

## Service Area Overview

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- The Economic Development Department promotes Middlesex County as an ideal place to establish and grow business while enjoying a high quality of life.
- The department's main objectives are to nurture & attract private sector investment thereby creating and maintaining job opportunities & increasing the property tax base.
- Visitor attraction is also carried out by the department which acts as the Destination Marketing Organization for the County.
- The Department of Economic Development serves four main functions in its role of supporting both the Economic Development and Tourism Development of the County: Research and Information Management, Marketing and Communications, Business Retention, and Investment Attraction.
- The Department currently operates from two small, leased offices located inside the Komoka Wellness Centre at 1 Tunks Lane.
- Economic development at the upper-tier municipal level is vital to the promotion of stability and growth, and to encouraging strong, cohesive lower-tier municipalities and regional partnerships that contribute positively to the provincial, national and global economy.
- The ultimate goal of economic development is to attract people and to draw, retain and grow viable businesses. This goal requires extensive efforts to balance and maximize land, space, infrastructure, and assets; together which shape the form and function of the community for future generations.

## Applicable Legislation

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- Workplace Safety and Insurance Act of Ontario
- Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Act
- Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act

## Plans, Strategies, and Studies

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- Middlesex County Strategic Plan
- Middlesex County Economic Development Strategic Plan
- Middlesex County Official Plan
- Middlesex Workforce Development Partnership Strategic Action Plan
- Middlesex County Tourism Investment Tool-Kit
- Middlesex County Commercial Investment Strategy & Action Plan
- Middlesex County Foreign Direct Investment Strategy & Action Plan

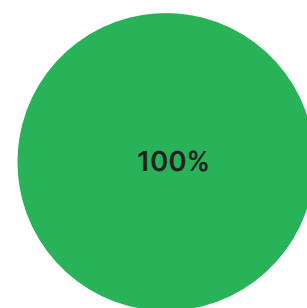
# Economic Development

## Assumptions

- All budget figures are rounded to the nearest dollar.
- The budget enhances current levels of service.
- The budget considers current demands and projections based on strategic action plans, known funding agreements, and consultant recommendations based on comparable municipal service levels..
- Budget figures generally contain assumptions based on historical precedent.
- Inflation and collective agreement provisions are considered.

## Expense Classifications

-  Discretionary (Service Level)
-  Non-Discretionary (Legislated)



## Pressures

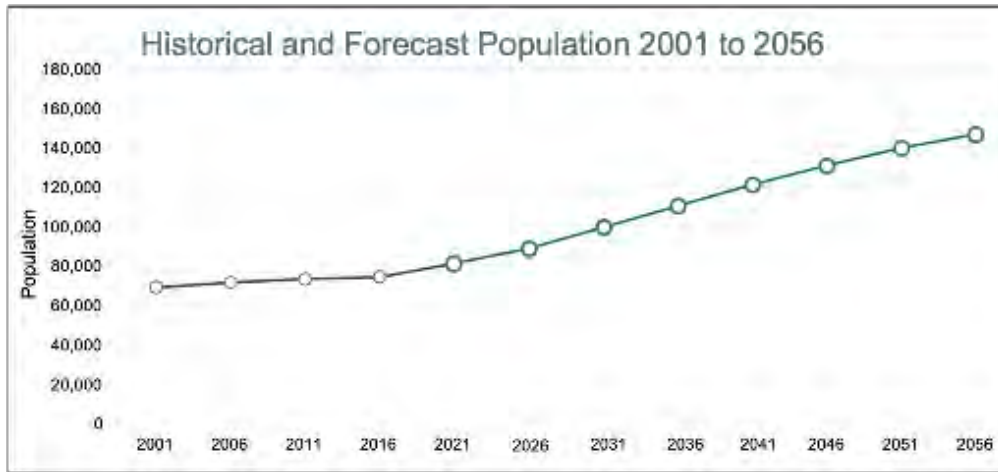
**1 Demographic Shifts:** With the 2023 population of Middlesex County sitting at 82,854, a growth rate of 15.8% has been realized since 2016 and 6.1% since 2021 (Source: Statistics Canada. Census Profile). Some of the local municipalities in Middlesex experienced growth above provincial averages over the last census period and this is expected to continue. These changing demographics are important to consider and play a significant role when it comes to supporting economic development across Middlesex County.

