



A People Place, A Change of Pace
SHELBURNE
ONTARIO, CANADA

Town of Shelburne Economic Development Action Plan



Developed by Collective Results Inc. in partnership with
Shelburne Economic Development



COLLECTIVERESULTS



Town of Shelburne Economic Development Action Plan

Development of the 2025-2030 Town of Shelburne Economic Development Action Plan

The Town of Shelburne Economic Development Action Plan (SEDAP) is a strategic tool designed to support and foster the municipality's approach to local economic development. The plan serves as a roadmap for translating economic development vision and goals into concrete actions. The 2025-2030 SEDAP was developed through engagement with residents, businesses and those that work in Shelburne and is intended to complement municipal council priorities and other economic development activities.



As part of the engagement, a community survey was developed and conducted from January to April 2025. The survey was aimed at residents, business owners and those that live in Shelburne and was designed to gather input and perspectives on current economic conditions, identify opportunities for economic growth, and prioritize future municipal actions.

Additionally, to support survey uptake and engagement, and continue to build skills locally, a four-part workshop series focusing on current business tools and strategies was planned. The workshop topics included artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital marketing and a panel discussion on creative hiring and retention strategies. The workshops were well attended and translated into survey participation and greater awareness of local economic development activities. For additional information about the presenters and the recordings of the workshops and panel, please visit the Shelburne Economic Development [website](#).

Summary of Findings

This section summarizes the key findings from our analysis of all survey responses. The survey was directed to residents, business owners and/or those that work in Shelburne and are over 18 years old.



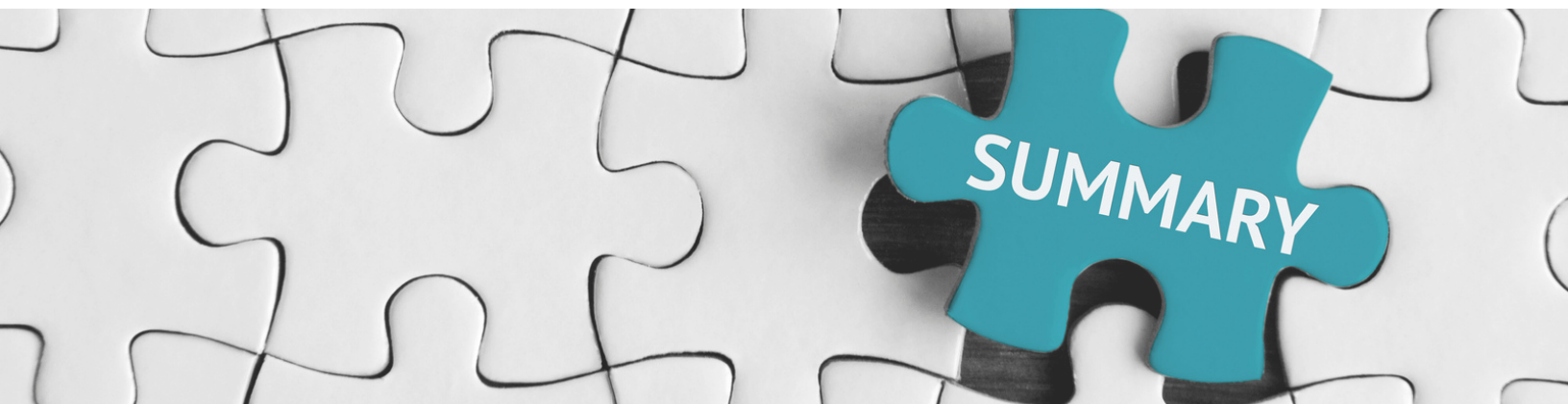
Survey Participants

In total, the survey received 236 responses from individuals that met the inclusion criteria, with a large proportion identifying as **residents of Shelburne (93%)**. Of those who identified as residents, almost **half (47%) have lived in Shelburne for more than 10 years**. The remaining respondents identified as **business owners in Shelburne (3%)** or as someone that **worked in the Town of Shelburne (4%)**.



Unique Features

Survey participants were asked to identify the unique features within Shelburne that should be promoted to boost future economic growth. The unique features most frequently identified by survey participants focused on recreation, arts and culture. This included the **Center Dufferin Recreation Complex (58%)**, **Fiddle Park (43%)**, **parks (27%)** and the **Grace Tipling Concert Hall and Art Gallery (26%)**. Additional comments also focused on recreation facilities and fields.

