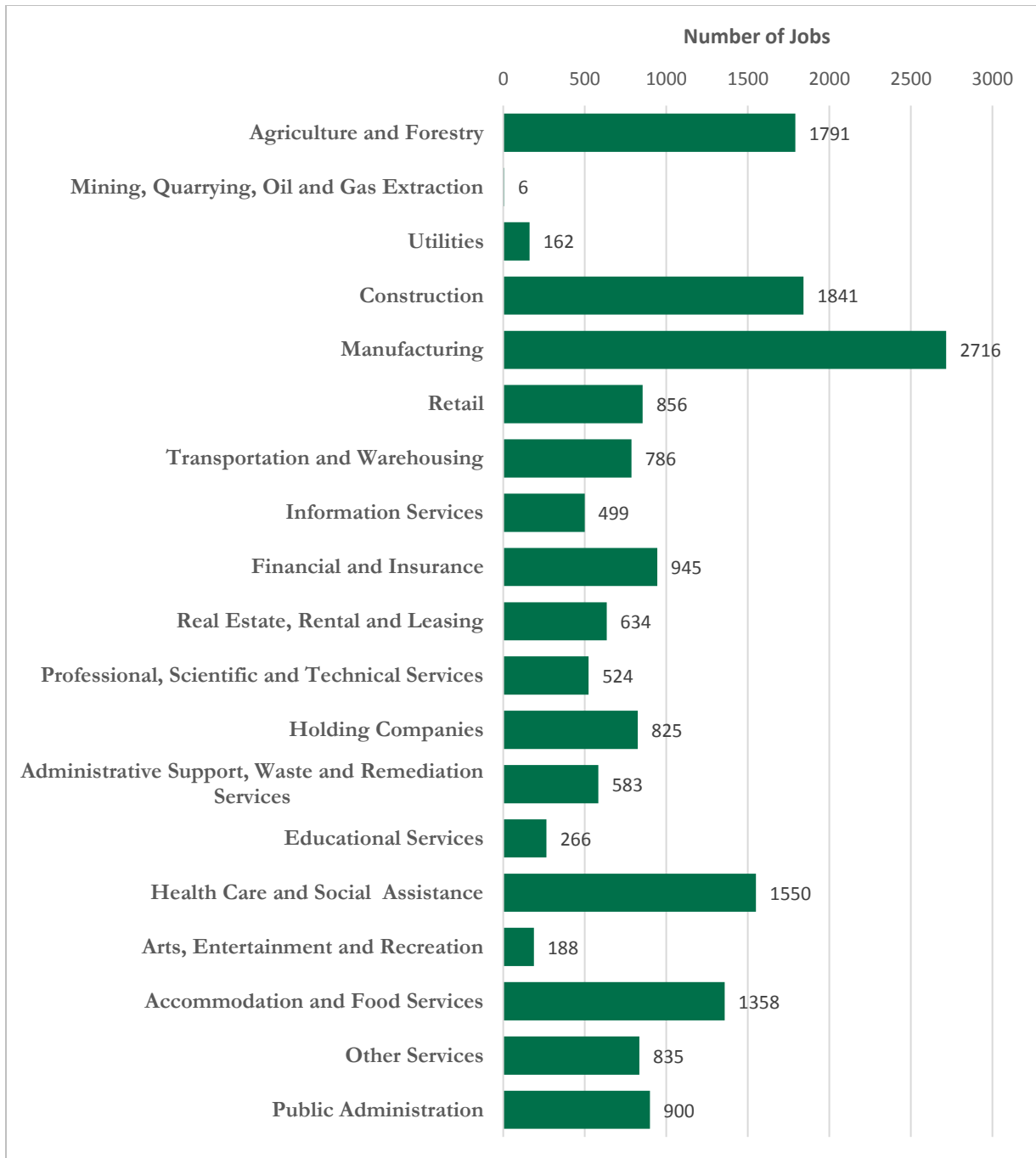
People currently living in Haldimand County value their small-town atmosphere and characteristics. Overall, most felt the community was safe, people looked out for each other and local businesses were supported by local residents.

Some business owners have relocated to Haldimand County based on the quality of life, small town feel and over-all sense of friendliness within the community.