Municipality	2021	2016
Adelaide Metcalfe	3,011	2,990
Lucan Biddulph	5,680	4,700
Middlesex Centre	18,928	17,262
Village of Newbury	440	466
North Middlesex	6,307	6,352
Southwest Middlesex	5,893	5,723
Strathroy-Caradoc	23,871	20,867
Thames Centre	13,980	13,191
Total	78,110	71,551
Increase to 2023	1.0607349	1.1579712

### Population Forecast:

At the current rate of growth, the population of Middlesex County could reach 100,000 in the as little as seven years.

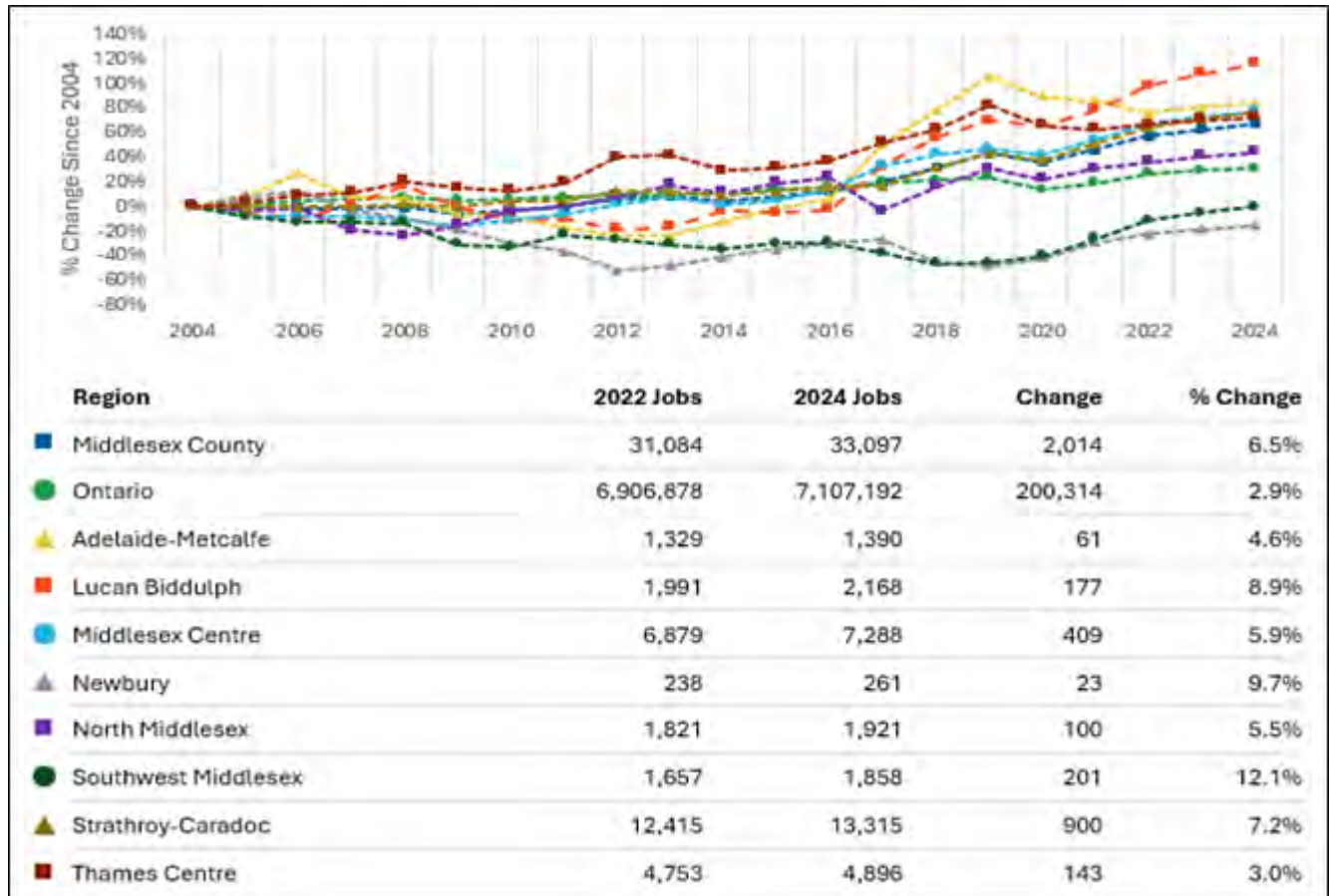
# Economic Development



Ontario Ministry of Finance Projection - Adapted

## Employment:

Middlesex County has experienced few business closures, and employment has consistently increased to serve both existing and new companies choosing to do business in the region. From 2022 to 2024, Middlesex County experienced a 6% increase in jobs. There was no decrease in jobs in any municipality in Middlesex County during this period. Each municipality in Middlesex County had an increase in job growth greater than the provincial average.



