

Economic Development
& Tourism

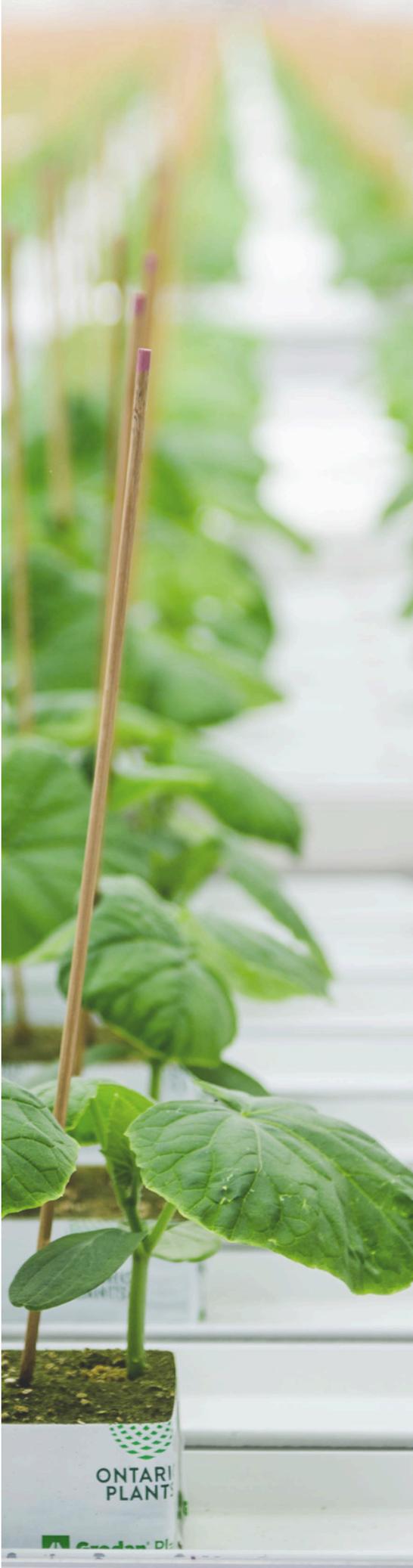
Strategic Plan

2026-2030



Table of Contents

- LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** 03
- ABOUT MIDDLESEX COUNTY** 04
- PURPOSE** 05
- MIDDLESEX COUNTY’S ROLE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** 06
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VALUE FRAMEWORK** 07
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY** 09
- REGIONAL INVESTMENT ENABLEMENT TOOLS** 10
- STRATEGIC OUTCOMES** 12
 - Regional Investment Attraction 13
 - Business Retention and Expansion 15
 - Workforce and Talent Development 17
 - Regional Economic Intelligence and Data 19
 - Regional Economic Infrastructure and Site Readiness 21
 - Destination Development and Regional Tourism Marketing 23
- IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, AND REPORTING** 25
- APPENDIX A - BACKGROUND RESEARCH AND DOCUMENT REVIEW** 29
- APPENDIX B - ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY** 32
- APPENDIX C - SOAR ANALYSIS (STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES, ASPIRATIONS, RESULTS)** 40
- APPENDIX D - APPLICATION OF SOAR FINDINGS TO STRATEGIC OUTCOMES** 44
- APPENDIX E - REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS AND GOVERNANCE** 49
- APPENDIX F - KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS** 54



Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land we stand upon today is the traditional territory of the Attawandaron, Anishinabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Lunaapeewak peoples who have long standing relationships to the land, water and region of Southwestern Ontario. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames First Nation, and Munsee-Delaware Nation.

We acknowledge the treaties that are specific to this area: Treaty 2 (McKee Purchase), Treaty 3 (Between the Lakes Purchase), Treaty 6 (London Township Purchase), Treaty 21 (Long Woods Purchase) and Treaty 29 (Huron Tract Purchase). We value the significant contributions, both in the past and the present of local and regional first nations of Turtle Island.

We acknowledge historic and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples endure in Canada and we affirm our commitment to honouring indigenous voices, nations and cultures, and to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect.





About Middlesex County

Middlesex County is an upper-tier municipality comprised of the following eight (8) municipalities:

- Municipality of North Middlesex
- Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc
- Municipality of Southwest Middlesex
- Municipality of Middlesex Centre
- Municipality of Thames Centre
- Township of Lucan Biddulph
- Township of Adelaide Metcalfe
- Village of Newbury

Middlesex County is a vibrant, growing collection of communities located in the heart of Southwestern Ontario. The County serves a growing community of 81,700 people and is a great place to call home, offering exceptional lifestyle, a wide variety of local attractions, and a wonderful sense of community.

Middlesex County believes its continued growth and development is guided by a welcoming and adaptable community, committed to sustainable growth, preserving our agricultural heritage and building a thriving economic and social environment. As stated in the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan:

Through collaboration, innovation, and responsible leadership, we foster a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient community that values diversity, prosperity, environmental stewardship, and overall well-being.

Purpose

Middlesex County is a diverse and growing region with strong agricultural, manufacturing, and small business sectors supported by vibrant rural communities and proximity to markets in Southwestern Ontario and the northern United States. Sustaining and strengthening the economy is essential to maintaining local employment opportunities, expanding the municipal assessment base, and ensuring the long-term prosperity of communities across the County.

Economic development and tourism play an important role in supporting this objective. Businesses require competitive locations to invest and expand, municipalities require a growing assessment base to sustain services and infrastructure, and communities benefit from increased employment opportunities and visitor activity.

This Economic Development & Tourism Strategic Plan establishes a clear direction for Middlesex County's role in supporting economic growth between 2026 and 2030. The strategic plan identifies the County's mandate, the tools available to support economic development, and the outcomes that will guide the work of the Economic Development & Tourism department.

The strategic plan is intended to ensure that Middlesex County's investment in economic development and tourism generates measurable value for residents, businesses, and municipal and community partners across the region.



Section 2

Middlesex County's Role in Economic Development

Middlesex County operates within Ontario's two-tier municipal system. Local municipalities retain responsibility for local land use planning and development approvals, and the provision of municipal water and wastewater services. As a result, decisions related to zoning, site plan control, and development servicing are undertaken at the local municipal level.

The role of Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism is to lead regional economic strategy, attract new opportunities, and coordinate municipal partners to ensure the region is competitive for investment, jobs, and visitors.

The County supports economic growth by:

- generating new investment opportunities for the region
- supporting existing businesses and employers
- coordinating municipal responses to economic development opportunities
- strengthening the regional economic ecosystem
- promoting Middlesex County in provincial, national, and international markets

This approach recognizes that economic development in a two-tier system requires collaboration between municipalities, with the County acting as a regional partner that supports local initiatives while positioning the region competitively.



Economic Development Value Framework

Building on Middlesex County’s regional economic development role, the Economic Development & Tourism Department delivers value to the County and its municipal partners by supporting investment, strengthening the regional business environment, and implementing programs that enable economic growth.

The County’s investment in economic development and tourism supports several key areas of activity that contribute to long-term regional prosperity and the continued growth of the municipal assessment base.

Investment Opportunity Generation



Middlesex County works to identify and advance opportunities for private sector investment across the region. This includes promoting the region to potential investors, supporting site selection inquiries, and coordinating responses between municipalities and regional partners.

Through these efforts, the County helps ensure that Middlesex County communities are positioned to compete for industrial, commercial, and tourism-related investment opportunities.

Employer Engagement and Business Growth



Supporting existing businesses is an important component of regional economic growth. The Economic Development & Tourism Department maintains relationships with employers across Middlesex County to better understand business conditions, identify opportunities for expansion, and connect businesses with relevant programs and partners.