### 3.3 Economic Base Analysis

#### 3.3.1 Employment Profile

There were an estimated 19,992 jobs in Haldimand County in 2016. With 2,716 jobs, the manufacturing sector was the largest employer in Haldimand County, followed by construction (1,841 jobs) and agriculture and forestry (1,791).



### 3.3.2 *Location Quotient – Sectors*

Compared to Ontario and Canada, employment sectors in Haldimand County with a higher than normal concentration were:

- Agriculture and Forestry
- Utilities
- Construction (compared only to Ontario)
- Manufacturing
- Information Services (compared only to Canada)
- Holding companies
- Education Service
- Public admin.

### 3.3.3 *Location Quotient – Subsectors*

Sub-sectors with high concentrations compared to Ontario and Canada are as follows:

- Food and beverage stores (1,021 jobs)
- Primary metal manufacturing (938 jobs)
- Crop production (983 jobs)
- Management of companies and enterprises (825 jobs)
- Animal production and aquaculture (708 jobs)
- Truck transportation (559 jobs).

### 3.3.4 *Location Quotient – Industries*

In terms of employment at the industry level, the following industries have very high concentrations:

- Iron & steel mills & ferro-alloy manufacturing (901 jobs)
- Grocery stores (887 jobs)
- Management of companies & enterprises (825 jobs)
- Petroleum & coal product manufacturing (350 jobs)
- Oilseed & grain farming (395 jobs).



## 4 Stakeholder Consultations

Over 130 stakeholders provided input into the development of the Haldimand County Economic Development Strategy. The consultations consisted of confidential one-on-one interviews, an online survey open to the entire Haldimand County community and focus groups held with Haldimand County Council, staff, local business owners, economic development stakeholders and support agencies. To ensure consistency, the same questions were used in both the interviews, focus groups and the online survey.

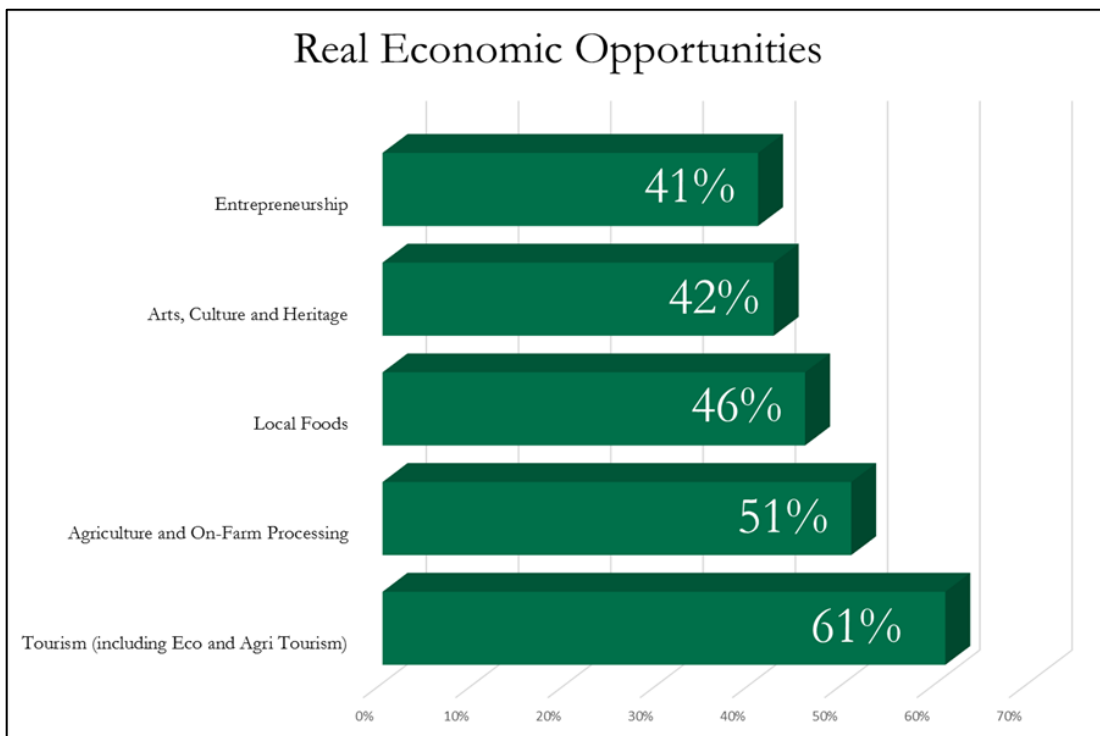
### 4.1 Interviews

20 interviews were undertaken with various members of the business community, local economic development and community stakeholders, Council members as well as staff.