Source: Lightcast 2024

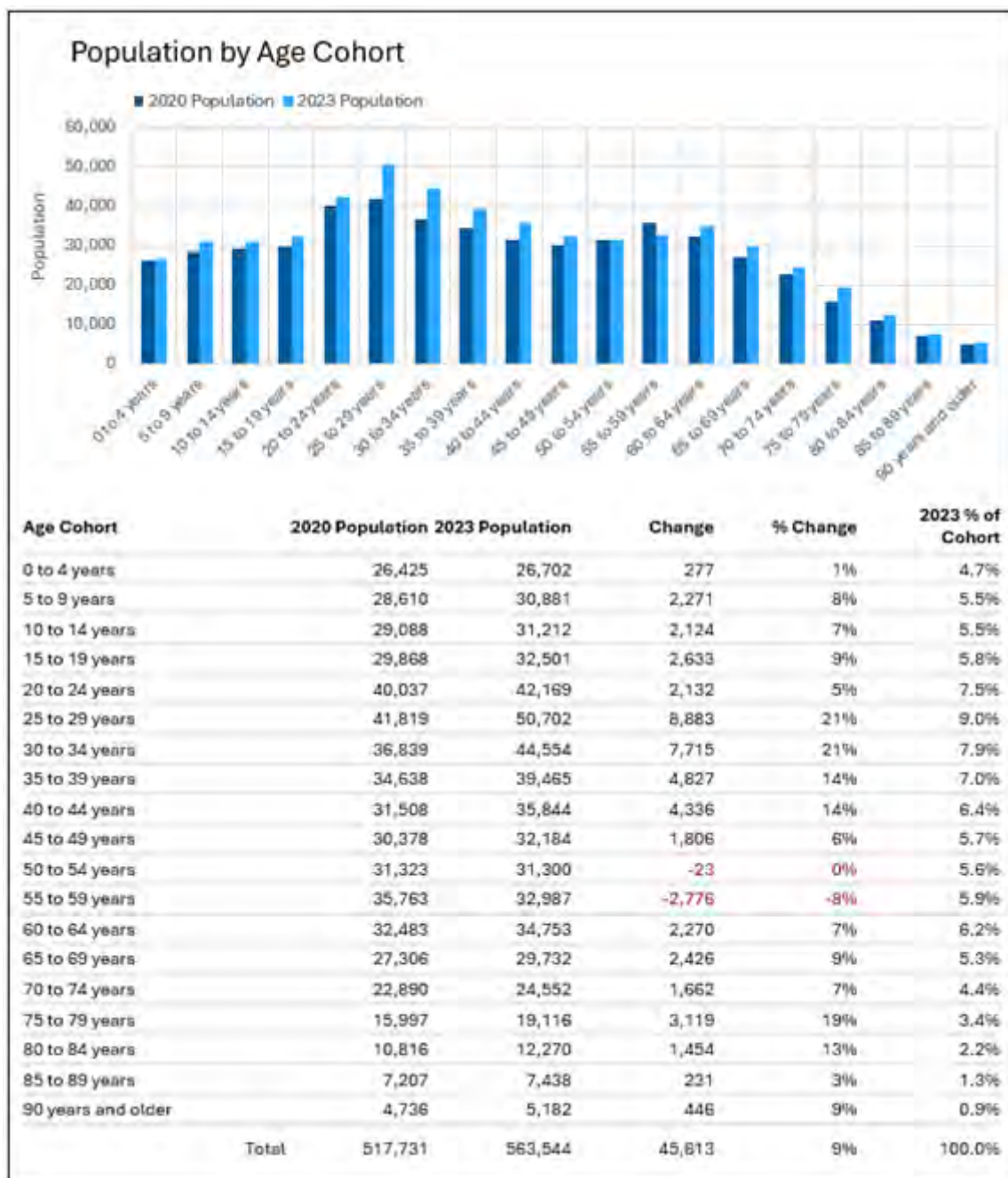
# Economic Development

## Labour Force Participation:

Labour force participation rates in Ontario have remained steady over the course of the past year with less than a 0.5% variation (Statistics Canada, [Table 14-10-0287-02](#)).

