

# CITY OF PEMBROKE

## BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION PROJECT 2017



Summary Document  
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**Contact Us**  
**Heather Salovaara**  
**Economic Development Officer**  
**City of Pembroke**  
**1 Pembroke Street East, Pembroke, ON**  
**613-735-6821 ext.1500**  
**hsalovaara@Pembroke.ca**  
**Pembroke.ca**

# About the BRE Project

From March - November 2017 the City of Pembroke with support from the Pembroke Economic Development Advisory Committee (PEDAC) conducted a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) project. BRE programs are created by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) to help municipalities better understand the challenges and opportunities the businesses in their community face. This BRE project focused on manufacturers and large employers. For the purposes of this project, a large employer was defined as a business with over 10 employees. Other businesses with less employees were also welcome to participate, they were just not actively sought out. In total 32 Pembroke businesses participated in the survey. The BRE survey is in-depth and on average takes 1-2 hours to complete. The City of Pembroke and PEDAC would like to thank the businesses that took part in the project as we recognize that their time is valuable.

# 32

## businesses interviewed

manufacturers & large employers in the City

### Industries Interviewed

Manufacturing

Retail/Service

Media

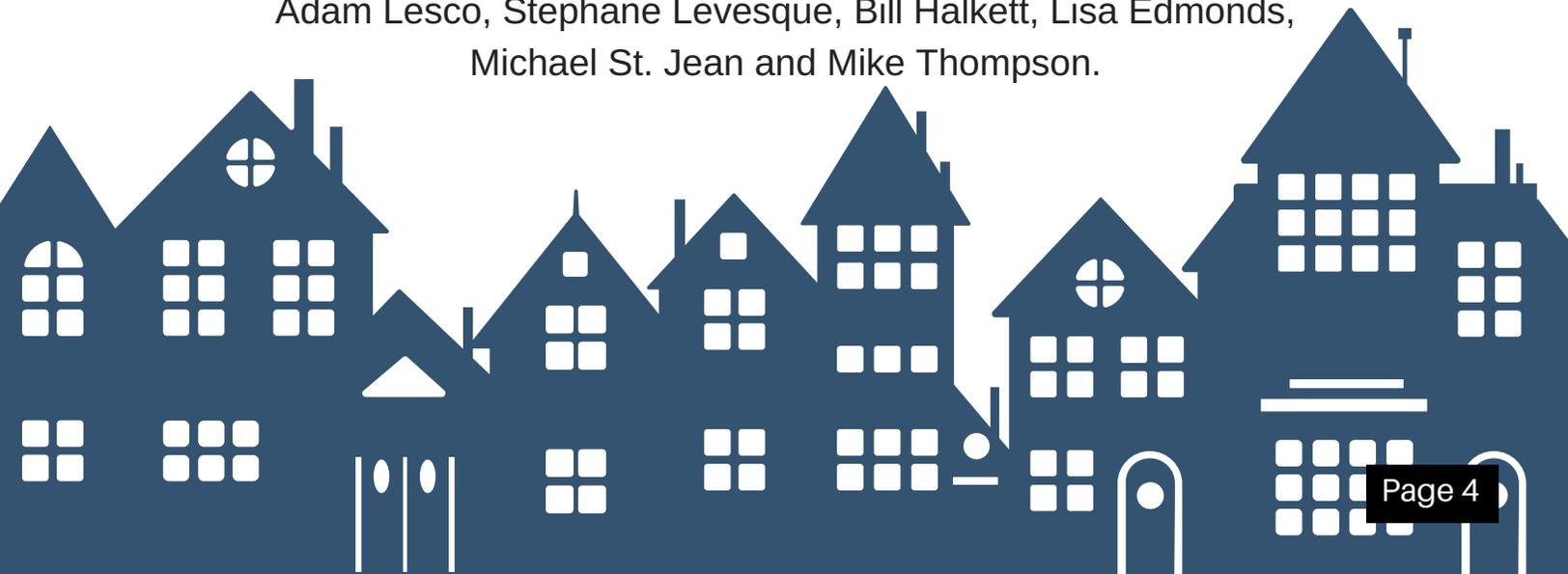
Health/Public

# Executive Summary

Through the BR&E Project businesses expressed what they feel are the positives and challenges of doing business in Pembroke. Overall, businesses feel that Pembroke is a good or excellent place to do business. Some key positives that stand out include quality of life, support from fellow businesses and the municipality, and the location of Pembroke as the hub of the Ottawa Valley. Overall, businesses felt through the survey that Pembroke is an affordable place to do business with great people. Some challenges that were identified include transportation issues - such as the lack of public transportation, and the 2-lane highway to Ottawa. Challenges in attracting a suitable workforce, transportation costs and taxes were highlighted by businesses. See the final page of this report for recommendations based on the BR&E Project.