### 4.2 Online Survey

An online survey was made available to the public and continually promoted by Haldimand County through various publications and newsletters. In total, there were 80 respondents to the survey.

One question that was posed on the online survey that was not discussed during the one-on-one interviews or focus groups was opportunities for growth. As indicated in the online survey responses the top 5 areas that respondents felt represented real opportunities for future growth included:



### 4.3 Focus Groups

To gather collective thoughts and solicit some discussion around specific topics, seven (7) focus groups were held with several stakeholders representing a variety of economic development sectors/themes including elected officials, staff, members of Haldimand County's business community and economic development stakeholders.



All the information gathered from the consultations was combined with the stats/data analysis and further analysed, summarized and presented as a detailed Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis. The detailed SWOT analysis is found in the Situational Analysis Report while a summary of the SWOT is found in the following section.

## 5 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

The following is a summary of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) that was prepared by analyzing the current stats and data, the feedback from County elected officials and staff and the stakeholders and residents engaged in the consultation, the foreign direct investment review as well as the industrial lands analysis. The complete detailed SWOT analysis can be found in the Situational Analysis Report.

Grounded in the research, analysis and consultation, the following SWOT summary has been crafted.



## 6 Transition from Research, Analysis and Consultation to Strategic Actions

### 6.1 The Time to Act is Now!

Currently, Haldimand County's economic growth and prosperity is limited by two major factors:

1. Gaps in the Haldimand economic environment that include:
  - A lack of available investment-ready industrial land and buildings in the right location;
  - A shortage of skilled and unskilled labour;
  - Inconsistent broadband throughout the County;
  - A perception that Haldimand County is risky area in which to invest was heard from both internal and external stakeholders.
  
2. Weaknesses in Haldimand County's ability to support business growth, retention and attraction.
  - Key information to support business growth, retention and attraction is not currently in place including:
    - - A detailed serviced industrial lands and available buildings inventory is required. This information must also be available on-line.
      - Annual key data purchased and an economic community profile created demonstrating the investment opportunities that exist in Haldimand County.
      - An easy to navigate, stand-alone economic development website
      - A full review of all internal policies and processes to ensure Haldimand County is seen as a progressive, business-friendly community.
      - Economic Development and Investment readiness training required by staff across the corporation to ensure business-friendly approach and support.

Now is the time that Haldimand County takes direct action to:

1. Improve the Haldimand County economic environment and its capacity to support business growth;
2. Get its "economic development house" in order.

### 6.2 What Does This Mean for Haldimand County?

Economic development is a long-term strategic investment, with an aim of creating an environment in which existing businesses have an opportunity to thrive and grow, while new businesses have what is needed to locate, start-up and be successful. It is Haldimand County's

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responsibility to create the positive environment into which individuals and companies will want to invest. At a minimum, this includes providing proper infrastructure supporting business and industrial growth and investment as well as cultivating a positive policy framework that supports economic development.

As a continued step to ensuring that Haldimand County has that supportive environment, the County is creating an economic strategy with a 3-5 year implementation target. The strategy needs to be realistic, achievable and built upon identifying real actions that will address any issues impeding the growth of the local economy.

When looking at Haldimand County there are several issues that have emerged from the research, analysis and the stakeholder consultation that need to be addressed in its new Economic Development Strategy. Overall, Haldimand does have several identified economic development strengths, but there are serious gaps in some of the economic development fundamentals. In other words, there is work that needs to be done to ensure Haldimand County has the right assets, information and tools in place to support the growth and diversification of its economy. Haldimand County is not yet investment ready. Without completing the required actions to become more investment ready, Haldimand County will continue to struggle to attract, grow and retain business investment.

There are numerous issues directly impacting Haldimand County's investment readiness that need to be addressed in this strategy:

- Where to do business? Currently there are limited built business accommodations (for lease or purchase) and limited desirable locations in which to build business accommodation
- Why invest in Haldimand County? Identify Haldimand's value proposition and the image/brand to support that value proposition?
- Infrastructure needed to help businesses succeed. There are critical pieces of infrastructure missing that are needed for the successful operation of businesses and industries.