These relationships also allow the County and its municipal and community partners to better understand emerging economic challenges and opportunities affecting local industries.

Section 3



Regional Investment Facilitation Programs

Middlesex County has implemented several programs designed to support municipalities in advancing development opportunities and strengthening the regional assessment base.

These programs include the Community Improvement Support Program, which strengthens local municipal incentive programs that support investment and redevelopment; the Middlesex County Loan Program, which provides interest-free loans for water and wastewater infrastructure projects that enable development; and the Employment Lands Readiness Program, which supports planning and technical studies required to advance employment lands toward development readiness.

Together, these programs help reduce barriers to development and support municipalities in preparing employment lands and infrastructure required to attract private investment.



Regional Promotion and Tourism Development

Tourism promotion and destination development initiatives support local businesses, events, organizers and visitor experiences across Middlesex County. Regional marketing efforts help connect visitors to local destinations while supporting economic activity in communities throughout the County.



Long-Term Outcomes

Through these activities, Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism supports several long-term outcomes that benefit communities across the region, including increased commercial investment, expansion and retention of local businesses, growth of the municipal assessment base, infrastructure improvements and strengthened tourism activity.

Collectively, these outcomes contribute to a stronger regional economy and help ensure that Middlesex County communities remain competitive locations for investment, employment, and tourism.

Economic Development in Middlesex County

Middlesex County's economy is characterized by a diverse mix of industries, including agriculture, agri-food processing, manufacturing, logistics, tourism, and small business activity. Many communities across the County serve as important employment centres for surrounding rural areas while benefiting from proximity to the City of London and broader Southwestern Ontario markets.

Economic growth within Middlesex County is driven by both local entrepreneurship and external investment. Supporting these opportunities requires strong collaboration between municipalities, businesses, sector organizations, and provincial and federal partners.

The County's economic development efforts are focused on strengthening the regional conditions that support business growth, including:

- competitive employment lands and investment opportunities
- strong relationships with existing employers
- access to workforce and talent
- reliable economic data and market intelligence
- coordinated regional marketing and promotion

Tourism also contributes to local economies throughout the County by supporting small businesses, hospitality operators, and local attractions. Regional tourism promotion helps connect visitors to the unique cultural, natural, and recreational assets that exist across Middlesex County communities.

Within this context, Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism works with municipal and industry partners to strengthen the region's economic competitiveness and support sustainable growth.

Regional Investment Facilitation Tools

In addition to strategic coordination and investment attraction efforts, Middlesex County has implemented a number of programs designed to support local municipalities in advancing industrial, commercial, and housing-related development opportunities.

These programs are intended to reduce barriers to development, improve site readiness, and strengthen the region’s ability to attract private sector investment.

Together, these initiatives form a regional framework that supports municipalities in growing their local economies while increasing the County’s overall property assessment base.

Community Improvement Support Program

The Middlesex County Community Improvement Support Program (CISP) provides financial support to local municipalities to enhance their locally adopted Community Improvement Plans. The program allows the County to reimburse a portion of municipal incentives provided through local CIP programs, strengthening the impact of municipal investment in economic development initiatives.



Through the CISP, the County supports projects that encourage industrial and commercial development, business expansion, property revitalization, and housing supply growth. Eligible incentives may include development charge rebates, tax increment financing grants, application fee waivers, and other municipal incentive programs designed to attract investment.

By partnering with municipalities in this way, the County amplifies the effectiveness of local incentive programs while supporting projects that generate new employment opportunities and long-term assessment growth.

Section 5



Middlesex County Loan Program

The Middlesex County Loan Program provides interest-free loans to lower-tier municipalities to support water and wastewater infrastructure projects that enable development and economic growth.

Priority is given to projects that expand servicing capacity and support development opportunities that increase the County's property assessment base, particularly industrial and employment-related development.

This program assists municipalities in advancing infrastructure projects that may otherwise be difficult to finance while ensuring that growth-related servicing investments can proceed in a financially sustainable manner.



Employment Lands Readiness Program

The Employment Lands Readiness Program supports municipalities in preparing employment lands for future development by providing funding for studies and planning work required to advance sites toward development readiness.

Eligible studies may include environmental assessments, servicing studies, transportation analysis, and other planning work required to bring employment lands to market.

By supporting this early-stage planning work, the program helps municipalities remove barriers to development and position employment lands to compete for industrial and commercial investment opportunities.

Section 6

Strategic Outcomes

The Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism Strategic Plan is structured around six outcomes that define the County's role in supporting economic growth across the region.

These outcomes reflect the County's mandate to generate investment opportunities, support employers, coordinate regional economic initiatives, and position Middlesex County as a competitive location for investment and visitors.

Each outcome identifies the County's role, the actions that will be undertaken, and the indicators that will be used to measure progress over the life of the strategic plan.



**Regional
Investment
Attraction**



**Business
Retention &
Expansion**



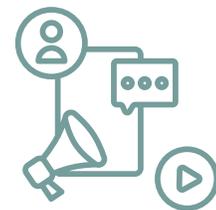
**Workforce &
Talent
Development**



**Regional
Economic
Intelligence
& Data**



**Regional Economic
Infrastructure &
Site Readiness**



**Destination
Development &
Regional Tourism
Marketing**



1 Regional Investment Attraction

Objective

To strengthen Middlesex County's ability to attract new business investment by promoting regional economic opportunities, supporting sector growth, and coordinating investment attraction efforts with municipal, regional, and senior government partners.

Strategic Approach

Business investment decisions increasingly occur at a regional scale, with investors and site selectors evaluating labour markets, infrastructure capacity, transportation access, sector ecosystems, and quality of life across economic regions rather than individual municipalities.

Middlesex County's economic development approach focuses on strengthening the region's competitiveness by coordinating investment attraction activities with local municipalities, regional economic development organizations, and senior levels of government. This collaborative approach enables the County to leverage shared labour markets, sector strengths, and transportation networks while presenting a coordinated and competitive investment proposition to potential investors.

A key component of effective investment attraction is ensuring that accurate, consistent, and investment-relevant information about Middlesex County is readily available to investors, site selectors, and business decision-makers. Maintaining reliable information on employment lands, sector strengths, workforce characteristics, and business opportunities helps position Middlesex County as a credible and competitive investment location.

The County's investment attraction efforts focus on sectors where Middlesex County demonstrates existing strengths and growth potential, including agriculture and agri-food processing, advanced manufacturing, logistics and distribution, and other value-added industries. By aligning regional promotion, sector development initiatives, and investment readiness efforts, Middlesex County supports the continued growth and diversification of the local economy.

While local municipalities retain responsibility for development approvals, land use planning, and servicing infrastructure, Middlesex County plays an important role in promoting regional opportunities, coordinating responses to investment inquiries, and connecting investors with appropriate municipal, industrial and regional partners.



1 Regional Investment Attraction

Through these coordinated activities, Middlesex County helps position the region as a competitive location for business investment while supporting long-term employment growth and expansion of the commercial and industrial assessment base.

Key Actions

To support regional investment attraction, Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism will:

- Promote Middlesex County as a competitive location for business investment within Southwestern Ontario through coordinated regional promotion and sector-focused initiatives
- Maintain accurate and investment-relevant information about Middlesex County's business environment, workforce, and economic opportunities to support investment attraction activities
- Support regional collaboration with industry, economic development organizations, sector associations, and government partners to strengthen investment promotion efforts
- Coordinate responses to investment inquiries and connect prospective investors with municipal partners and appropriate regional organizations
- Promote employment lands and business location opportunities across Middlesex County in coordination with municipal partners and private sector interest-holders
- Align local investment attraction efforts with provincial and federal economic development initiatives and sector programs where appropriate

Performance Indicators

Progress toward this outcome will be measured through:

- Investment inquiries supported or coordinated by Middlesex County
- New business investment projects supported within Middlesex County
- Regional investment attraction initiatives undertaken with partner organizations
- Sector-focused investment promotion initiatives completed
- Growth in commercial and industrial assessment across Middlesex County



2 Business Retention & Expansion

Objective

To support the continued growth, competitiveness, and expansion of existing businesses across Middlesex County by strengthening relationships with businesses and coordinating support through regional partners and municipal interest-holders.