## Acknowledgements

The City of Pembroke would like to thank all of the businesses that took their time to speak with City representatives and be a part of the Business Retention and Expansion project. We understand that a business' time is valuable and appreciate business owners and managers taking time to speak with us. This project was made possible with the support of staff from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and members of the Pembroke Economic Development Advisory Committee (PEDAC). The members of PEDAC are as follows: Jamie Bramburger, Dan Mellen, Mayor Michael Lemay, Councillor Andrew Plummer, Tracey Dean, Matt Bimm, Adam Lesco, Stephane Levesque, Bill Halkett, Lisa Edmonds, Michael St. Jean and Mike Thompson.



# Business Information

**47%** of businesses are locally owned & operated



**39%** are a branch or division of a regional, national or international company



**43%** of owners are a resident of the community



**82% of businesses have been in operation for over 10 years.**



 **78%** of business have a business plan



**17%** of businesses employ 100-299 people



Most businesses employ primarily full-time employees

**68%** of businesses have at least 1 owner involved in day-to-day operations

**94% of businesses rated Pembroke as a good or excellent place to do business**



# Impressions of Pembroke

We asked participants how they would rate factors of doing business in Pembroke.

## Top advantages of doing business in Pembroke:

Availability of adequate housing



Internet and cell phone service



Availability of health & medical services



Water & wastewater fees

Support from residents



Support from municipality

Regional/Provincial roads and highways

Local roads & streets

78% of businesses rated support from other businesses as excellent or good

91% of businesses rated the quality of life in Pembroke as excellent or good

## Top challenges of doing business in Pembroke:

Municipal property taxes



Workforce

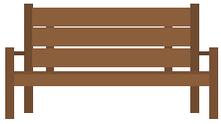


Public transportation

Proximity to rail & airports



# Community Services Impressions



**78% of businesses rated parks and open spaces as good or excellent**



**87% of businesses rated both fire and police services as good or excellent**



**65% of businesses rated snow removal as good or excellent**



**78% of businesses rated elementary and secondary schools as good or excellent**



**57% of businesses rated post-secondary education as good or excellent**



**39% of businesses rated child care services as good or excellent**



**87% of businesses rated street and road repair as poor or fair**



**61% of businesses rated library services as good or excellent**



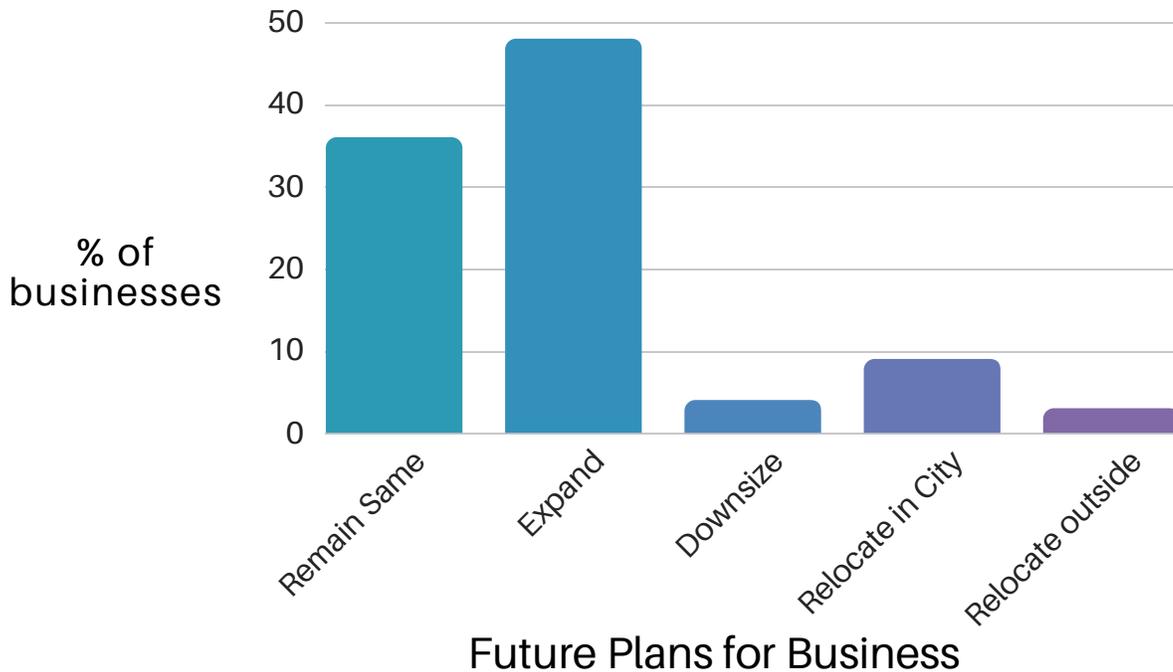
**65% of businesses rated recreation facilities as good or excellent**