The prime age for labour force participation (25-54 years of age) in the London CMA (including most of Middlesex County) has grown by 13% since 2020 and represents 42% of the total regional population. The population of those representing the next generation of workers (0-24 years of age) represents a lower percentage of the total regional population at only 29% and is experiencing a much slower rate of growth at only 6.1% over the same period. (Statistics Canada, [17-10-0152-01](#))

The demand for workers in and around Middlesex County will put pressure on existing and new employers to compete for labour force. Workforce attraction will remain an important component for economic development





# Economic Development

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**SME Post-Pandemic Slump:** The true impact of the pandemic on small and medium sized enterprises, (that make up over 90% of all sectors in Middlesex County), is only now being realized. Upper-level government supports including relief grants and loans provided to lessen the weight of pandemic recovery have in some cases, prolonged the effects of supply chain challenges and sales adjustments brought on by the forced shutdown and restraint placed upon global markets.

Extensions of most government loan programs have come to an end, and businesses that are unable to accommodate the assigned interest rates and repayment schedules, are even further challenged by economic impacts such as the recent increase to the minimum wage. TD Bank published a [recent](#) article highlighting these ongoing challenges of Canada's post-pandemic recovery, with weak business dynamism, rising bankruptcies, and mid-sized businesses, especially in manufacturing, being hardest hit. To revive growth, the report emphasizes the need for policies that ease financial conditions, reduce regulatory barriers, and promote entrepreneurship.

Business appreciation and programs that encourage the retention and expansion of existing commercial enterprises throughout Middlesex will remain an integral component of a successful economic development effort.

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**Service Demands:** The Department of Economic Development works to meet the County's strategic objectives and provides all member municipalities with:

- Business Appreciation, Retention and Expansion
- Domestic and Foreign Direct Investment Attraction
- Workforce Attraction
- Sector Development including Manufacturing, Agriculture and Tourism

With a current staff complement of only 4 FTEs, a lack of a dedicated office and meeting space to bring together industry and community partners, and a municipal structure that limits revenue generation and private-sector partnerships, the department is challenged in meeting the growing economic development needs of all member municipalities and industry who often have limited internal resources to facilitate growth and innovation.

In addition, the County must rely on partner agencies such as the Community Futures Development Corporation, London Small Business Centre and Community Employment Choices (each operating as non-profit corporations funded by upper tier government) to provide supports for entrepreneurial development and employment services that are integral to supporting the private sector from both a retention and attraction standpoint.



# Economic Development

- 4 Competitive Industrial Attraction/Development:** Upper-level government support, combined with aggressive municipal incentives and public-private partnerships have resulted in an estimated \$15 billion in new industrial investment being announced in Ontario within a 2-hour radius of Middlesex County in the past 3 years.  
To remain competitive, Middlesex County must properly resource and empower its economic development service to use every tool available and be innovative in its offerings and partnering efforts with industry in order to attract and secure investment.
- 5 Exhausted Economic Development Strategic Plan:** The current Economic Development Strategic Plan for Middlesex County was an update of the previous plan and written during the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan will be exhausted in 2025 and a new plan is required; the costs for which have been included in the 2025 budget for the internal department.