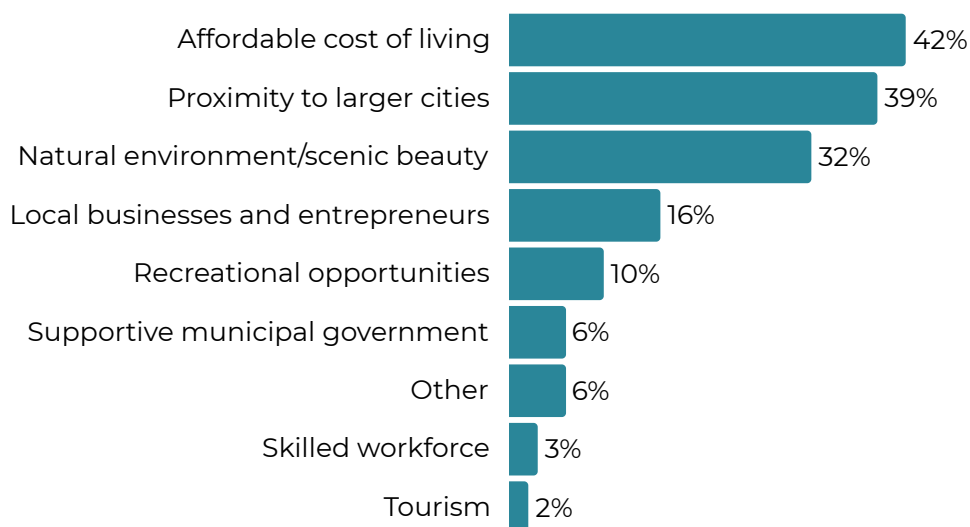




Economic Strengths and Assets

The survey participants were asked to identify what they saw as the community's greatest economic strengths or assets. Participants were able to select up to 3 options as well as add additional characteristics that they considered economic strengths for the community. The most frequently identified strengths included **affordable cost of living (compared to surrounding, larger cities and towns; 42%), proximity to larger cities/markets (29%)** and **natural environment/scenic beauty (e.g., parks; 32%)**. Refer to table 1 for additional economic strengths that were identified by respondents.

Table 1: Economic Strengths and Assets for the Community



Barriers to Starting or Growing a Business in Shelburne

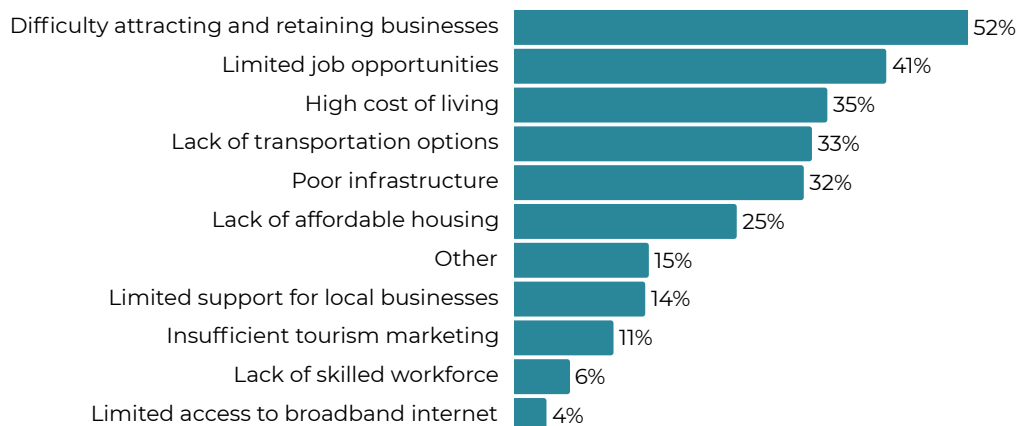
The most frequently identified barrier to starting or growing a business in the Town of Shelburne by participants related to **high operating costs (57%)**. Additionally, participants also identified **lack of available commercial space (38%), the small size of the town (30%), access to financing/capital (27%),** and **regulations and permits (25%)** as barriers. Other barriers noted by participants focused on the **safety of access downtown** business due to the traffic and lack of off street parking; the high cost of rent and taxes (relating to operating costs), and lack of community support, with residents often accessing shops and services outside of town.