### 6.3 Where to Do Business?

Currently the County has a solid team of economic development professionals engaged in a program aimed at retaining and growing investment into Haldimand's economy. Unfortunately, due to a lack of physical locations (serviced shovel ready and on-the-market land and buildings) where businesses can operate, and a lack of up-to-date economic development tools and information, it is very difficult for the economic development team to achieve success in attracting new businesses. These issues that need to be urgently addressed to enable the County to retain, grow, and attract businesses.

## 6.4 Why Invest in Haldimand County?

Haldimand County as a larger urban/rural municipality is lacking an economic development identity, both within and without the County. A large majority of stakeholders consulted felt a direct connection and identified with their own village, but did not have the same connection or sense of belonging to Haldimand County as a whole. Haldimand County appears to lack internal cohesion and lacks an overall sense of place. It therefore lacks identity and brand identity or recognition. The municipality needs to articulate the strengths and unique attributes that make Haldimand County attractive to investors and visitors. This will define Haldimand County's value proposition. It is the "why" for investing in Haldimand County. Part of the value proposition includes having very business friendly policies, processes, and initiatives aimed at retaining, growing and attracting investment in to Haldimand.

When consulting local economic development stakeholders, a sense of pessimism prevailed. Those consulted focused more on what the County lacked, or what it was not. This viewpoint needs to change to more positively reflect what Haldimand County has to offer. There should be a focus on how the County's strengths support growth in its local economy.

Haldimand County is located in a region in Southern Ontario that has strength in manufacturing, food processing, tourism and agriculture. Haldimand needs to utilize its strengths to support business growth in these sectors. Instead of looking at what is missing from the County (the negatives), there is benefit to looking at what the County offers (the positives). This can be used as a part of the Haldimand County story going forward.

## 6.5 Infrastructure to Help Businesses Succeed

Generally, Haldimand County offers the best of both worlds. The urban hubs are completely serviced with municipal services (including water and sewer) and the rural countryside supported mainly by privately owned infrastructure. Other services available throughout the County includes electric power (and in some areas natural gas) and telecommunication infrastructure (phone, cell phone and internet).

The one infrastructure item that is now critical to every business is high speed broadband internet service. While municipalities are not often the direct internet service providers, it is a municipal economic development responsibility to ensure that high speed internet is available in business locations. The effective and speedy exchange of electronic data is a basic business requirement and if high speed internet is not available, businesses will choose locations where it is available. During the consultations, the lack of high speed internet in Haldimand County (both in the urban and rural sectors) was raised several times. This is an economic development issue that needs to be addressed in Haldimand County.

## 6.6 Main Economic Development Themes

To address the issues identified above, Haldimand County's economic development strategy will be crafted around five (5) main themes. The purpose of the themes is to group like-actions together to address specific issues in a strategic approach.







The five themes include:

- Becoming Investment Ready
- Ensuring Haldimand County is a Great Place to Invest and to do Business
- Creating a Unique Haldimand County Economic Development Identity
- Building Stronger Economic Development Partnerships
- Building a More Unified Haldimand County.



## 7 Haldimand County's Economic Development Strategy - Actions

The following section outlines the specific economic development strategic actions for Haldimand County. The actions are based on the economic analysis and stakeholder input and have been crafted based on the following rationale:

- The actions need to be realistic and reflect Haldimand County's current and projected Economic Development & Tourism staffing and resource model.
- Haldimand County has an established economic development program. The actions should complement what is currently being done and help to add clarity and focus to the program.
- There is a need to create a solid economic development foundation for which Haldimand County can grow and strengthen its economy as well as its economic development program.
- The strategy is activity based and not sector based.

There are several strategic themes under which strategic economic development actions have been identified:

- **Becoming Investment Ready**
- **Ensuring Haldimand County is a Great Place to Invest and to do Business**
- **Creating a Unique Haldimand County Economic Development Identity**
- **Building Stronger Economic Development Partnerships**
- **Building a More Unified Haldimand County**



## 7.1 Becoming Investment Ready

A major component of most successful Economic Development programs is knowing what types of information and supports real investment opportunities require and having the knowledge, data and skillset to respond to these investment inquiries. In today's highly competitive investment environment, successful communities need to ensure that they have the tools and information at hand to respond almost immediately to any business inquiry. It is about being ready which includes ensuring easy access to key data, having an inventory of available land and buildings including the current zoning and any limitations. For Haldimand County, this means ensuring the economic development and community foundations are in place so that any investment opportunities (either coming from existing businesses within the County or coming from outside the County) can be realized.