Strategic Approach

Existing businesses represent the primary source of job creation, economic stability, and investment within most communities. Supporting the success and expansion of current businesses is a central component of Middlesex County's economic development efforts.

Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism maintains ongoing relationships with businesses across the region in order to better understand business conditions, identify expansion opportunities, and respond to emerging challenges affecting local industries. Through structured business engagement and collaboration with municipal partners, the County gathers insights related to workforce availability, infrastructure needs, supply chain considerations, and regulatory issues that may affect business competitiveness.

Entrepreneurship and small business development also play an important role in the long-term growth of the local economy. Many successful businesses begin as micro-enterprises or home-based businesses before expanding into commercial or industrial space. Supporting awareness of available business advisory services, financing programs, and entrepreneurship resources helps strengthen this pipeline of future employers within Middlesex County.

The County's role is focused on coordination, information sharing, and connecting businesses with the appropriate resources and partners that support business growth. By working collaboratively with local municipalities, regional organizations, and senior levels of government, Middlesex County helps ensure that businesses and entrepreneurs are aware of available programs, investment supports, and workforce initiatives that can assist with expansion or operational improvements.

Through proactive engagement with employers and coordination with municipal partners, Middlesex County helps position local businesses to expand operations, pursue new investment opportunities, and remain competitive within the regional and global economy.



2 Business Retention & Expansion

Key Actions

To support business retention and expansion, Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism will:

- Conduct regular outreach and engagement with businesses across Middlesex County to maintain strong relationships and identify emerging opportunities and challenges
- Maintain structured communication with key employers to better understand business conditions, workforce needs, and potential expansion opportunities
- Connect businesses and entrepreneurs with regional organizations that provide advisory services, employment services, financing programs, and entrepreneurship support
- Support awareness of programs and services that assist businesses with innovation, productivity improvements, and operational growth
- Coordinate with local municipalities and regional partners to respond to business expansion opportunities and address barriers to growth where appropriate
- Recognize and promote business investment and achievements within Middlesex County communities to reinforce the value of local employers and strengthen the regional business environment

Performance Indicators

Progress toward this outcome will be measured through:

- Number of businesses engaged through employer outreach activities
- Number of business expansion opportunities identified or supported
- Number of businesses connected with regional, provincial, or federal support programs
- Challenges identified and addressed through regional coordination
- Business expansion or investment projects supported within Middlesex County



3 Workforce & Talent Development

Objective

To support the alignment of workforce development efforts with the needs of Middlesex County employers and strengthen regional collaboration that supports talent attraction, retention, and workforce participation.

Strategic Approach

Access to a skilled and available workforce is a key factor influencing business investment, expansion, and long-term economic competitiveness. Employers across Middlesex County continue to identify workforce availability and skills alignment as important considerations affecting recruitment, retention, and future growth.

While workforce training and education programs are delivered by secondary schools, post-secondary institutions, employment service providers, and provincial and federal programs, Middlesex County plays an important coordinating role by supporting connections between employers, workforce partners, and regional institutions.

Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism works collaboratively with local municipalities, workforce development organizations, educational institutions, and employer groups to strengthen awareness of employment opportunities, improve alignment between training and labour market needs, and support initiatives that enhance workforce participation across the region.

Improving workforce mobility is also an important component of labour market access. Regional transportation initiatives such as Middlesex County Connect expand labour market participation by improving access to employment, education, healthcare, and services across Middlesex County and neighbouring communities.

Through coordination with workforce partners and municipal interest-holders, Middlesex County helps strengthen the region's talent pipeline and improve access to employment opportunities for residents across the County.



3 Workforce & Talent Development

Key Actions

To support workforce and talent development, Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism will:

- Collaborate with workforce development organizations, educational institutions, and employment service providers to strengthen alignment between workforce training and employer needs
- Support employer engagement initiatives that improve awareness of local career opportunities and workforce pathways within Middlesex County
- Promote Middlesex County as a competitive place to live, work, and build a career within Southwestern Ontario
- Support initiatives that strengthen connections between employers and students through co-operative education, internships, and experiential learning opportunities
- Work with municipal and regional partners to improve workforce mobility and access to employment opportunities, including coordination with intercommunity transportation initiatives such as Middlesex County Connect
- Share labour market information and workforce insights with municipal partners and interested parties to support regional workforce planning

Performance Indicators

Progress toward this outcome will be measured through:

- Workforce development initiatives supported through regional partnerships
- Employer engagement activities related to workforce development
- Workforce promotion and talent attraction initiatives undertaken with regional partners
- Workforce partnership initiatives involving educational institutions and employment service providers
- Employer feedback regarding workforce availability and labour market alignment



4 Regional Economic Intelligence & Data

Objective

To strengthen the availability, quality, and accessibility of economic and investment-related information in order to support informed decision-making, investment attraction, business retention, and regional economic planning.

Strategic Approach

Reliable economic data and investment-ready information are essential to effective economic development. Businesses, investors, site selectors, and municipal partners rely on accurate and up-to-date information when evaluating locations, assessing market opportunities, and making investment decisions.

Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism supports regional economic competitiveness by maintaining and sharing economic intelligence related to local industry sectors, workforce characteristics, employment lands, and business activity. This information supports both external investment promotion and internal decision-making by municipal partners and regional interest-holders.

The County works collaboratively with local municipalities, regional economic development organizations, and senior levels of government to ensure that economic information related to Middlesex County remains accurate, consistent, and aligned with recognized provincial and national data sources.

By strengthening the availability and accessibility of economic information, Middlesex County supports business attraction, employer expansion, and regional economic planning while improving the ability of municipal partners to respond to investment opportunities.





Key Actions

To support regional economic intelligence and data development, Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism will:

- Maintain current economic profiles and community information that support investment attraction and business development activities
- Collect, analyze, and share economic and labour market information relevant to Middlesex County businesses and industry sectors
- Maintain and update business and investment information resources that improve access to accurate information about Middlesex County's economy
- Coordinate with municipal partners and regional organizations to ensure consistency of economic data and investment information across the region
- Support the development and maintenance of business and employment land information that assists investors and site selectors in evaluating opportunities within Middlesex County
- Share economic insights and analysis with municipal partners and interested parties to support informed economic development decision-making

Performance Indicators

Progress toward this outcome will be measured through:

- Economic and community profile information maintained and updated
- Business and investment information resources developed or maintained
- Economic data and labour market insights shared with municipal and regional partners
- Investment inquiries supported through economic intelligence and data resources
- Economic analysis and reporting supporting County economic development initiatives



5 Regional Economic Infrastructure & Site Readiness

Objective

To strengthen the readiness of employment lands and supporting infrastructure across Middlesex County in order to improve the region's ability to attract industrial, commercial, and employment-related investment.

Strategic Approach

The availability of development-ready employment lands supported by appropriate infrastructure is a critical factor influencing business investment decisions. Investors and site selectors evaluate potential locations based on planning status, servicing capacity, transportation access, and the overall readiness of sites for development.

While local municipalities retain responsibility for land use planning, development approvals, and municipal servicing infrastructure, Middlesex County plays an important role in supporting regional investment readiness by coordinating information, supporting planning initiatives, and facilitating collaboration among municipal partners.