**No Response was a common answer when asking to rate the following services:**

- Workforce Planning and Development Board
- Chamber of Commerce
- Business Improvement Area (BIA)
- Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC)
- Small Business Enterprise Centre

# Future Plans

With regards to company growth businesses were asked what their next 18 months will look like, their answers were as follows:

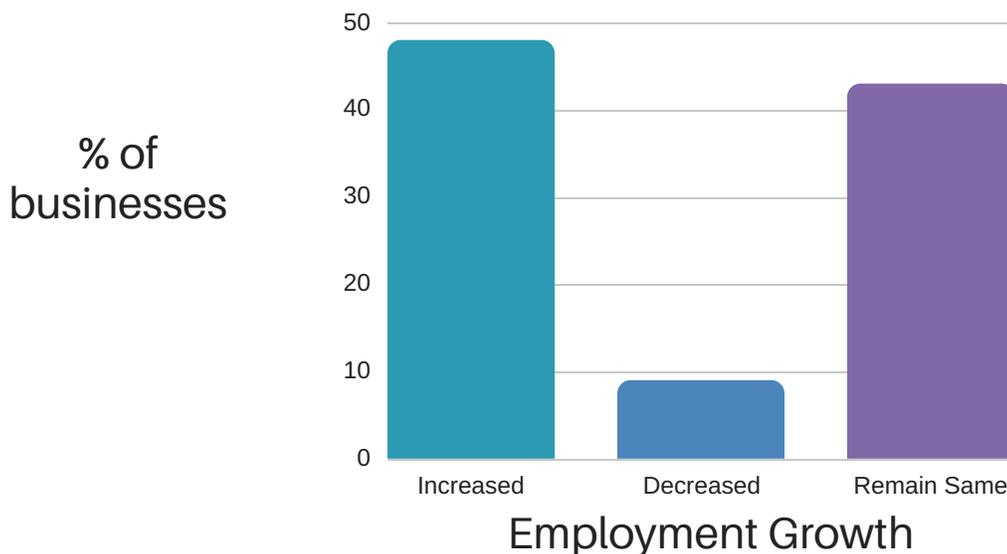


83% of expanding businesses were interested in information on Federal and Provincial programs to assist them

23% of businesses will have an increase in workforce due to their expansions

Over 80% of businesses expect their sales to increase or stay the same next year

Businesses were asked, in the past three years has the **number of people you employ** increased, decreased or stayed the same? Here are the results:



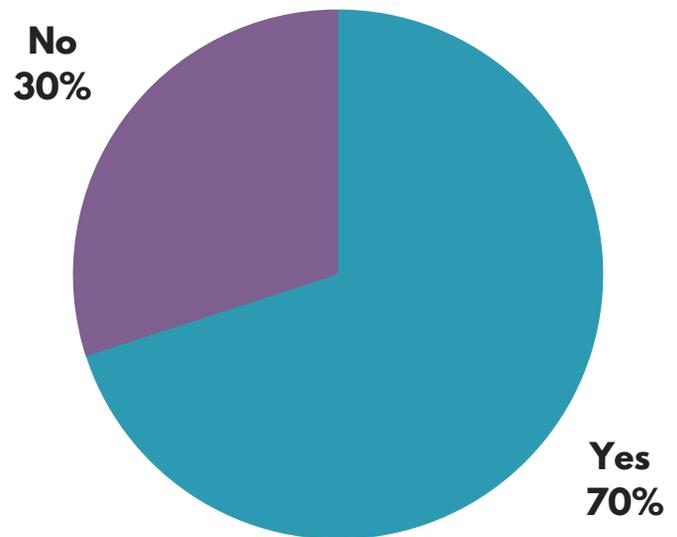
# Workforce

Businesses were asked what **support services** would be helpful to them. They answered as follows:

- Trade shows
- Business networking sessions
- E-marketing, social media & online content workshops
- Workforce planning, employee training and attraction
- Marketing Seminars

## 82% of employers felt the workforce was stable

Businesses were asked if they currently had **difficulty hiring**. The answers were as follows:



Businesses described their **hiring challenges** as follows:

**23%** too few applicants  
**32%** lack of appropriate skills or training

**25%** lack of relevant experience  
**20%** other

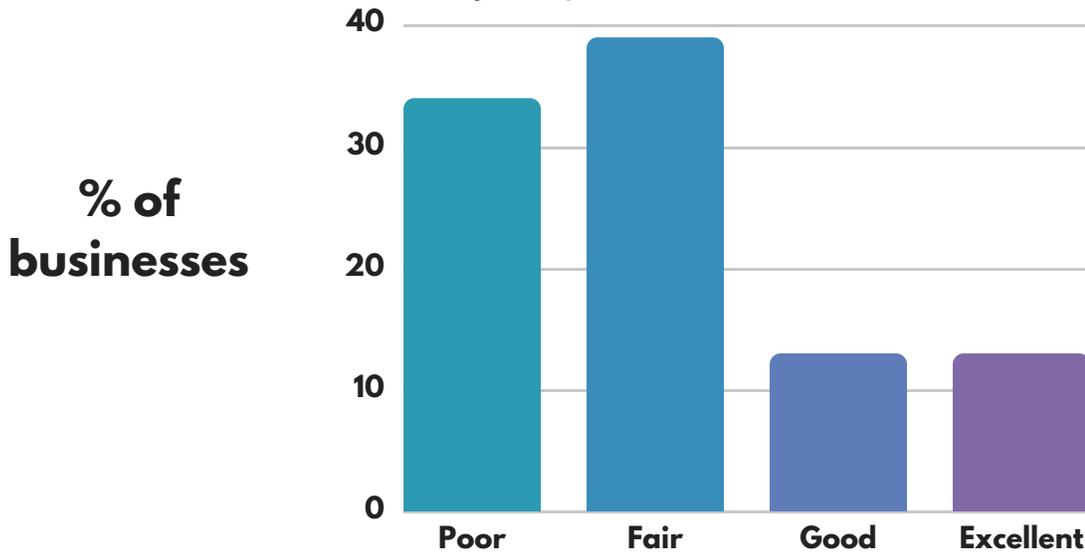
Businesses would like to purchase the following locally but currently do not:

**equipment maintenance services**  
**baking items**  
**electrical products**

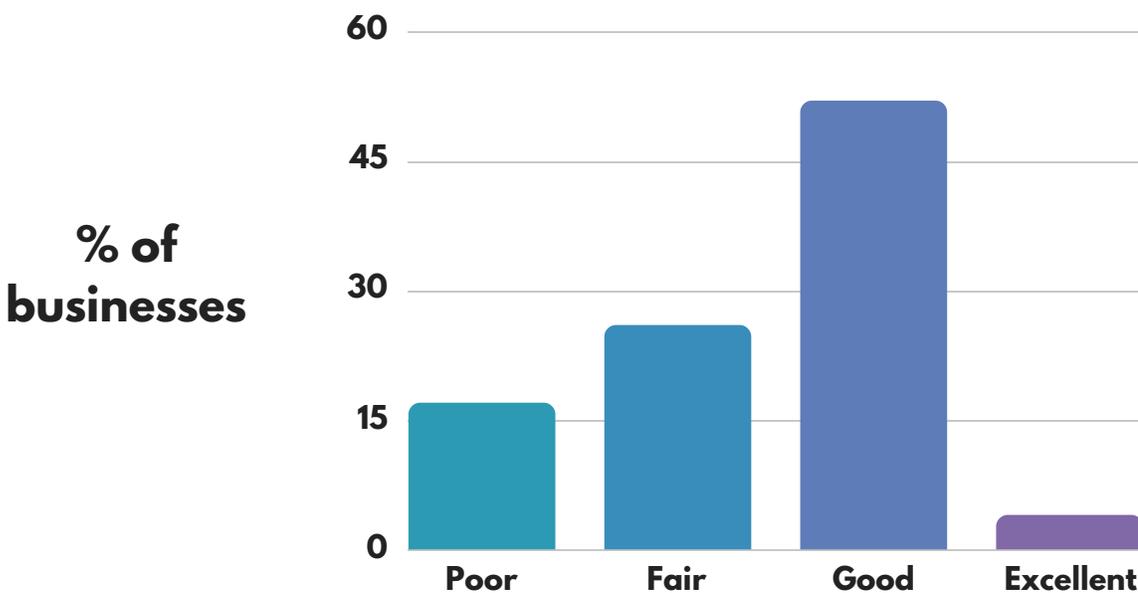
**fresh vegetables**  
**paper and cleaning supplies**