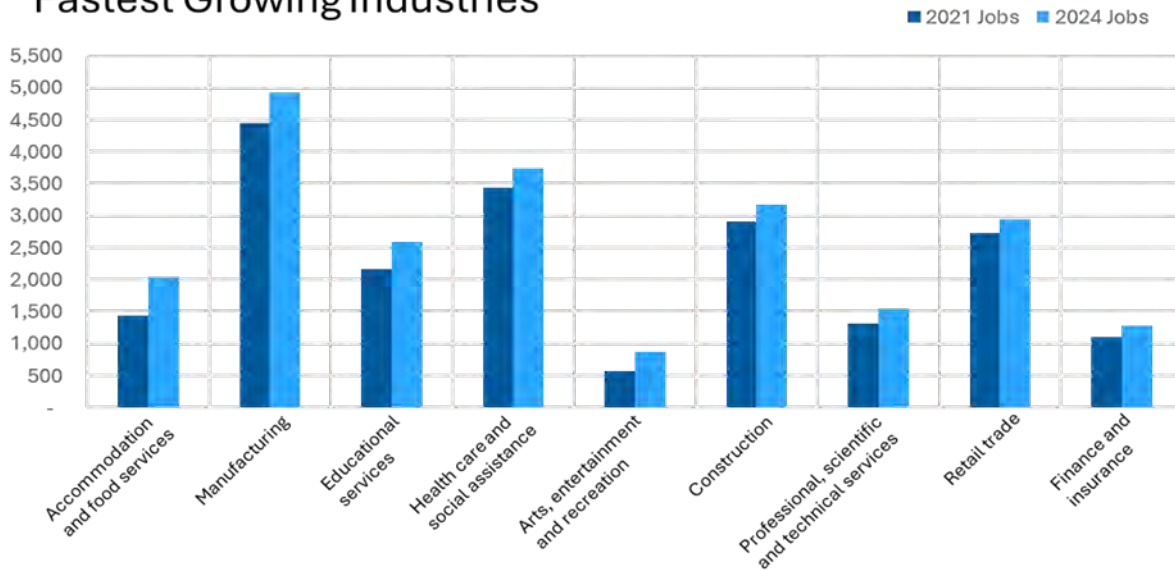
## Opportunities

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- 1 Strengthening Regional Partnerships:** The Department of Economic Development works to actively collaborate with several provincial Ministries, FedDev Ontario, City of London, Ontario Food Cluster, Ontario Manufacturing Communities Alliance, Western Ontario Warden's Caucus, London Economic Development Corporation, St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation, Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Community Employment Choices, Fanshawe College, Western University, Community Futures Development Corporation, Thames Valley and London District Catholic School Boards, Workforce Training and Development Board, Ontario Southwest Tourism Corporation, Chambers of Commerce, and others. The opportunity to continue to lead discussion and facilitate projects on a joint basis brings increased return on investment to the County.
- 2 Business Expansion:** Several Middlesex-based businesses across multiple sectors and municipalities are undergoing or have planned expansions in 2024. A key component of continued investment by growing enterprises includes consistent availability and access to the County's Economic Development and Tourism Services and the expertise that the department holds. Opportunities in this vein include providing on-going and timely consultation to aid lower tier municipal staff in the development and enhancement of local Community Improvement Plans, Official and Strategic Plans, implementation of business retention programs. It also includes relationship building among Department staff and industry to identify needs and secure from both the private and public sector at all levels, support to access programs, partnership and funding to encourage commercial and industrial expansion.  
Tourism, one of the hardest hit sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic, continues to experience some of the fastest growth in the Middlesex-London region. Tourism-related operations represent the top two fastest growing employment segments in the region. The Department of Economic Development is the Destination Marketing Organization for tourism in Middlesex County and plays an important role in the promotion and development of tourism enterprise investment.

# Economic Development

## Fastest Growing Industries



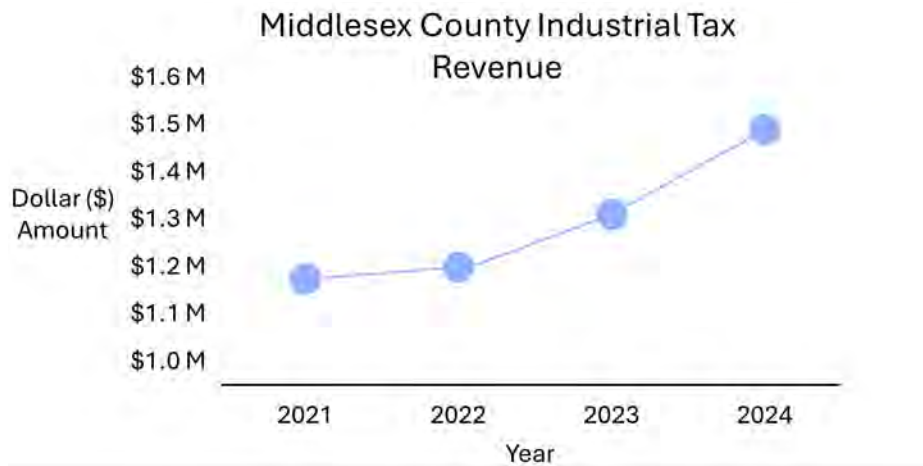
Industry	2021 Jobs	2024 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2021-2024)	% Change
Accommodation and food services	1,429	2,041	612	43%
Manufacturing	4,440	4,924	484	11%
Educational services	2,168	2,589	421	19%
Health care and social assistance	3,439	3,743	305	9%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	578	875	297	51%
Construction	2,910	3,176	266	9%
Professional, scientific and technical services	1,320	1,546	227	17%
Retail trade	2,725	2,945	220	8%
Finance and insurance	1,092	1,284	191	18%