Through targeted programs and regional coordination, the County supports municipal efforts to improve the competitiveness of employment lands and strengthen the region's ability to respond to investment opportunities. Improving employment land readiness and supporting infrastructure planning contributes to long-term industrial and commercial assessment growth while supporting employment opportunities across Middlesex County communities.

Programs such as the Middlesex County Employment Lands Readiness Program and the Middlesex County Loan Program help municipal partners advance studies, planning work, and infrastructure investments that support employment land development and regional economic growth.





5 Regional Economic Infrastructure & Site Readiness

Key Actions

To support regional economic infrastructure and site readiness, Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism will:

- Maintain and update information related to employment lands and development opportunities across Middlesex County
- Work collaboratively with municipal partners to identify employment lands with strong development potential and market competitiveness
- Support planning studies and technical work that advance employment land readiness through the Middlesex County Employment Lands Readiness Program
- Assist municipalities in advancing growth-related infrastructure projects through the Middlesex County Loan Program
- Coordinate information related to infrastructure capacity, servicing availability, and development readiness across municipal partners
- Support regional efforts to strengthen the competitiveness of employment lands for commercial and industrial investment

Performance Indicators

Progress toward this outcome will be measured through:

- Employment land readiness initiatives supported through County programs
- Infrastructure projects supported through the Middlesex County Loan Program
- Investment inquiries supported with employment land and infrastructure information
- Employment lands advancing toward development-ready status across the County
- Growth in commercial and industrial assessment across Middlesex County



6 Destination Development & Regional Tourism Marketing

Objective

To strengthen tourism across Middlesex County by promoting destinations, experiences, and events.

Strategic Approach

Tourism supports local businesses, hospitality operators, and communities, as well as events across Middlesex County. Regional marketing and coordination helps connect visitors to local destinations while supporting economic activity in rural communities.

Middlesex County will continue to work with tourism operators, event organizers, and municipal partners to promote the region's tourism assets and support destination development initiatives.





6 Destination Development & Regional Tourism Marketing

Key Actions

To support tourism development, Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism will:

- Promote Middlesex County tourism assets through regional marketing initiatives
- Support destination development initiatives that enhance visitor experiences
- Coordinate regional tourism promotion with municipal and industry partners
- Support events and initiatives that attract visitors to Middlesex County communities
- Collaborate with tourism organizations and operators across the region



Performance Indicators

Progress toward this outcome will be measured through:

- Tourism marketing initiatives delivered
- Tourism partnerships supported
- Regional tourism campaigns undertaken
- Tourism events or initiatives supported
- Engagement metrics associated with tourism promotion initiatives

Implementation, Monitoring & Reporting

Implementation

The Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism Strategic Plan will be implemented through the annual budget aligned with the six strategic outcomes identified in this document.

While the strategic plan establishes the overall direction for the County's economic development and tourism efforts, implementation will remain flexible to allow the department to respond to emerging economic opportunities, changes in market conditions, and new provincial or federal programs that support economic growth.

The Economic Development & Tourism Department will continue to work closely with County departments, local municipalities, and regional partners to ensure that initiatives undertaken under this strategy support broader municipal and regional priorities.

Key implementation mechanisms will include:

- coordination with local municipal economic development efforts
- continued operation of County investment enablement programs, including the Community Improvement Support Program, the Middlesex County Loan Program, and the Employment Lands Readiness Program
- participation in regional economic partnerships and workforce initiatives
- investment attraction and tourism promotion activities aligned with the strategic outcomes of this plan

Monitoring and Performance Measurement

Monitoring and performance measurement are essential to ensuring that the County's investment in economic development and tourism generates measurable value for the region.

The Economic Development & Tourism Department will track activities and outcomes associated with the six strategic outcomes identified in this strategic plan.

Performance indicators will focus on both activity levels and economic outcomes, including investment opportunities generated, businesses engaged, and development initiatives supported.

Where possible, the County will also monitor broader economic indicators that reflect regional economic activity and assessment growth.

Performance monitoring will focus on indicators such as:

- investment inquiries and opportunities supported
- business outreach and engagement activities
- business expansion or development projects supported
- employment lands readiness initiatives undertaken
- infrastructure projects supported through County programs
- tourism promotion initiatives and partnerships
- participation in workforce and regional economic initiatives

These indicators will provide an overview of economic development activity across the County and demonstrate how the department is supporting municipal partners and regional economic growth.

Assessment Growth Monitoring

A key objective of Middlesex County's economic development efforts is to support the long-term growth and diversification of the County's property assessment base, particularly in the industrial and commercial sectors.

Implementation, Monitoring & Reporting

The County will continue to monitor assessment trends and development activity across Middlesex County to better understand how economic development initiatives contribute to regional growth.

Monitoring will include:

- tracking industrial and commercial assessment growth
- monitoring development activity within employment lands
- evaluating projects supported through County economic development programs
- reviewing economic indicators that influence regional investment activity

This information will support ongoing evaluation of economic development initiatives and help inform future strategic planning and program design.

Reporting to Council

The Economic Development & Tourism Department will report quarterly to Middlesex County Council on the implementation of this strategic plan.

Reporting will summarize:

- activities undertaken under each strategic outcome
- performance indicators associated with economic development initiatives
- projects supported through County economic development programs
- partnerships and collaborations supporting regional economic growth
- emerging opportunities and challenges affecting the regional economy

This reporting will provide transparency and accountability regarding the County's economic development activities and ensure Council remains informed about progress under the strategic plan.

Implementation, Monitoring & Reporting

Strategic Plan Review

This strategic plan covers the period from 2026 to 2030. Over this time, the County will monitor economic trends, program performance, and regional economic conditions to ensure that the strategic plan remains relevant and effective.

A review of the strategic plan may be undertaken during the strategic plan period if significant changes occur in the regional economy, provincial policy environment, or municipal priorities.

At the conclusion of the strategic plan period, Middlesex County will evaluate outcomes and develop an updated strategic plan to guide future economic development and tourism service delivery initiatives.



Appendix A - Background Research and Document Review

The Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism Strategy was informed by a review of regional economic data, municipal policy documents, and economic development best practices. This research was undertaken to ensure that the strategic plan reflects the economic conditions and opportunities within Middlesex County and aligns with broader regional and provincial economic development priorities.

The review also helped identify the appropriate role for Middlesex County within the regional economic development system and informed the strategic outcomes and actions contained within the strategic plan.

Strategic Development Approach

The development of this strategic plan incorporated several sources of information, including regional economic data, reviews of municipal and regional planning documents, analysis of Middlesex County economic development programs, and a structured strategic assessment of regional strengths and opportunities.

Particular attention was given to the realities of Ontario's two-tier municipal structure. Within this system, lower-tier municipalities retain responsibility for land use planning, development approvals, and municipal servicing infrastructure, while upper-tier municipalities support economic development through regional coordination, promotion of investment opportunities, and programs that enable development.

The strategic plan focuses on areas where Middlesex County can add value within this framework, including investment attraction support, employer engagement, regional economic intelligence, and initiatives that help municipalities advance development opportunities.

Regional Economic Overview

Middlesex County is part of the broader London-Middlesex economic region in Southwestern Ontario. The County benefits from proximity to the City of London and strong transportation connections to major markets in Ontario and the United States.

Background Research and Document Review

According to the 2021 Census, Middlesex County had a population of approximately 81,700 residents, representing steady population growth over the previous decade. The County is expected to continue experiencing population growth as housing development expands across Southwestern Ontario and the London metropolitan area.

The broader London-Middlesex region supports a labour force of more than 220,000 workers, reflecting a diverse regional economy that includes manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare, retail trade, construction, and professional services.