# Workforce

Businesses were asked about their **ability to attract new employees**, they responded as follows:



Businesses were asked about their **ability to retain new employees**, they responded as follows:

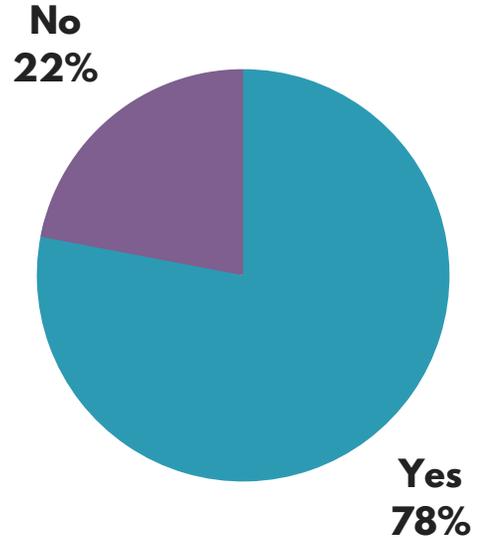


Businesses were asked how the municipality or community could help them retain employees. Businesses responded as follows:

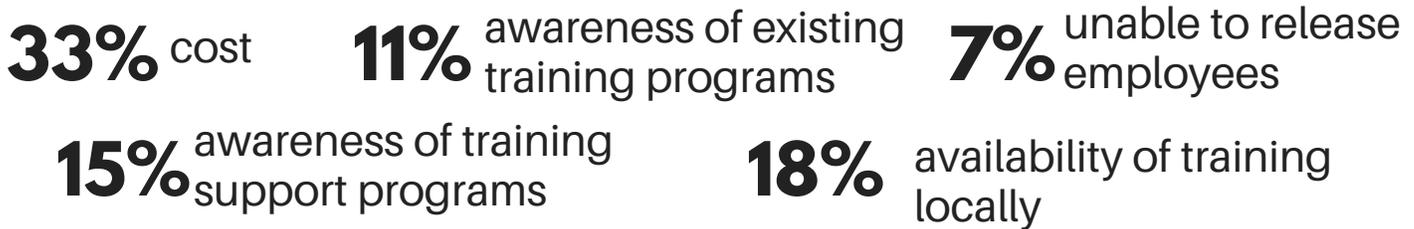
- **Employment section on City of Pembroke website**
- **Grant program to retain new employees**
- **College courses in retail, sales, cooking, hospitality**
- **Partnership with high schools and employers**

# Workforce

Businesses were asked if they participate in any **co-op, internship or apprenticeship programs**. They answered as follows:



43% of businesses said that they experience **barriers to training**. These barriers are as follows:



Businesses identified the following **training programs** as potentially helpful to their employees:

- First Aid
- Leadership/management
- Employee wellness
- Digital media training
- Photoshop/adobe course
- Customer service
- Safety training
- Mental health
- Personal finance



Businesses identified the following as **positions that are difficult to fill**:

-  **Sales** 
- RPNs**
- Chefs/cooks**
- Engineers** 
- Drivers**
- Estimators/project managers** 
- Customer service personnel** 
- Technicians** 
- Housekeepers** 
- Labourers**

# Community Advantages

Businesses were asked what Pembroke's top three advantages are as a place to do business. Answers are depicted below in order of popularity among respondents:



## Location

Proximity to Garrison Petawawa and CNL were highlighted. Many referred to Pembroke as a hub, gathering all businesses and services. Proximity to Highway 417 was also noted.