### *Why Haldimand County Should Invest in Becoming Investment Ready*

Currently, the County is facing challenges when trying to secure new businesses and investments. These challenges range from having a limited supply of well-located shovel ready commercial/industrial land to having up-to-date data and the proper supports in place to assist an investor in planning to invest in Haldimand County.

## Recommended Actions

### *7.1.1 Gathering the basic required information to respond to investment inquiries*

- Creating a new Economic Profile (to be updated regularly with current year data and community information)
- Ensure the data from the profile is made available online via a separate, easy to navigate dedicated economic development website
- Annually budgeting for acquiring and updating economic development data.

### *7.1.2 Preparing to become investment ready*

- Developing and implementing an economic development 101 training program specifically for Haldimand County elected officials, staff and economic development stakeholders as an approach to ensuring everyone has the same level of economic development understanding.
- Continuing with staff investment readiness training including Economic Development & Tourism staff, elected officials and other Haldimand County staff (ie. Planning, Building, Engineering etc.) would benefit from understanding their roles in investment growth readiness and the various components required to support the investment retention and attraction process.
- Complete an investment ready assessment

### *7.1.3 Gathering needed intelligence about Haldimand's business community*

- Revamping the current Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) program:
  - Ensuring the County's Business Directory is up-to-date



- Setting objectives of the program (why visit businesses/purpose of visits)
- Identifying businesses with high growth potential for targeted support
- Targeting highest potential sectors with an annual visitation program around (ie. Tourism, manufacturing, agriculture and agribusiness, retail/downtown)
- Re-crafting a succinct unique set of questions for Haldimand County based on the objectives of the BR&E program
- Generating an updated protocol for opportunities identification and issues resolution (how are the issues and opportunities handled, how are they followed up, etc.)
- Continuing to work with existing business owners to build out potential opportunities into real actual investments
- Defining a set number of targeted visits be undertaken each quarter including a follow-up protocol
- Managing the program within a professional Client Relations Management (CRM) program

#### *7.1.4 Developing Haldimand County as an investment product*

- Working with local landowners, real estate professionals and planning staff create the Haldimand Industrial land inventory of available/shovel ready and on market properties.
- Undertaking an industrial/employment land strategy by:
  - Creating policies to address the County's responsibility for ensuring a sufficient and continuous supply of shovel-ready employment lands are available. Policies to include the development of employment/industrial land if/as required
  - Completing a market and location analysis to identify land within Haldimand County which is strategically located as having the highest investment potential for industrial/employment development
  - Completing an analysis of the infrastructure and servicing needed for development of recommended lands
  - Creating a business case for the development of the employment/industrial land
- Working with local service providers, map out areas within the County, starting with priority areas with strong business concentrations, that have strong broadband coverage and those areas that are underserved. Create an action plan and business plan to bring reliable broadband to those portions of the County that do not currently have adequate broadband coverage or are underserved.

#### *7.1.5 Exposing Haldimand County to a world of investors*

- Creating new Economic Development and Tourism websites.



## 7.2 Ensuring Haldimand County is a Great Place to Invest and to do Business

To be successful in its Economic Development efforts, Haldimand County needs to continue working towards creating an environment that supports businesses growth. The message that Haldimand County is a great place to invest and do business should be part of the County's overall value proposition.

### ***Why Haldimand County Should Invest in Ensuring the County is a Great Place to Invest and to do Business***

Success in business development and business attraction will required the corporation of staff across divisions, Council and community stakeholders. If the County as a whole is not supporting the local business community or creating a community that truly wants businesses to succeed, it will be very difficult to sustain or grow the local economy. This includes ensuring municipal policy is reviewed and update as required to ensure that it supports investment and the operation and growth of businesses.