Several sectors play an important role in the Middlesex County economy:

- Agriculture and agri-food production, which represents a significant share of land use and economic activity across the County
- Manufacturing, which employs approximately 16 percent of the County's workforce
- Construction and population-related services, which have grown in response to regional population growth
- Tourism and hospitality, which support small businesses and community events across the County

These sectors contribute to a diverse economic base that supports employment opportunities and investment across the region.

Review of Existing Plans and Policies

The strategic plan was further informed by a review of relevant municipal plans and economic development policies.

The Middlesex County Strategic Plan identifies economic prosperity, regional collaboration, and sustainable community growth as key priorities for the County. The Economic Development & Tourism Strategic Plan supports these priorities by focusing on investment attraction, employer engagement, and initiatives that strengthen regional competitiveness.

Community Improvement Plans adopted by lower-tier municipalities were reviewed to understand the incentives currently used to support redevelopment, business expansion, and investment attraction. These municipal programs informed the development of the Middlesex County

Background Research and Document Review

Community Improvement Support Program, which allows the County to share in the cost of municipal incentives that support economic development.

Provincial economic development policies and investment attraction programs were also considered to ensure that the strategic plan aligns with broader economic initiatives and funding opportunities available to municipalities and businesses across Ontario.

SOAR Analysis (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results)

A SOAR analysis of Middlesex County was undertaken as part of the strategic plan development process to identify key strategic priorities for the region.

The SOAR framework examines:

- regional strengths
- emerging opportunities
- long-term aspirations
- measurable results

This analysis identified several themes that informed the Strategic Plan, including the importance of strengthening regional collaboration among municipalities, supporting investment attraction and employment land readiness, maintaining strong relationships with existing employers, and improving access to economic data and market intelligence.

The findings of the SOAR analysis informed the strategic outcomes identified in this strategic plan and ensured that the recommended actions reflect both current economic conditions and long-term opportunities for the region.

Appendix B - Economic and Demographic Profile of Middlesex County

Economic and Demographic Profile of Middlesex County

This appendix provides an overview of the demographic, labour market, and economic characteristics of Middlesex County. The purpose of this profile is to provide evidence-based context for the strategic outcomes identified in the Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism Strategy.

Understanding population growth, employment trends, business activity, and regional economic connections is essential to identifying opportunities for investment attraction, business growth, workforce development, and long-term assessment expansion across the County.

The analysis presented in this appendix draws on available economic and labour market data as well as regional research conducted during the development of the strategic plan.

Population and Demographic Trends

Middlesex County has experienced sustained population growth in recent years as part of the broader expansion of the London–Middlesex economic region.

According to the 2021 Census, Middlesex County had a population of approximately 81,700 residents, representing averaged growth of roughly 9 percent between 2016 and 2021. Population growth has been driven by several factors, including housing demand, employment access to regional labour markets, and the attractiveness of rural communities located within commuting distance of the City of London.

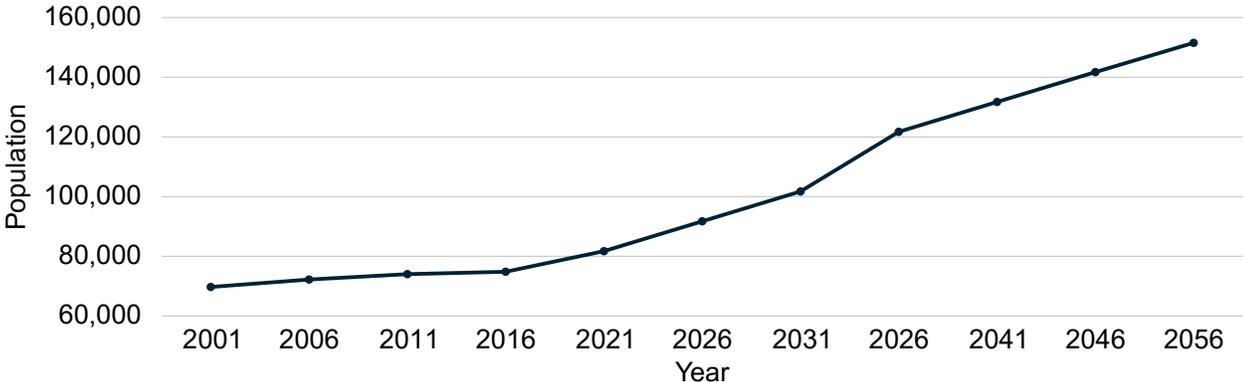
Growth is expected to continue over the coming decades as Southwestern Ontario continues to expand. Regional projections indicate that Middlesex County's population could approach 100,000 residents by 2030, with longer-term projections suggesting continued growth beyond that period.

Economic and Demographic Profile of Middlesex County

Population growth presents both opportunities and challenges for economic development. Increasing population supports labour force growth, consumer demand, and business development. At the same time, demographic changes, including an aging population and slower growth in core working-age cohorts, may place pressure on labour force availability.

Supporting workforce attraction, housing diversity, and regional transportation connectivity will therefore remain important considerations for Middlesex County and its municipal partners.

Population Projections for Middlesex County 2001 to 2056



Employment Trends

Employment in Middlesex County has experienced strong growth in recent years and is expected to continue expanding through the remainder of the decade.

Total employment increased from 34,374 jobs in 2019 to approximately 42,189 jobs in 2025, representing an increase of 7,816 jobs (+22.7%) over that period. Employment is projected to reach approximately 45,719 jobs by 2030, representing an additional 8.4 percent growth between 2025 and 2030.

Growth has occurred across a range of sectors, reflecting both population expansion and broader economic shifts.

Economic and Demographic Profile of Middlesex County

Major Drivers of Employment Growth

Several sectors have experienced particularly strong employment gains between 2019 and 2025:



Health Care & Social Assistance

33%

Health care and social assistance added approximately 1,218 jobs (+33.1%), reflecting population growth and rising demand for health services.



Construction

27%

Construction added approximately 1,096 jobs (+27.3%), driven by population growth, housing development, and infrastructure investment.



Professional, Science & Technical

53%

Professional, scientific and technical services increased by 795 jobs (+53.9%), indicating increasing demand for knowledge-based services.



Agriculture

Agriculture plays a vital role in Middlesex County's economy, with steady employment growth reflecting ongoing agricultural activity and the strength of the region's farming sector.



Education

52%

Educational services expanded significantly, adding 934 jobs (+52.0%), reflecting growth in local school systems and educational institutions.



Retail Trade

Retail trade also saw steady employment growth, supported by strong consumer demand across the County.

Emerging and High-Growth Sectors

Several smaller sectors also experienced strong percentage growth between 2019 and 2025.

- Management of companies and enterprises grew by approximately 93 percent, reflecting growth in corporate management and head-office functions.
- Information and cultural industries increased by approximately 39.7 percent.
- Finance and insurance expanded by approximately 38.8 percent.

Although these sectors represent smaller portions of total employment, their growth indicates increasing diversification within the regional economy.

Economic and Demographic Profile of Middlesex County

Outlook to 2030

Employment growth is projected to continue across several sectors through 2030. Health care, construction, manufacturing, and professional services are expected to remain key drivers of employment expansion.

Middlesex County continues to exceed provincial and national averages for employment in agriculture, manufacturing, and construction, reflecting the County's strong goods-producing economic base alongside growing service industries.

Overall, employment trends suggest a diversified and resilient regional economy supported by both population-driven sectors and export-oriented industries.

Business Activity and Business Counts

Business activity within Middlesex County has also expanded in recent years. Between 2019 and 2025, the number of businesses increased from 9,775 to 11,381 establishments, representing an increase of 1,606 businesses (+16.4%).