Proximity to Algonquin Park, whitewater rafting and the local landscape were highlighted. Mainly referenced the mix between urban and rural in Pembroke.



## Quality of life

## Community size



Limited traffic, ability to know your customer, and the small community feel were highlighted. Many said the community was friendly and easy to get around.

There is potential here to be innovative and try new things. There is also always new customers coming to the area through Garrison Petawawa.

## Potential



## Cost of doing business

When compared to other cities Pembroke is more affordable on many points: labour, rental space, land, hydro costs.

Businesses noted the great support they receive from the community, other businesses and the municipality.

## Support

## People

Local people were described as loyal and friendly. The labour force was highlighted as experienced, stable and affordable.



Other mentioned advantages include:

- Safe community**
- Local economy**
- Low electricity costs**
- housing availability**

# Community Disadvantages

Businesses were asked what Pembroke's top three disadvantages are as a place to do business. Answers are depicted below in order of popularity among respondents:

## Workforce



Businesses cited difficulty to fill certain positions, available tradespeople and competitive wages from CNL and Garrison Petawawa as challenges related to the workforce.

Many businesses cited property taxes as a disadvantage.

## Taxes

**Location**  Limited rail and air service, proximity to US border, distance from Ottawa, and distance from 401 were all cited as disadvantages by businesses.

Road conditions were cited as a disadvantage by businesses.

## Roads

## Transportation costs



Trucking costs and distance for shipped goods to travel were cited as disadvantages.

Businesses noted the small buying community due to lower average income as a disadvantage.

## Lower income

## Limited training

Limited training and education courses available locally was mentioned by businesses.



Many businesses felt that the fact that Highway 417 was 2 lanes was a disadvantage.

## Highway 417

Other mentioned disadvantages include:

**Spread out population in Ottawa Valley**  
**Community size**  
**Limited industry**

# Largest Change Requested

Businesses were asked 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. Businesses answers can be categorized in the following 4 major themes. They are listed in order of popularity:

## 1. Transportation & Roads

Three main themes emerged in this category:

- **Develop public transportation**
- **Improve road conditions**
- **Twinning Highway 17 to be 4 lanes**

## 2. Reduce Taxes

**Reduction of municipal property taxes for residential, commercial and industrial properties**

## 3. Business Development

Four main themes emerged in this category:

- **Continue to improve downtown**
- **Develop waterfront**
- **Increase summer tourism**
- **Promote positivity and that we are open for business**

## 4. Workforce

Four main themes emerged in this category:

- **Increase Algonquin College offerings to suit employer needs**
- **Have more training available locally**
- **Focus on youth retention and immigrant attraction**
- **Workforce development activities**

# Recommendations

The following are a set of recommendations developed by City staff and PEDAC members for actions moving forward based on the BR&E Report and feedback from Pembroke businesses.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Specific Actions</b>
<b>Improve transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Lobby higher level governments to twin Highway 17 to Pembroke</li><li>- Research and potentially implement a public transportation system</li><li>- Educate residents about road work projects and ensure proper communication with businesses</li></ul>
<b>Improve training and education opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Coordinate training sessions that benefit multiple businesses</li><li>- Work with Algonquin College to ensure local needs are being met as best as possible at our local college</li><li>- Work with local high schools to ensure that local employment opportunities are known</li></ul>
<b>Workforce development activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Implement youth retention and immigrant attraction programs</li><li>- Host job fairs to assist local employers</li><li>- Research the possibility of adding an employment section to the City's website</li></ul>
<b>Educate businesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- On support services and grants</li><li>- On where the City spends tax dollars</li><li>- On other businesses and how to work together</li><li>- Continue to promote CIP</li></ul>
<b>Develop waterfront</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Attract private-sector investment to Pembroke's waterfront</li><li>- Continue to develop recreation offerings at waterfront</li></ul>
<b>Marketing &amp; promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Further develop summer tourism</li><li>- Promote that Pembroke is open for business</li><li>- Focus on quality of life and that Pembroke is the hub of activity when marketing</li></ul>