Economic Challenges Facing Community

The survey participants were asked to identify what they considered to be the biggest economic challenges to the Town of Shelburne. The majority of participants indicated the biggest economic challenge is the **difficulty attracting and retaining businesses (52%)**. Additionally, survey participants also identified **limited job opportunities (41%)**, **lack of transportation options (33%)**, **poor infrastructure (e.g. roads, internet; 32%)** and **lack of affordable housing (25%)** as economic challenges for the community. The other economic challenges noted by participants were a lack of children's amenities (e.g., childcare, playgrounds), a lack of investment in Main Street (e.g., high rent and taxes, limited stores to drive tourism), lack of community services and capacity, and not prioritizing community spaces (e.g., indoor facilities for winter months, updating parks, etc.). Refer to table 2 for additional economic challenges that were identified by respondents.

Table 2: Economic Challenges for the Community





Economic Development Priorities

Survey participants were asked to identify economic development priorities based on what they perceived to be important for the future of the Town of Shelburne. The majority of survey participants identified that the most important economic development priorities to Shelburne are **attracting new businesses/industries (62%)** and **downtown/Main street revitalization (61%)**. These priorities were followed by **creating more job opportunities (40%)** and **affordable housing (29%)**. Other priorities suggested by participants focused on a traffic bypass, investments in recreation and community spaces (indoor, outdoor), and more accessible medical professionals (e.g., walk-in clinic with an actual doctor).

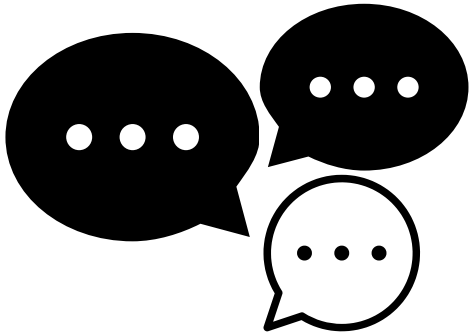


Attracting Businesses and Industry

When asked about the types of businesses and industry that they would like to see more in the community, the most common types of business indicated was **retail (e.g., clothes, groceries; 76%)**. Respondents also indicated that they would like to see more **professional services (e.g., healthcare, legal, financial; 52%)** and **restaurants and cafes (51%)**. The most frequent 'other' responses by participants elaborated or provided more specific details to those already mentioned (e.g., big box stores, a shoe store, more accessible healthcare options). Additionally, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and child friendly amenities (e.g., more licensed day care, indoor playground, gymnastics) were also mentioned by survey participants as business they would like to see in the community.