## Recommended Actions

### *7.2.1 Continuous review of Haldimand County's business friendliness*

- Undertaking a “leading practices” review of the County's development review and permitting processes. If the review reveals the County is not meeting the performance standards of similar sized or neighbouring communities, make the necessary changes to development review and permitting processes to make them leading edge. If the County's processes out-perform others in Ontario, use this information as part of the County's value proposition.
- Continually monitor Haldimand County's home-based business policies to determine if there are additional opportunities to ensure maximum potential for the establishment and growth of home-based businesses. Implement any required changes to ensure Haldimand County has the most competitive and supportive home-based business policies and when it is determined that the County has effective and supportive policies that make this a part of the County's value proposition.
- Continually reviewing items such as water and wastewater capacity to ensure new development can be accommodated in areas identified as priority areas in the industrial land strategy.

### *7.2.2 Developing the right partnerships with Haldimand's business community*

- Continuing to support the Haldimand Community Improvement Plan program (including the granting program as well as other programs that improve our downtowns including streetscaping, main street redevelopment, community beautification and partnership program).
- Exploring the benefits and possibility of expanding the geographic catchment area of the CIP programs to include larger areas than just the main street areas of the communities (i.e. Industrial/employment areas).

- Working with local Chambers to promote joint marketing and business awareness programs to the entire County.

#### 7.2.3 *Taking a coordinated approach to business development*

- Ensuring the business development services available through the three external Small Business Enterprise Centres supporting Haldimand County are promoted within Haldimand County.
- Lobby the Provincial government to allocate more comprehensive business development and support services in Haldimand through one of three existing Small Business Enterprise Centres currently supporting Haldimand County.
- Continue to pursue opportunities to support the Grand Erie Business Centre in expanding its entrepreneurship support activities, including co-location within County facilities and including the possible sharing of support resources.



#### 7.2.4 *Recognition of the importance of Haldimand County's businesses*

- Continuing with Haldimand County's Business Excellence Awards to help promote and highlight business success and bring the County's business community closer together.
- Developing and holding semi-annual lunch and learns or business breakfasts for a County-wide business audience. Work with the County's business community to determine their needs and develop the topics according to business needs.

### 7.3 **Creating a Unique Haldimand County Economic Development Identity**

Investors need to know about Haldimand County, its strategic advantages and why this community is such a great place to invest and to do business. Currently the County lacks an identity or brand that is well-known internally or outside of Haldimand County. The County must create this identity and brand and share it widely with others.

#### ***Why Haldimand County Should Invest in Creating a Unique Identity***

Consultations revealed that stakeholders cannot easily identify or describe Haldimand's unique identity, brand, strengths, location, or the economic development opportunities that exist. Economic growth will occur from within Haldimand County but it is also important that the County can solicit investment from outside the County as well. For the County to be able to attract investment and grow its economy, it will need to be able to describe its economic development identity through a strong brand that can anchor its marketing efforts.



## Recommended Actions

### 7.3.1 *Creating the “Why Invest” in Haldimand County*

- Using the economic development strategy and situational analysis, create Haldimand’s Value Proposition – what are the business reasons companies should want to invest in Haldimand County?

### 7.3.2 *Using the “Why Invest” to create a new economic development identity*

- Utilizing Haldimand’s unique characteristics and value proposition, undertake a branding exercise to help express that Haldimand County economic development identity.
- Using the experience of creating the Haldimand County economic development brand as a spring board to create a new brand for Haldimand County.



### 7.3.3 *Rejuvenate Haldimand’s investment attraction efforts*

- Completing a marketing plan to best utilize the County’s new economic development brand and value proposition. Document the Haldimand County economic development story and learn how to tell that story well.

### 7.3.4 *Begin telling foreign investors about Haldimand County*

- For investment attraction and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)<sup>2</sup> purposes:
  - Developing a value proposition document specifically for the agri-food sector, and secondarily for the manufacturing sector
  - Raising the County’s profile with Ontario’s in-market network and investment attraction teams by equipping them with the key messages and information. Provide representatives with value propositions that, when Ontario representatives engage prospects, will sharpen their understanding of what Haldimand County may be able to offer.
  - Upon completion of the above actions, build the FDI value proposition into a limited investment attraction (marketing program as listed in subsection 7.3.3 above) with a focus on businesses to locate in the new industrial areas. Due to their close proximity to Haldimand County and the magnitude of foreign direct investment flowing into the region target markets in western Greater Toronto Area, Hamilton, Niagara region, and the Brant area.