### 3

**Industrial Land Development:** Middlesex County offers considerable competitive advantage for industrial development. A prime location with direct 400-series highway access and proximity to both Canadian and US markets, Middlesex County currently has more than 100 parcels of zoned or potential employment lands (as inventoried by the Economic Development in partnership with Planning and all lower-tier municipalities in 2023). These lands are, for the most part however, underserved, under private ownership, and inadequately marketed.

There is a tremendous opportunity for Middlesex County to diversify its tax base. While several new industrial projects have been solidified in the past three years, and growth of the industrial tax revenue of Middlesex County has shown year over year improvement since 2021, one long-standing automotive manufacturer closed their doors in 2024, and the County remains heavily reliant on its residential tax base with less than 3% of the levy being generated through industrial tax.

# Economic Development



To-date in 2024 the Department of Economic Development has partnered with Global Affairs Canada to facilitate 38 one-on-one meetings with foreign direct investors (FDI) interested in doing business in Middlesex County in 2024, and 190 one-on-one meetings with FDIs interested in doing business across the region in key sectors of the local economy.

A fulsome and innovative approach to industrial land acquisition, development and promotion is required to secure investment and capitalize on industrial tax revenue for the sustainability of our communities. The County Loan Fund has been redeveloped to encourage and support growth related infrastructure projects by local municipalities. The Department of Economic Development has developed a Foreign Direct Investment Strategy and Action Report in addition to a Commercial Investment Attraction Action Plan and a Tourism Investment Tool-kit.

The opportunity has been previously presented to the County (and deferred to 2025) to join the Southern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA) to solidify the investment interests of the region, resulting in access to lead generation far exceeding the capacity of the County. This unified front would serve the County well at this time of significant upper-level government support for large-scale industrial investment.

## 4

**Funded Projects:** The Department of Economic Development has a long and successful history of special project development, funding acquisition and implementation. Funding is secured through partnerships with local and regional stakeholders, as well as the provincial and federal government. 2025 projects include, but are not limited to, Middlesex County foreign direct investment attraction in partnership with Global Affairs Canada and Middlesex County commercial investment attraction in partnership with the Ministry of Rural Affairs. Additional funding proposals have been submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agri-business to provide funding to help pilot Agri-food and Agri-tech enterprises in Middlesex County, in 2025, to Global Affairs Canada for foreign direct investment in 2025-2026 and to FeDev Ontario for tourism development projects in 2025-2026.



# Economic Development

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## Establishment of the Middlesex County Economic Development Corporation:

To help address identified pressures, as well as to more fully capitalize on the opportunities outlined in this report, an extensive third-party consultation was conducted in 2024 to determine the best approach to the delivery of economic development services for the benefit of all Middlesex County based municipalities, industry and community stakeholders. The recommendation to formalize the Middlesex County EDC by utilizing the corporation established in 2018 was presented in the Middlesex County Economic Development Strategy Report to Council on September 24, 2024. By Council Resolution, an Implementation Plan and associated financial forecast have been prepared by staff and are being presented as an Addendum to Budget Committee for Council consideration as part of the 2025 Budget.