Several sectors experienced particularly strong growth:



Transportation and Warehousing

46%

Transportation and warehousing increased by approximately 46 percent, reflecting growth in logistics and supply chain activity.



Management of Companies and Enterprises

64%

Management of companies and enterprises expanded by approximately 64 percent, indicating growth in corporate management and organizational headquarters.



Information and Cultural

40%

Information and cultural industries grew by approximately 40 percent.



Construction

15%

Construction businesses increased by 181 establishments (+15.6%), reflecting strong development activity.



Health Care and Social Assistance

29%

Health care and social assistance increased by approximately 29 percent, aligning with demographic changes.

Economic and Demographic Profile of Middlesex County

Agriculture and related industries also recorded modest growth, increasing by approximately 5.2 percent during the period.

Some sectors experienced declines in the number of establishments, including wholesale trade, finance and insurance, and professional services. In many cases these changes reflect consolidation or restructuring within industries rather than a decline in economic activity. Short-term trends from 2024 to 2025 show continued economic expansion, with 390 additional businesses (+3.4%) added in a single year.

Overall, these trends highlight the diversity of Middlesex County's economy, with growth in logistics, services, population-serving sectors, and construction-related industries.

Industrial and Commercial Assessment Context

Property taxation remains a primary source of municipal revenue across Middlesex County and its local municipalities. Maintaining a balanced mix of residential and non-residential assessment is an important factor in long-term fiscal sustainability.

Commercial and industrial development generally generates significant municipal revenue while placing proportionally lower demand on municipal services compared with residential development. Strengthening the non-residential assessment base therefore supports employment growth, improves the balance between residential and non-residential taxation, and enhances municipal fiscal capacity.

In recent years, Middlesex County has experienced strong growth in residential assessment, reflecting population growth and housing development across the region. Growth in commercial and industrial assessment has been more modest.

This highlights the importance of continued focus on:

- employment lands readiness
- investment attraction
- infrastructure capacity
- coordinated economic development initiatives with local municipalities

Programs such as the Community Improvement Support Program, the Middlesex County Loan Program, and the Employment Lands Readiness Program are designed to help local municipalities advance development opportunities and strengthen the non-residential assessment base.

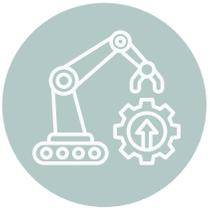
Economic and Demographic Profile of Middlesex County

Regional Economic Strengths and Key Sectors

Several industries play an important role in the Middlesex County economy.



Agriculture remains a foundational component of the County's economic base. Middlesex County contains extensive agricultural lands supporting crop production, livestock operations, and agri-food processing. These activities contribute to a broader agri-business ecosystem that includes transportation, equipment supply, and food processing industries.



Manufacturing remains a key export-oriented sector. Businesses located in Middlesex County benefit from access to major transportation corridors, supply chains across Southwestern Ontario, and proximity to regional labour markets. Increasing automation, advanced manufacturing technologies, and integration with global supply chains continue to shape the sector.



Logistics and Distribution - Middlesex County's proximity to Highways 401 and 402, along with access to regional transportation networks and markets in Ontario and the United States, positions the County as a competitive location for warehousing and distribution operations. Growth in e-commerce, agri-food logistics, and manufacturing supply chains is increasing demand for distribution facilities across Southwestern Ontario.



Population growth across the London–Middlesex region has driven strong growth in sectors such as health care, education, construction, retail trade, and professional services. These industries support both local employment opportunities and the broader regional economy.



Tourism contributes to local economic activity through agri-tourism, events, recreational activities, and cultural attractions. Regional tourism promotion helps connect visitors to communities throughout Middlesex County and supports small businesses, hospitality operators, and tourism-related employment.

Economic and Demographic Profile of Middlesex County

Regional Transportation and Workforce Connectivity

Regional mobility plays an important role in supporting economic development across Middlesex County. Access to employment centres, education, healthcare, and services influences labour market participation and business competitiveness.

Middlesex County Connect, the County's intercommunity transit system, is an important component of the region's transportation network. The service provides transit connections between communities across Middlesex County and neighbouring municipalities, improving access to employment centres, educational institutions, and services.

Recent service improvements have strengthened east–west connectivity across the region and improved access between smaller communities and major employment hubs, including the City of London.

By expanding regional mobility, Middlesex County Connect supports workforce participation, helps employers access a broader labour pool, and contributes to inclusive economic development across the County.

The long-term effectiveness of the service will depend on continued collaboration among municipal partners, senior levels of government, and transportation providers. Ongoing monitoring of ridership, service performance, and funding sustainability will inform future decisions regarding service expansion and optimization.



Economic and Demographic Profile of Middlesex County

Implications for the Strategic Plan

The demographic and economic trends outlined in this appendix highlight several key considerations for economic development within Middlesex County.

Population growth, regional economic integration, and strong transportation connectivity create opportunities for continued investment and employment growth. At the same time, workforce availability, infrastructure readiness, and the balance between residential and non-residential development remain important long-term considerations.

The strategic outcomes identified in the Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism Strategic Plan respond directly to these conditions by focusing on:

- regional investment attraction
- business retention and expansion
- workforce and talent development
- economic intelligence and data
- employment land readiness
- tourism promotion and destination development

Together, these priorities support long-term economic growth, strengthen regional competitiveness, and contribute to the continued expansion of the County's industrial and commercial assessment base.



Appendix C - SOAR Analysis (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results)

As part of the development of the Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism Strategic Plan, a strategic assessment was undertaken using the SOAR framework. SOAR stands for Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results, and is commonly used in strategic planning to identify key advantages, emerging opportunities, long-term objectives, and measurable outcomes.

The purpose of the SOAR analysis was to evaluate the economic development environment within Middlesex County and identify strategic priorities that could guide the County's role in supporting economic growth between 2026 and 2030.

The analysis considered regional economic conditions, existing municipal programs, and the broader economic environment within Southwestern Ontario.

Regional Strengths

The SOAR analysis identified several strengths that contribute to the economic competitiveness of Middlesex County.

One of the County's most significant strengths is its geographic location within Southwestern Ontario, providing access to major transportation corridors, regional markets, and cross-border trade routes. The County benefits from proximity to Highway 401, one of the busiest transportation corridors in North America, which provides efficient access to major markets including Toronto, Detroit, and the broader Great Lakes region.

The County also benefits from its position within the London-Middlesex economic region, which provides access to a large labour force, post-secondary institutions, and regional infrastructure networks. Many businesses located within Middlesex County benefit from proximity to London's workforce, supply chains, and economic institutions.

SOAR Analysis

A second major strength is the diversity of the County's economic base. Agriculture, agri-food processing, manufacturing, logistics, construction, and service industries all contribute to the regional economy. This diversity provides economic resilience and helps reduce reliance on any single industry sector.

Agriculture in particular remains a foundational component of the local economy. Middlesex County contains extensive agricultural lands and supports a wide range of crop production, livestock operations, and agri-food businesses that contribute to the broader regional agri-food sector.

Manufacturing plays an important role in the regional economy, with a significant share of the workforce employed in manufacturing-related industries. Manufacturing businesses located within the County contribute to regional, provincial, national and global supply chains and export activity.

The County's quality of life and rural communities also represent an important strength. Communities across Middlesex County offer attractive living environments, access to natural amenities, and proximity to urban employment centres. These characteristics support population growth and contribute to the region's ability to attract workers and businesses.

Economic Opportunities

The analysis identified several opportunities that could support continued economic growth across the region.

One important opportunity is the potential to attract new industrial and commercial investment within Middlesex County. Population growth and economic expansion across Southwestern Ontario are increasing demand for employment lands and industrial development opportunities. Municipalities that are able to prepare development-ready sites and provide appropriate infrastructure will be well positioned to compete for this investment.