<sup>2</sup> Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) refers to an investment which is made by an individual or company that resides in a different country outside of Canada



## 7.4 Building Stronger Economic Development Partnerships

The County cannot do everything. Economic development is truly a community-wide activity. It requires the collaborative effort of multiple organizations, the business community, regional partners and all levels of government. As such, the County needs to continue building its networks and partnership development activities as an approach to creating a stronger economic development program.

### ***Why Haldimand County Should Invest in Building Stronger Economic Development Partnerships***

Successful economic development programs are built on partnerships. Partnerships allow Haldimand County to leverage the expertise, knowledge, resources and networks of other organizations and businesses. A strategic priority of the County needs to involve working with others to build strong economic development partnerships and relationships.

## Recommended Actions

### *7.4.1 Engaging Haldimand County's business community as partners in economic development*

- Establish an Economic Development Advisory Committee (including members from Council, the business community, economic development stakeholders, etc.) to provide leadership, guidance and support for Haldimand County's economic development program
- As part of an overall rebranding effort, engaging various community groups, economic stakeholders, businesses and residents to help to create or define a new visual identity for Haldimand County. Use the economic development branding exercise as a spring board to a larger Haldimand County rebranding exercise.
- Partnering with Chambers of Commerce and stakeholders to create a Haldimand County Ambassadors program connecting the businesses and stakeholders within Haldimand County. Engage the ambassadors to represent the community externally and use the ambassadors for testimonials and support when working with potential investors. The aim of the program is to enlist Haldimand's business community to be the voice in spreading the word about the benefits of doing business in Haldimand.

### *7.4.2 Strengthening economic development partnerships with neighbouring communities*

- Strengthening working relationships with neighbouring communities to seek out joint economic development initiatives (i.e. Industrial land development, joint marketing, etc.) and other economic development opportunities (i.e. Investment attraction).
- Continuing to build working relationships and partnerships with neighbouring First Nation communities with an aim to explore opportunities that address workforce development issues and supply of skilled and unskilled labour.

*7.4.3 Continue as the lead Tourism Organization for Haldimand County*

- Implement the Haldimand County Tourism Strategy
- Haldimand County Economic Development and Tourism should continue to act as the lead organization to support and promote the tourism sector within Haldimand County.
- The Economic Development and Tourism staff should continue to play a key role in further engaging and educating the local community, local businesses, regional tourism partners, tourism advocates and tourism operators to develop programs and strategies that will enhance and grow the tourism offerings in Haldimand County. In other words, the Haldimand County Economic Development and Tourism Division will need to continue to be the leader in growing the tourism sector within the County.

*7.4.4 Aligning economic development efforts with regional partners*

- Aligning efforts with other economic development partners in the area such as the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie, the Grand Erie Business Centre and the Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation to ensure there is no duplication of efforts and partnership opportunities are identified.



## 7.5 Building a More Unified Haldimand County

Although comprised of several smaller communities, Haldimand County is a single tier municipality that was formed in 2001. There appears to be several different business communities within Haldimand County, with each focused on their own individual priorities. To grow the Haldimand County economy, it is important that the County's business community unite to address specific economic development and County-wide priorities. In addition, for the County to be effective in delivering its economic development program it will need to focus on initiatives that support the entire community and overall economy, and thereby create greater unity within the County, and a stronger sense of "County" place.

### *Why Haldimand County Should Invest in Creating a Unique Identity*

Haldimand County would be best served if their economic development resources were allocated to those economic development initiatives and projects that benefit the entire Haldimand County economy. Currently members of the business community appear to be focused on their individual communities within Haldimand County and do not appreciate or understand the need for Haldimand County to focus on the entire community.

## Recommended Actions

### 7.5.1 *Creating a unified Haldimand County*

- Undertaking a County-based Community Strategy aimed at creating a greater sense of unity and sense of place that is County-based, while identifying Haldimand County community development priorities. (what do you mean by a community strategy).

### 7.5.2 *Addressing youth engagement in economic development and youth employment*

- Engaging the Haldimand County youth in developing a youth engagement and retention strategy
  - To help create solutions to address Haldimand County's aging demographic profile and
  - To explore options and opportunities to solve the County's workforce issues.
- Look at replicating the DREAM program and the Minga in Dunnville throughout other areas of the County as an approach to help address youth engagement and retention issues in Haldimand County.