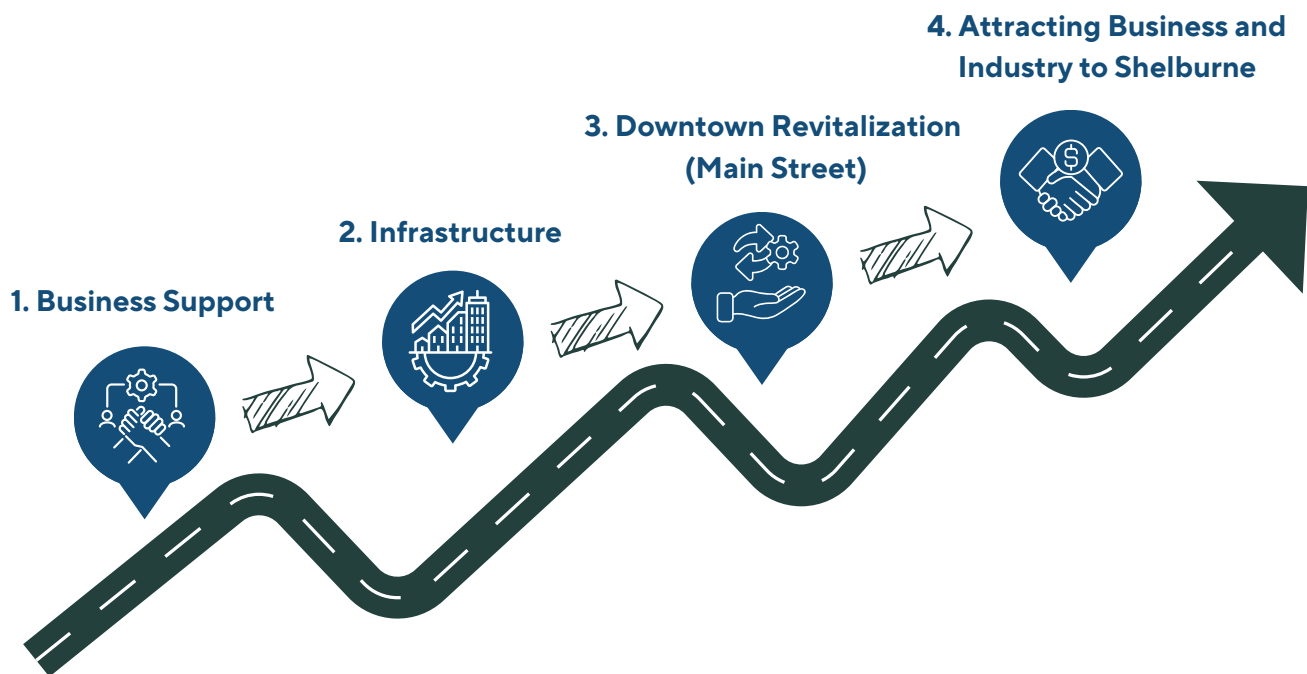


Changes to Improve Local Economy



In an open ended question, the survey participants were asked to **identify a change or project** that they would like to see **implemented to improve the local economy**. The text responses were themed based on common elements and patterns.

Based on this analysis, the **most common changes** that survey participants wanted to see were related to the **following themes**:



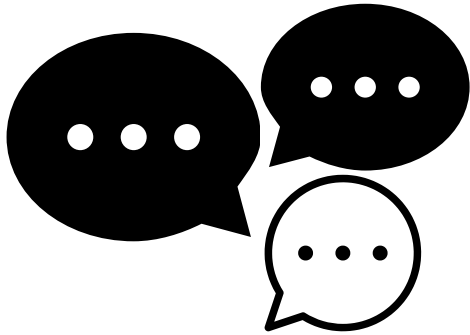
Please refer to **Table 3** for a summary and more detail/context to the **responses** to this question about **changes to improve the local economy**.

Table 3: Suggested Changes to Improve Local Economy

Theme	Key Insights	Key Quotes
Business Support	• Respondents emphasized need for education and workforce training • Municipality could consider financial mechanisms to support new and existing businesses; focus on reducing barriers (policy, access)	"Tax incentives for new businesses moving to the area..." "Workforce training programs aligned with local industry needs"
Infrastructure	• Improving digital infrastructure (high speed internet and cell service throughout the town) was emphasized alongside traditional physical infrastructure • Mobility seen as an economic enabler; connecting workers to jobs	"Infrastructure improvements, especially roads and internet connectivity" "Better public transportation connecting residential areas to business districts"
Downtown Revitalization	• The downtown is seen as a critical economic hub; aesthetic and functional improvements should both be prioritized	"Revitalize the downtown with more restaurants and entertainment options" "Improving the downtown area with better storefronts and pedestrian zones"
Attracting Business and Industry to Shelburne	• Respondents communicated an interest in diversifying the economic base; with sustainability and technology emerge as priority sectors	"Focus on attracting tech companies with incentives..." "Develop green energy projects to create jobs and sustainability..."



Additional Comments or Suggestions for Economic Development Action Plan



In an open ended question, the survey participants were asked to share **additional comments or suggestions** to **inform the Town of Shelburne's Economic Development Action Plan**. The text responses were themed based on common elements and patterns.

Based on this analysis, the **most common comments and suggestions** that survey participants provided were related to the **following themes**:

01

Infrastructure

03

Downtown
Revitalization

02

Business
Development &
Attraction

04

Municipal Services,
Programs and
Support

Please refer to **table 4** for a summary and more detail/context on the **additional comments and suggestions** that were offered by respondents to **inform the economic action plan**.