Related to this opportunity is the importance of employment lands readiness. Investment attraction often depends on the availability of sites that are properly planned, serviced, and ready for development. Supporting municipalities in preparing employment lands through planning studies, infrastructure investments, and coordination with regional partners can significantly improve the region's competitiveness.

SOAR Analysis

Another opportunity exists in strengthening relationships with existing businesses and employers. Local businesses are often the primary source of job creation and economic growth within communities. Maintaining strong relationships with employers allows municipalities and economic development organizations to better understand industry trends, identify expansion opportunities, and respond to emerging challenges.

Workforce development also represents a significant opportunity. As the regional economy continues to grow, ensuring that employers have access to skilled labour will remain a critical factor influencing investment decisions. Partnerships with workforce development organizations, educational institutions, and industry groups can help address labour market challenges and support long-term economic growth.

Finally, opportunities exist to strengthen regional tourism promotion and enhance the visibility of Middlesex County as a destination for visitors and tourism-related businesses.

Regional Aspirations

The SOAR analysis also examined long-term aspirations for economic development within Middlesex County.

One key aspiration is to ensure that Middlesex County remains a competitive location for business investment and employment growth within Southwestern Ontario. This requires maintaining strong relationships with municipal partners, supporting the development of employment lands, and promoting the region to potential investors.

Another aspiration is to support sustainable and balanced economic growth across communities throughout the County. Economic development efforts should support both existing businesses and new investment opportunities while maintaining the rural character and quality of life that define many Middlesex County communities.

The County also aspires to strengthen its role as a regional economic development partner, working collaboratively with municipalities, businesses, industry organizations, and government agencies to support economic opportunities.

Finally, the region aims to ensure that economic development initiatives contribute to long-term prosperity, including employment opportunities, business growth, and expansion of the municipal assessment base.

SOAR Analysis

Desired Results

The final component of the SOAR framework focuses on measurable results that indicate progress toward the region's economic development objectives.

The desired results identified through the analysis align closely with the strategic outcomes contained within the Economic Development & Tourism Strategic Plan. These results include:

- increased private sector investment across Middlesex County
- expansion and retention of local businesses and employers
- improved readiness of employment lands for development
- stronger regional partnerships supporting economic growth
- increased tourism activity and visitor engagement
- continued growth of the County's industrial and commercial assessment base

Achieving these results will require collaboration among municipalities, businesses, regional organizations, and government partners.

Implications for the Strategic Plan

The findings from the SOAR analysis directly informed the strategic outcomes contained in the Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism Strategic Plan.

The analysis reinforced the importance of focusing on regional coordination, investment attraction support, employer engagement, workforce development, economic intelligence, employment land readiness, and tourism promotion.

These priorities reflect areas where Middlesex County can play a meaningful role within the regional economic development system while supporting municipalities in attracting investment and strengthening local economies.

The strategic outcomes presented in the main body of the strategic plan build upon these findings and establish the framework for Middlesex County's economic development and tourism initiatives between 2026 and 2030.

Appendix D - Application of SOAR Findings to Strategic Outcomes

The SOAR analysis conducted during the development of the Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism Strategic Plan identified key strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and desired results for the region. These findings provided an analytical foundation for the strategic direction outlined in the strategic plan.

This appendix explains how the themes identified through the SOAR analysis informed the six strategic outcomes that guide the work of Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism between 2026 and 2030.

Linking Strategic Analysis to Strategic Direction

The SOAR analysis highlighted several important characteristics of the Middlesex County economy. These included the region's strong agricultural and manufacturing base, its geographic position within the broader London–Middlesex economic region, and the importance of collaboration among municipalities and regional partners in supporting economic growth.

The analysis also identified emerging opportunities related to investment attraction, workforce development, employment land readiness, and regional tourism promotion. These opportunities informed the strategic priorities contained within the strategic plan.

The six strategic outcomes identified in the strategic plan reflect areas where Middlesex County can play a meaningful role in supporting economic growth while recognizing the responsibilities of lower-tier municipalities within Ontario's two-tier municipal structure.

Each outcome therefore represents an area where the County can contribute to regional economic competitiveness through coordination, promotion, research, and program support.

Application of SOAR Findings to Strategic Outcomes

Investment Attraction

The SOAR analysis identified investment attraction as an important opportunity for the region. Population growth and economic expansion across Southwestern Ontario are increasing demand for employment lands and industrial development opportunities.

Middlesex County's location within the London–Middlesex economic region, combined with access to major transportation corridors and regional labour markets, creates favourable conditions for attracting investment.

The Regional Investment Attraction outcome within the strategic plan responds directly to this opportunity. The County's role focuses on promoting the region to potential investors, supporting site selection inquiries, and coordinating municipal responses to investment opportunities.

By strengthening regional promotion and improving coordination among municipalities, the County can help ensure that communities across Middlesex County are positioned to compete for private sector investment.

Business Retention and Expansion

The SOAR analysis also highlighted the importance of supporting existing businesses and employers across the region. Local businesses are often the primary source of job creation and economic growth within communities.

Maintaining strong relationships with businesses allows municipalities and economic development organizations to better understand industry trends, identify expansion opportunities, and respond to emerging challenges affecting businesses.

The Business Retention and Expansion outcome within the Strategic Plan reflects this priority. Through outreach and engagement with businesses, Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism works with municipal partners to identify opportunities for growth and connect businesses with relevant support programs and partners.

This outcome supports the long-term sustainability of the regional economy by helping existing employers remain competitive and continue expanding their operations.

Application of SOAR Findings to Strategic Outcomes

Workforce and Talent Development

Workforce availability was identified as another important consideration within the SOAR analysis. Employers across many sectors report challenges related to labour shortages and workforce availability, particularly in industries such as manufacturing, construction, and healthcare.

Addressing these challenges requires collaboration among municipalities, workforce development organizations, educational institutions, and employers.

The Workforce and Talent Development outcome reflects the importance of these partnerships. Middlesex County supports regional workforce initiatives and collaborates with partners to ensure that employers have access to the skilled labour required to support business growth and investment.

Promoting Middlesex County communities as attractive places to live and work also supports long-term workforce development efforts.

Economic Intelligence and Data

The SOAR analysis highlighted the importance of reliable economic data and market intelligence in supporting economic development initiatives.

Municipalities and investors require access to accurate information about population trends, labour markets, infrastructure capacity, and economic conditions in order to make informed decisions.

The Regional Economic Intelligence and Data outcome responds to this need by focusing on the development and maintenance of regional economic data resources. Middlesex County provides economic analysis and data that support investment attraction, municipal planning, and regional economic decision-making.

Strengthening access to economic information helps ensure that municipalities and businesses are able to identify opportunities and respond effectively to changing economic conditions.

Application of SOAR Findings to Strategic Outcomes

Employment Land Readiness

The availability of development-ready employment lands was identified as a key factor influencing investment attraction within the region.

Businesses seeking to invest in new facilities often require sites that are properly planned, serviced, and ready for development. Municipalities that can provide development-ready sites are therefore more competitive in attracting investment.

The Regional Economic Infrastructure and Site Readiness outcome reflects this priority. Middlesex County supports municipalities in preparing employment lands through initiatives such as the Employment Lands Readiness Program and the Middlesex County Loan Program.

These programs help municipalities undertake studies, planning work, and infrastructure investments required to bring employment lands to market and support industrial and commercial development.

Tourism Promotion and Destination Development

The SOAR analysis also identified opportunities to strengthen tourism promotion and destination development across Middlesex County.

Tourism supports a wide range of local businesses, including hospitality operators, restaurants, cultural attractions, and recreational facilities. Regional marketing initiatives can help increase visitor awareness of these destinations and support economic activity within communities across the County.

The Destination Development and Regional Tourism Marketing outcome reflects this opportunity. Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism works with municipal partners, tourism organizations, and community groups to promote tourism experiences and support destination development initiatives.

These efforts contribute to the broader promotion of Middlesex County as a place to visit, live, and invest.

Application of SOAR Findings to Strategic Outcomes

Strategic Plan Alignment

The strategic outcomes contained in the Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism strategic Plan reflect the findings of the SOAR analysis and the broader research undertaken during the development of the strategic plan.

Together, these outcomes establish a clear framework for the County's economic development and tourism initiatives over the next five years. By focusing on investment attraction, employer engagement, workforce development, economic intelligence, employment land readiness, and tourism promotion, Middlesex County can support long-term economic growth and strengthen the competitiveness of communities across the region.

These priorities also support the continued expansion of the County's industrial and commercial assessment base, which contributes to the financial sustainability of municipal services and infrastructure.



Appendix E - Regional Economic Development Partners and Governance

Economic development in Middlesex County is delivered through a collaborative network of municipal, regional, provincial, and federal partners. Economic activity, labour markets, supply chains, and investment decisions operate across municipal boundaries. As a result, successful economic development requires coordination among multiple organizations that contribute expertise, resources, and programs supporting business growth, workforce development, investment attraction, and tourism promotion.

Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism works in partnership with local municipalities, regional economic development organizations, workforce agencies, educational institutions, business associations, and senior levels of government to strengthen the regional economy and support sustainable economic growth.

The County's role within this network is to support regional coordination, facilitate collaboration among partners, and connect businesses and investors with the appropriate organizations and resources that support business development and expansion.

Municipal and Regional Economic Development Partners

Middlesex County is comprised of eight local municipalities that retain responsibility for local land use planning, development approvals, infrastructure servicing, and community-level economic development initiatives. The County works collaboratively with these municipalities to coordinate investment attraction efforts, support business retention and expansion activities, and improve regional investment readiness.

Local municipal partners include:

- Municipality of North Middlesex
- Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc
- Municipality of Thames Centre
- Township of Adelaide Metcalfe
- Township of Lucan Biddulph
- Township of Middlesex Centre
- Township of Southwest Middlesex
- Village of Newbury

Regional Economic Development Partners and Governance

Given Middlesex County's geographic position surrounding the City of London, the regional economy is closely interconnected with the City through shared labour markets, transportation systems, supply chains, and sector clusters. Collaboration with the City of London and regional economic development organizations helps ensure that investment attraction and economic development activities are coordinated and mutually supportive.

Regional economic development collaboration also includes partnerships with organizations such as:

- Southern Ontario Marketing Alliance (SOMA)
- Ontario Manufacturing Communities Alliance (OMCA)
- Ontario Food Cluster (OFC)
- Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC)

These organizations support regional promotion, sector development initiatives, and policy advocacy that strengthen Southwestern Ontario's competitiveness for business investment.

Workforce Development and Employment Partners

Workforce availability and skills alignment are important considerations for businesses operating in Middlesex County. Economic development activities therefore involve collaboration with workforce development organizations, employment services, and training providers that support employers and job seekers across the region.

Key workforce development partners include:

- London and Area Works
- Workforce Planning and Development Board (regional workforce planning organizations)
- Community Futures Development Corporations (Middlesex and Western Ontario)
- Employment service providers operating within the London–Middlesex region

These organizations provide labour market research, workforce planning support, employer engagement services, and employment programs that help connect workers with available job opportunities.

Regional Economic Development Partners and Governance

Education and Training Institutions

Middlesex County benefits from proximity to several major post-secondary institutions and training providers that support workforce development, research, and innovation.

These institutions play a critical role in preparing the regional workforce and supporting business innovation and technology adoption.

Key institutional partners include:

- Western University
- Fanshawe College
- Local secondary school boards operating within Middlesex County

Through collaboration with these institutions, Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism supports connections between employers, students, and workforce training programs, helping to strengthen the region's talent pipeline and improve awareness of local career opportunities.

Business and Industry Organizations

Business associations and industry organizations play an important role in representing the interests of local businesses, supporting networking opportunities, and providing information and advocacy that strengthens the regional business environment.

Key business organizations include:

- Chambers of Commerce operating within Middlesex County and the City of London
- Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC)
- London Small Business Centre
- TechAlliance of Southwestern Ontario

These organizations provide services that support business development, innovation, entrepreneurship, and knowledge-sharing among firms operating across the region.

Regional Economic Development Partners and Governance

Innovation, Research, and Investment Support Organizations

Middlesex County businesses also benefit from access to a broader regional innovation ecosystem that supports research, commercialization, and business growth.

Organizations supporting innovation and investment include:

- Ontario Centre of Innovation (OCI)
- National Research Council of Canada (NRC)
- Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC)

These organizations provide funding programs, technical expertise, and advisory services that support innovation, commercialization, and business expansion.

Tourism and Regional Promotion Organizations

Tourism development and promotion in Middlesex County is supported through partnerships with regional tourism organizations and industry associations that market Southwestern Ontario destinations and support tourism-related businesses.

Key partners include:

- Regional Tourism Organization 1 (RTO1)
- Tourism industry associations operating at the provincial, regional and national level

Through collaboration with these organizations, Middlesex County supports tourism promotion, destination marketing, and initiatives that strengthen tourism-related businesses across the County.

Regional Economic Development Partners and Governance

Provincial and Federal Government Partners

Provincial and federal governments provide many of the policy frameworks, funding programs, and economic development initiatives that support business investment, workforce development, infrastructure, and innovation.

Middlesex County works with a range of ministries and agencies to align local economic development priorities with available programs and funding opportunities.

These partnerships help businesses navigate government programs while supporting investments that contribute to economic growth, workforce development, and long-term regional competitiveness.

Role of Middlesex County within the Partnership Network

Within this collaborative ecosystem, Middlesex County Economic Development & Tourism plays a coordinating role that connects municipal partners, regional organizations, and businesses.

The department supports collaboration across partners by:

- Sharing economic and labour market information
- Coordinating responses to investment inquiries and opportunities
- Promoting Middlesex County as a competitive location for business investment
- Supporting business retention and expansion activities
- Facilitating connections between employers, workforce partners, and government programs

Through these partnerships, Middlesex County helps strengthen the regional economic development system while ensuring that local municipalities and regional organizations can work together effectively to support business growth and economic opportunity.

Appendix F - Key Economic Development Indicators

The following indicators will be monitored to track economic trends and investment activity across Middlesex County during the 2026–2030 strategic Plan period.

Key Indicator	Description	Reporting Frequency
Population Growth	Annual population growth within Middlesex County, reflecting continued residential development and labour force availability.	Annual
Industrial & Commercial Assessment	Growth in industrial and commercial assessment across Middlesex County, supporting a more balanced and sustainable municipal tax base.	Annual
Private-Sector Investment	Total value of private-sector investment facilitated or supported through County programs and economic development initiatives.	Annual
Business Counts	Total number of active businesses operating within Middlesex County across all industry sectors.	Annual
Employment	Total employment levels across key industry sectors within Middlesex County.	Annual
Lead Generation	Number of qualified business and investment attraction leads generated or supported through Middlesex County economic development initiatives and regional partnerships.	Annual
Employment Land Readiness	Employment lands advancing toward development-ready status through planning, servicing, or infrastructure improvements supported by municipal or County initiatives.	Annual

These indicators will be monitored annually and used to inform ongoing evaluation of the strateg’s effectiveness, alignment with County priorities, and opportunities to strengthen economic development efforts across Middlesex County.