# Economic Development

## 2025 Draft Budget

Description	2023 Actual	2024 Year To Date	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	Change (\$)	Var (%)
<b>REVENUE</b>						
COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX	\$ 771,525	849,315	871,893	1,235,575	363,682	41.71%
GRANTS	116,855	95,745	119,200	205,833	86,633	72.68%
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 888,380</b>	<b>945,060</b>	<b>991,093</b>	<b>1,441,408</b>	<b>450,315</b>	<b>45.44%</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>						
SALARIES	\$ 284,893	320,071	329,261	487,102	157,841	47.94%
BENEFITS	85,389	93,191	101,340	147,921	46,581	45.97%
OPERATIONS	41,519	44,828	49,912	103,141	53,229	106.65%
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	275,811	313,502	329,348	402,830	73,482	22%
TOURISM SERVICES	106,610	96,490	112,500	171,914	59,414	52.81%
TOURISM GROWTH FUND	-	-	-	128,500	128,500	0.00%
TOURISM RELIEF & RECOVERY FUND	2,319	-	-	-	-	0.00%
COVID-19 PROGRAM - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	-	656	-	-	-	0.00%
OMAFRA FUNDING (RED)	91,839	76,322	68,732	-	(68,732)	-100.00%
<b>TOTAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>\$ 888,380</b>	<b>945,060</b>	<b>991,093</b>	<b>1,441,408</b>	<b>450,315</b>	<b>45.44%</b>



# Economic Development

## 2025 Draft Budget - Capital Projects

Description	2025
	Budget
New Computer Hardware and Software	11,300
Computer Hardware - Hardware Replacement Program	8,200
Computer Hardware - New Hardware - IT Contingency Program (Misc Supplies, Keyboards, Mice, Etc.)	1,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 20,500</b>

## 1 - Grants

	2023 Actual	2024 Year To Date	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	Change	Var Type (%)	
GOVERNMENT OF CANADA	24,355	19,500	-	-	Unchanged	0.00%	◆
SPONSORSHIPS & GRANTS	2,000	37,500	19,500	60,500	Increased	210.26%	◆
COVID-19 PROGRAM	-	-	-	-	Unchanged	0.00%	◆
TOURISM GROWTH FUND	-	-	-	139,500	Increased	0.00%	◆
OMAFRA WORKFORCE STRATEGY	53,643	8,279	59,700	-	Decreased	-100.00%	◆
RED PROGRAM	36,857	30,466	40,000	5,833	Decreased	-85.42%	◆
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>116,855</b>	<b>95,745</b>	<b>119,200</b>	<b>205,833</b>			

Notes:

2025 County of Middlesex Draft Budget

◆ - Non-Discretionary | ◇ - Discretionary





# Economic Development

## 2 & 3 - Salaries & Benefits

	2023 Actual	2024 Year To Date	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	Change	Var Type (%)
SALARIES	284,893	320,071	329,261	487,102	Increased	47.94% ◆
BENEFITS	85,389	93,191	101,340	147,921	Increased	45.97% ◆
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>370,282</b>	<b>413,262</b>	<b>430,601</b>	<b>635,023</b>		

Notes:

2025 County of Middlesex Draft Budget

◆ - Non-Discretionary | ◇ - Discretionary



# Economic Development

## 4 - Operations

	2023	2024	2024	2025	Change	Var	Type
	Actual	Year To Date	Budget	Budget		(%)	
OFFICE SUPPLIES	4,894	4,897	5,000	6,000	Increased	20.00%	◇
COMPUTER SOFTWARE	1,363	1,479	1,500	-	Decreased	-100.00%	◇
COMPUTER HARDWARE	4,450	-	-	20,500	Increased	0.00%	◇
COMPUTER SUPPLIES/MAINTENANCE	-	-	500	-	Decreased	-100.00%	◇
LEASED OFFICE EQUIPMENT	446	221	300	400	Increased	33.33%	◆
CONVENTIONS	1,394	5,298	6,000	6,000	Unchanged	0.00%	◇
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT	1,785	1,311	5,000	5,000	Unchanged	0.00%	◇
TRAVELING EXPENSES	7,403	12,847	12,000	12,000	Unchanged	0.00%	◇
MEMBERSHIPS & SUBSCRIPTIONS	10,577	10,599	9,000	9,000	Unchanged	0.00%	◆
POSTAGE	889	761	1,500	1,500	Unchanged	0.00%	◇
CELL PHONES	1,719	1,038	2,200	2,200	Unchanged	0.00%	◇
PHOTOCOPYING	150	23	-	-	Unchanged	0.00%	◇
HYDRO	527	406	600	600	Unchanged	0.00%	◆
TELEPHONE	234	45	300	300	Unchanged	0.00%	◇
PROPERTY RENTAL	5,687	5,903	6,012	39,641	Increased	559.36%	◆
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41,519</b>	<b>44,828</b>	<b>49,912</b>	<b>103,141</b>			