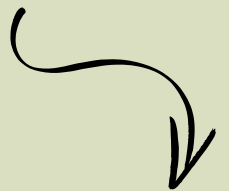


Table 4: Summary of Additional Comments and Suggestions for Economic Development Action Plan

Theme	Descriptions	Summary of Suggestions
Infrastructure	Includes: - Roads - Parking - Transportation - Traffic flow - Recreation and community facilities (e.g. parks, facilities) - Digital infrastructure (e.g. high speed internet) - Wastewater treatment	- Install advanced traffic signals at Hwy 89 intersection to improve flow and safety - Develop a local transit system and connections to neighboring municipalities - Create a downtown parking strategy with designated resident parking areas - Explore bypass options to redirect large trucks away from downtown - Improve traffic flow at key intersections with dedicated turn lanes - Upgrade waste water treatment facilities to address capacity and odor issues - Enhance snow removal and winter maintenance operation - Ensure infrastructure capacity meets growth demands - Create policies to ensure developers contribute to community - Enhance existing recreational facilities including the splash pad and sports fields
Business Development and Attraction	Includes: Supporting and attracting new businesses and industry	- Create targeted business attraction strategy using population growth data - Develop incentive programs for new businesses to locate in Shelburne - Diversify the commercial mix beyond food service establishments - Attract retail businesses to reduce resident outflow for shopping
Downtown Revitalization	Includes: - Main street aesthetics - BIA initiatives - Storefront improvements	- Expand and strengthen the BIA Create a façade improvement program for downtown businesses - Develop a downtown beautification strategy - Enhance downtown public spaces to create a more welcoming environment
Municipal Services, Programs and Support	Includes: - Town of Shelburne Training and skill building - Tourism and attractions (local events and festivals) - Municipal revenue and development charges	- Develop revenue-generating municipal assets - Create mentorship and support programs for entrepreneurs and small businesses - Revive and expand traditional community events (Shelbrrr Fest, Street Festival) - Create new signature events including a music festival leveraging fiddle heritage - Create youth entrepreneurship programs and workshopsSupport early education and daycare options for families

Notable Community Concerns

*In this question, several **recurring concerns** emerged from the responses that could be addressed in the economic development plan:*

01

INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY VS. GROWTH

Many respondents expressed concern about growth outpacing infrastructure capacity, particularly regarding waste water treatment

02

DOWNTOWN VITALITY

Concerns about the health of the downtown core and need for revitalization.

03

COMMERCIAL DIVERSITY

Strong desire for more retail options to reduce outflow of shopping dollars

04

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Need for more facilities and programming for youth and teens

05

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Specific concerns about traffic flow and safety, particularly at key intersections

Additional Context

The **engagement process** with residents, businesses and those that work in Shelburne resulted in valuable and thought provoking data to inform the action plan. As the action plan is meant to **inform municipal economic development planning**, it is important to provide some context for the Town of Shelburne's role in meeting the concerns that were identified during the engagement process. Additionally, it is **important to note** that Shelburne is a **small municipality** with a **limited tax base** that is **predominantly residential**.

- » **Broadband/High Speed Internet:** The development of infrastructure to support the building of broadband/high speed internet networks cannot be controlled by the Town of Shelburne. The development is controlled by private telecommunications corporations. In partnership with the provincial and federal governments, Dufferin County is working with Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) Inc. (the primary organization responsible for high-speed internet expansion in Dufferin County) to improve high speed internet access in Shelburne.
- » **Infrastructure:** *The building of physical infrastructure such as roads and highways are shared with Dufferin County and the province. Changes to infrastructure are discussed with Dufferin County and the province and would be made with their approval and funding. Additionally, there is limited land now in Shelburne as it has been built out, with no additional infrastructure to support new commercial development and industry.*
- » **Downtown Revitalization:** The Town of Shelburne is not a landlord or owner of most of the buildings in downtown Shelburne. As a result there is limited control over the building and renovating of older buildings. The Town of Shelburne's development and operations department is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and winter control of roads and sidewalks, as well as beautification projects like street planters and hanging baskets in the downtown.

Summary

The **Town of Shelburne's Economic Development Action Plan** addresses the key findings that came from the engagement process with residents, businesses and those that work in Shelburne.

These findings include the ***need to attract businesses, revitalize downtown, and improve infrastructure***, while building on the municipality's strengths like its **affordable cost of living** and **natural beauty**. The activities are practical and scalable, ensuring feasibility for a small municipality through provincial and federal government grants, partnerships, and targeted programs.



Economic Development Action Plan 2025-2030

Introduction

The Town of Shelburne is a progressive and increasingly diverse community that is welcoming of new populations and customs. Our economic base supports a vibrant and diverse economy, local employment opportunities, and the necessary physical and social infrastructure that encourages and supports future growth.

As Shelburne continues to grow as a community, the importance of fostering the economic well-being and quality of life within the municipality grows as well. Shelburne, like many smaller, rural communities across Ontario, faces both unique challenges and opportunities in today's rapidly changing economic landscape.

Economic development for the Shelburne community means taking deliberate actions to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for all our residents. This involves nurturing existing businesses, attracting new businesses, entrepreneurs and residents, developing our workforce, enhancing infrastructure, and leveraging unique local assets.

Shelburne Economic Development (SED) is front and center with this mandate and actively works with key partners including wn of Shelburne and Dufferin County councils, municipal staff, local business owners and residents to enhance the overall economic well-being of the community.

As part of this work, SED led the development of an economic development action plan to identify the needs of the community and guide the next five years of local economic growth. The Town of Shelburne Economic Development Action Plan (SEDAP) is designed to identify the community's priorities and address the economic challenges by taking a balanced and proactive approach to the work. Building on previous strategic plans, this SEDAP continues the focus on foundational activities such as infrastructure, while also identifying activities and opportunities for innovation and modernization. This economic action plan represents the Town of Shelburne's commitment to proactive, coordinated economic leadership and emphasizes the vision that economic development is about creating resilient, inclusive, and vibrant communities where residents can thrive.

Overarching Goal

To create a **thriving, sustainable, local** economy that leverages the town's **unique assets, supports businesses and residents**, and **enhances the quality of life**.

The plan is organized into seven key themes derived from the engagement findings. Each theme includes an objective and specific, actionable activities tailored to the municipality's context. The activities range from offering financial incentives to streamlining regulations, upgrading infrastructure, and promoting local culture. These are organized into seven themes, each with multiple actionable recommendations. The municipality can prioritize high-impact activities while pursuing medium- and low-priority actions as resources allow.

Goal 1: Business and Resident Attraction & Retention

➤➤➤ Description:

- Attract new businesses and support existing ones to create jobs and economic activity.
- Attract new residents to Shelburne and support those that are current residents.

➤➤➤ Activities:

- Continue to support and promote shop local '#SupportTheBurne' program.
- Develop and implement financial incentive (tax based) programs for new businesses (e.g. facade improvements).
- Establish a local small business loan fund.
- Promote the unique features of the Town of Shelburne (lower cost of living vs. GTA, green spaces, etc) to potential residents and business owners.

Goal 2: Revitalize & Enhance the Downtown Core

➤➤➤ Description

- Transform the downtown/Main Street area into a vibrant, attractive hub for businesses and community activities.

➤➤➤ Activities:

- Continue to allocate funding and promote the incentive programs that are part of the [Town of Shelburne Community Improvement Plan](#).
- Expand and strengthen the BIA.
- Improve safety and accessibility of the downtown core through better lighting, sidewalks, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure with traffic calming measures.
- Plan and organize regular events and festivals to increase foot traffic.
- Address parking challenges - Conduct traffic studies, develop municipal lots.

Goal 3: Foster a Thriving and Diverse (Business) Community

➤➤➤ Description

- The municipal government will support and encourage growth in the Town's business and resident populations.

➤➤➤ Activities:

- Engage with local business owners - Establish a program with regular engagement and support services.
- Expand and foster partnerships with local partners (e.g. Dufferin County, Chamber of Commerce, Ministry partners at provincial and federal levels).
- Identify opportunities to expand recreational, cultural and child care programming.
- Conduct an audit of local commercial spaces and develop a centralized database of available properties.
- Advocate for additional staff in economic development - Increase staff support of economic development activities.
- Create mentorship and support programs and workshops for entrepreneurs and small businesses

Goal 4: Infrastructure Improvement

➤➤➤ Description

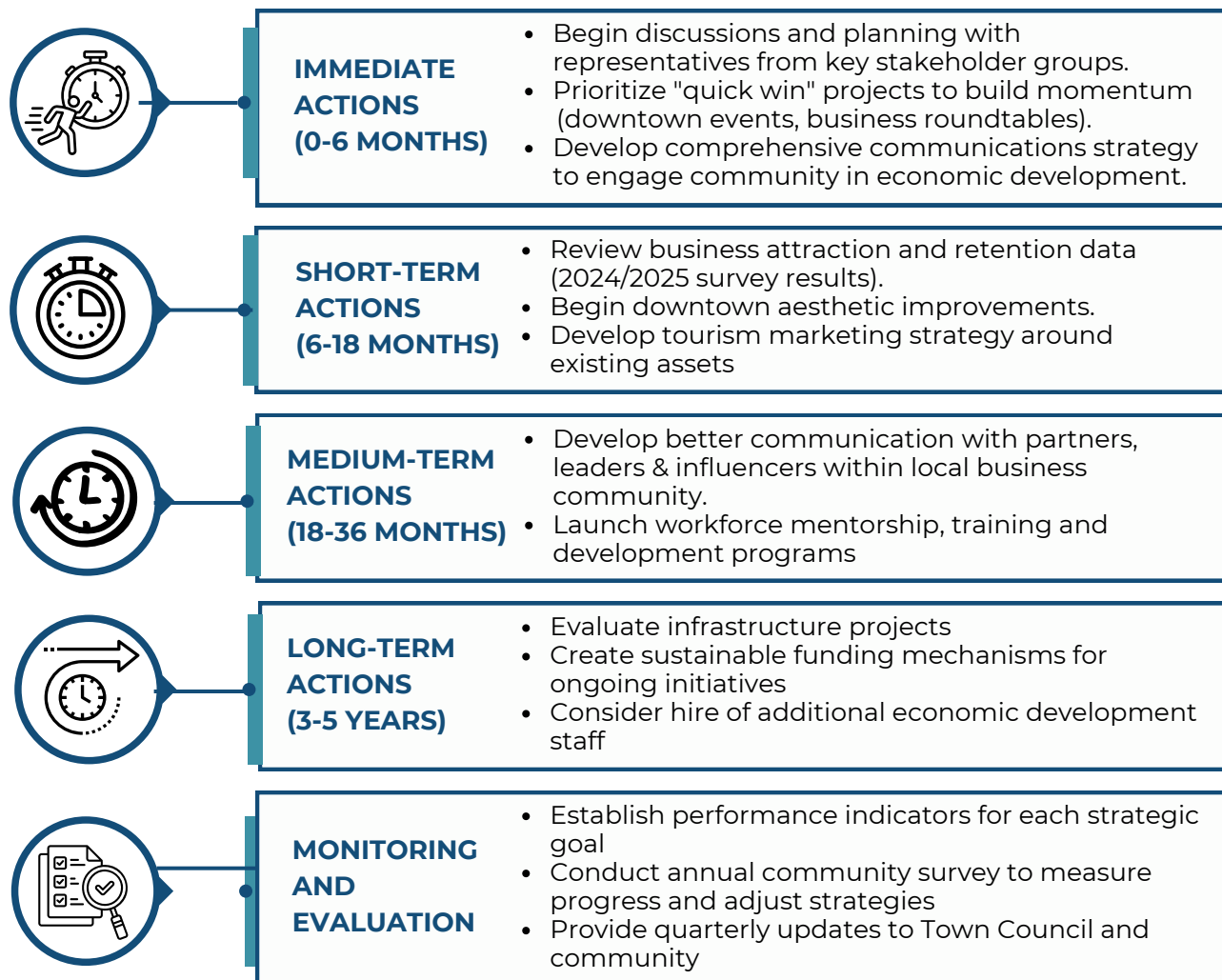
- Upgrade physical and digital infrastructure to support business growth and quality of life.

➤➤➤ Activities:

- Work with Dufferin County and telecommunications corporations to develop an expansion plan to improve high speed internet connectivity in Shelburne.
- Continue exploring public transportation options (e.g., shuttle services) with Dufferin County and other partners.
- Develop programming and events for existing underused community space 

Future Actions

Timelines: Implementation Framework



The **Town of Shelburne Economic Development Action Plan** presents a comprehensive approach to addressing the municipality's economic challenges while building on its **unique strengths**. By focusing on **balanced growth** that preserves community character while creating **new opportunities**, the municipality can create a **sustainable economic future** that benefits all residents and businesses. Success will require collaboration between government, business, and community partners, with regular evaluation and adaptation as circumstances evolve.