Notes:

### 2025 County of Middlesex Draft Budget

◆ - Non-Discretionary | ◇ - Discretionary



# Economic Development

## 5 - Economic Development Services

	2023	2024	2024	2025	Change	Var Type
	Actual	Year To Date	Budget	Budget		(%)
SOFTWARE SUPPORT & LICENSES	2,905	18,803	16,330	17,330	Increased	6.12% ◇
SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS	-	-	2,500	2,500	Unchanged	0.00% ◇
MARKETING	44,866	28,181	48,000	48,000	Unchanged	0.00% ◇
SPECIAL EVENTS	736	4,046	5,000	10,000	Increased	100.00% ◇
E.D. STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION	195,864	238,833	232,518	295,000	Increased	26.87% ◆
ADVERTISING	31,441	23,639	25,000	30,000	Increased	20.00% ◇
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>275,811</b>	<b>313,502</b>	<b>329,348</b>	<b>402,830</b>		

Notes:

2025 County of Middlesex Draft Budget

◆ - Non-Discretionary | ◇ - Discretionary



# Economic Development

## 6 - Tourism Services

	2023	2024	2024	2025	Change	Var	Type
	Actual	Year To Date	Budget	Budget		(%)	
ADVERTISING	26,495	29,200	30,000	30,000	Unchanged	0.00%	◇
PRINT MATERIAL	14,789	9,300	10,000	10,000	Unchanged	0.00%	◇
WEBSITE	7,556	8,105	8,000	19,000	Increased	137.50%	◇
MEMBERSHIPS & SUBSCRIPTIONS	2,240	3,799	2,500	2,500	Unchanged	0.00%	◇
FORUMS AND MEETINGS	3,179	5,385	8,000	11,414	Increased	42.68%	◇
PHOTOGRAPHY	3,231	-	2,500	2,500	Unchanged	0.00%	◇
VIDEO PRODUCTION	13,805	5,885	15,000	15,000	Unchanged	0.00%	◇
VISITOR'S CENTRE	928	1,043	1,000	51,000	Increased	5000.00%	◇
PROMOTIONAL ITEMS	5,136	5,277	5,500	5,500	Unchanged	0.00%	◇
SPECIAL EVENTS	29,251	28,496	30,000	25,000	Decreased	-16.67%	◇
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>106,610</b>	<b>96,490</b>	<b>112,500</b>	<b>171,914</b>			

Notes:

2025 County of Middlesex Draft Budget

◆ - Non-Discretionary | ◇ - Discretionary





# Economic Development

## 7 - Tourism Growth Fund

	2023 Actual	2024 Year To Date	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	Change	Var Type (%)
TOURISM GROWTH FUND	-	-	-	128,500	Increased	0.00% ◆
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	-	-	<b>128,500</b>		

Notes:

## 8 - Tourism Relief & Recovery Fund

	2023 Actual	2024 Year To Date	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	Change	Var Type (%)
SALARIES	1,957	-	-	-	Unchanged	0.00% ◆
BENEFITS	362	-	-	-	Unchanged	0.00% ◆
E.D. STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION	-	-	-	-	Unchanged	0.00% ◆
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,319</b>	-	-	-		

Notes:

2025 County of Middlesex Draft Budget

◆ - Non-Discretionary | ◇ - Discretionary



# Economic Development

## 9 - OMAFRA (RED)

	2023 Actual	2024 Year To Date	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	Change	Var Type (%)
WORKFORCE PROJECT STAFFING	91,839	76,322	68,732	-	Decreased	-100.00% ◆
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>91,839</b>	<b>76,322</b>	<b>68,732</b>	<b>-</b>		

Notes:

## 10 - Special Projects

	2023 Actual	2024 Year To Date	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	Change	Var Type (%)
COVID-19 PROGRAM	-	656			Unchanged	0.00% ◇
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>		

Notes: