

Town of Grimsby  
Economic Development

# Strategic Action Plan 2022-2025

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OCTOBER 2022



TOWN OF  
**GRIMSBY**

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Downtown Grimsby.

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## Executive Summary

In the fall of 2021, the Town of Grimsby's Economic Development Advisory Committee (GEDAC) and the Economic Development Officer (EDO) undertook the task of developing an economic development strategic action plan. This strategic three-year action plan will serve as the foundation of a clear path for economic development actions that are achievable and it will be used to build on future strategies. The Town of Grimsby wants to be proactive with an action-oriented and result-based approach to guide the economic development mandate.

The strategic action plan was developed in-house with the assistance of many volunteers who guided the EDO to create a format that aligns with the Niagara Region Economic Development Strategy, detailed actions tied with budgets, resource support, timing, and performance metrics. During the three-year period, it is expected that the Town of Grimsby will be well into its journey to achieving its economic development goals and provide Council annual reports. The strategic action plan is a dynamic tool that the Town will use when anticipating and responding to emerging trends and opportunities in the marketplace to ensure Grimsby's competitiveness.

### The strategic action plan was derived from the three-phase methodology:

1. **Where are we now?** The economic base analysis was developed by the Niagara Workforce Planning Board (NWPB). The Board analyzed trends and existing factors related to population, demographics, income, education, workforce, industry, and business.
2. **Where do we want to go?** This phase focused on consultations with the business community and stakeholders, which included the Business Retention & Expansion report, Business Roundtable Workshops, GEDAC Working Group Workshops, and one-on-one interviews with members of Council. The results of these consultations formed the basis of where Grimsby's economic development needs to go.
3. **How do we get there?** The team developed objectives and action items through a critical evaluation of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOTs). This assessment helped to create the strategic goals, objectives and specific action items of the economic development strategic action plan.

Through the extensive consultation process, economic analysis, business focus groups, and surveys, five (5) strategic goals were identified as important to the current and future needs of Grimsby's economic development.

- Support business retention and expansion
- Workforce development and alignment
- Business attraction and investment readiness
- Collaborative marketing
- Support innovation, entrepreneurship, and home-based businesses

These strategic goals are supported with thirteen (13) objectives and thirty five (35) action items.

While the strategy will be advanced by the EDO, it is recognized that successful implementation will be the result of collaboration with many stakeholders and partners, including businesses, educational institutions, governments, and community organizations.

### Grimsby Economic Development Strategic Action Plan 2022-2025

Business Retention  
& Expansion

Workforce Development  
& Alignment

Business Attraction  
& Investment  
Readiness

Collaborative  
Marketing

Support Innovation  
Entrepreneurship &  
Home Business

## Introduction

The purpose of a three-year strategic action plan is to help Grimsby prepare for the obstacles ahead and keep the community's growth on track. An effective action plan that is achievable will serve as a foundation for future strategic elements and will keep Grimsby's activities focused. GEDAC and staff have embarked on creating a shorter term three-year economic development strategic action plan to address the immediate needs of Grimsby's business community and to ensure a strong foundation is built that will allow Town staff and local stakeholders to achieve longer-term strategies. It also allows Grimsby to have detailed action plans and clarity around Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time Based (SMART) objectives.

Through their endeavors, Council and GEDAC have long been supporting the Town's efforts to enhance Grimsby's economic development, as demonstrated by the 2020 decision to create a new Economic Development Officer position to support the Town's economic development initiatives. The EDO has since assisted with business expansion and retention initiatives; growth and success of the downtown business improvement area; business development support for Metrolinx investments at Casablanca in the form of a new GO Station; leveraging the possibility of new investments as a result of the new hospital; and the attraction of new businesses and investment.

Once the EDO joined the Grimsby team, a Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program was undertaken in 2021 in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and Grimsby and District Chamber of Commerce. The objective of the BR&E project was to collect data through a survey that would support the development of an economic development strategic action plan. Approximately seventy two (72) businesses in Grimsby responded to the Town's online survey. This provided staff with feedback regarding the local business community's perception of what was working well and where there was room for improvement. For example, many businesses approved and supported the Town's decision to create an Economic Development Officer position.

To compliment the results of the BR&E survey, a series of four (4) stakeholder roundtables were conducted in Q1 of 2022. This included participation from staff at the Town of Grimsby, Niagara Economic Development, Brock University, and the Employment Help Centre. In total, twenty (20) businesses participated in the roundtable events. Participants included a range of businesses from entrepreneurial home-based businesses to some of Grimsby's largest employers. This provided staff with insights and perspectives from the private-sector that were critical in informing Grimsby's economic development strategic action plan.



The consultation process is only a part of the foundation on which the Town's economic development strategic action plan has been created. The other process, known as an "Economic Base Analysis", allowed staff and GEDAC to that review and analyze the latest statistical information to better understand the economy. The Town of Grimsby is one of twelve (12) municipalities in the Niagara Region; however, it is in close proximity to the city of Hamilton. Therefore, the Economic Base Analysis required the review and consideration of the twelve (12) Niagara Region municipalities and the City of Hamilton's long term economic development strategies and the potential implications for the Town.

This included reviewing the following information:

- Economic Development Strategy Reviews
- Demographics
- Labour Force
- Business Counts
- Economic Sector Analysis

Analysing the above information enabled staff to identify and draft the specific priorities and actions that the Town will need to undertake to prepare Grimsby for the economic growth that will occur in the coming years as the province recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. This economic development strategic action plan will be the first of its kind for the Town of Grimsby and it would not have been possible without the countless hours of work provided by staff, but more importantly the efforts of volunteers that contributed their time and energy working towards a common goal of preparing for the Town's future.

## Situational Analysis

Grimsby is strategically identified as the gateway to Niagara, minutes away from Toronto, Hamilton, and the Canada/U.S. border. The ongoing trend of globalization and urbanization means that attributes of place are important for an increasingly mobile talent and capital. Grimsby's call to action for a renewed level of investment and a greater degree of co-operation among industry, labour, educators and orders of government to enhance competitiveness and stimulate sustained economic growth that would benefit the community aligns with the Niagara Region's Economic Development Strategy.

Grimsby benefits from Niagara's economic development strategy goals and also from the strong link of commuter flow to Hamilton as a member of the Hamilton Census Metropolitan area. The NWPB undertook an Economic Analysis for the Town of Grimsby ([Appendix A](#)). The information in this section is based on that analysis.

### Economic Base Analysis

The economic and industrial analysis will be revisited when post-COVID data is available, as well as when the full 2021 Census Canada data is available.

### Demographics

Between 2016 and 2021, Grimsby's population increased by 5.7%. While 2020 saw very little population increase in Grimsby, this was likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting the movement of people into and out of Niagara. However, with the completion of the Niagara Region's new Official Plan, the Town of Grimsby will need to plan for future growth.

Grimsby's population is comparatively younger than Niagara Region, with the median age being 43.6 years compared to a median of 45.7 years for the Region as a whole. However, it is important to note that more than one quarter of Grimsby's population is over the age of 60. This fact will likely reduce the labour force engagement unless younger families are attracted to the community.

### Labour Force

Grimsby has an active mobile labour force, commuting to Hamilton in greater numbers than it commutes within Grimsby itself. While this data is based on the 2016 Census, NWPB used the St. Catharines-Niagara Census Metropolitan Area in 2020 to estimate current labour force measures in Grimsby. The 2021 census will most likely show the impacts of COVID-19 on Grimsby's labour force and its new remote work and telecommuting patterns.

The below table shows where, in 2016, Grimsby residents commuted to for their employment:

Commuting Destination	Grimsby Residents
Hamilton	3,405
Grimsby	2,705
Burlington	1,350
Lincoln	680
St. Catharines	600
Oakville	580
Mississauga	485
Toronto	345
West Lincoln	230
Niagara Falls	115
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,495</b>

Source: NWPB – Grimsby Economic Analysis, Nov. 2021

The table below provides a five-year historical context of the job counts in Grimsby. The top five (5) largest employers are health care and social assistance, retail trade, manufacturing, wholesale trade, and construction.

Industry	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Retail Trade	1,577	1,635	1,667	1,643	1,506
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,615	1,584	1,459	1,526	1,460
Manufacturing	917	974	1,167	1,160	1,088
Wholesale Trade	792	860	869	843	804
Construction	717	797	798	787	768
Educational Services	575	602	777	711	659
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	650	684	746	736	640
Administrative & Support, Waste Management & Remediation Services	572	593	635	635	625
Transportation & Warehousing	497	590	635	616	615
Accommodation & Food Services	736	743	790	840	611
Other Services (except public administration)	505	508	540	537	490
Finance & Insurance	347	314	379	388	366
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	314	327	351	376	363
Public Administration	266	286	415	379	346
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	291	301	305	344	294
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	229	204	204	208	211
Unclassified	157	180	188	171	155
Information & Cultural Industries	110	107	97	106	97
Utilities	60	70	88	92	89
Management of Companies & Enterprises	22	18	21	25	27
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil & Gas Extraction	2	2	2	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,953</b>	<b>11,381</b>	<b>12,133</b>	<b>12,121</b>	<b>11,214</b>

Source: NWPB – Grimsby Economic Analysis, Nov. 2021

## Business Counts

The table below outlines the percentage of all businesses that are either self-employed businesses or traditional businesses. Grimsby has a higher percentage of self-employed businesses than Niagara as a whole. This is an opportunity for Grimsby to proactively engage the micro home-based business community and provide support to transition into small-medium enterprises.

Community	% Self-Employed Businesses	% Traditional Businesses
Niagara Region	67.0%	33.0%
Grimsby	71.8%	28.2%

Source: Canadian Business Counts, December 2020; NWPB calculations

## Industrial/Commercial and Residential Tax Ratio

Property tax is the main source of revenue for the Town of Grimsby and is used to fund services such as road repair, education, recreational programs, public transit, and other services. Studies of relative consumption patterns between residential and commercial properties indicated that residential properties pay 40% of the property taxes and consume over 70% of the services; in comparison, commercial properties pay 60% of the property taxes and consume only 29% of the services. One of the justifications for the higher taxation of business properties is that businesses can write off property taxes against income for income tax purposes, whereas residential property owners cannot.

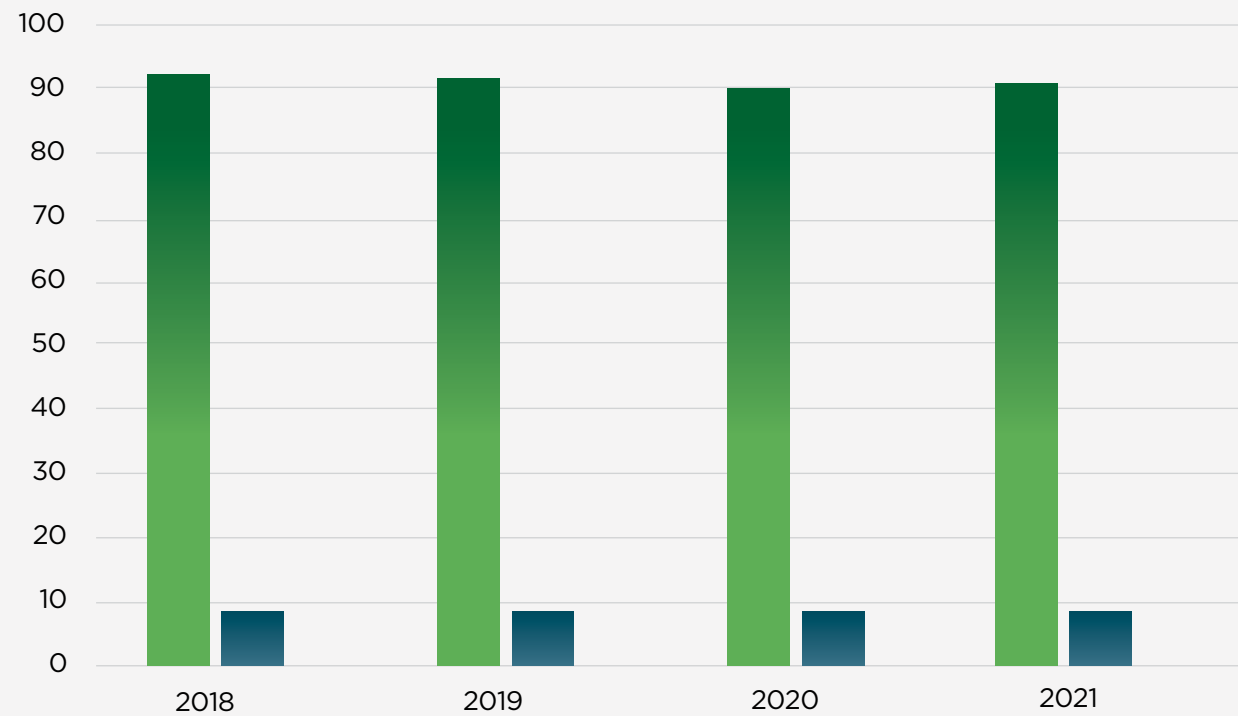
Some municipalities have introduced a property tax incentive better known as a tax increment-based grant (TIG) to attract new businesses with the goal of expanding the municipalities' property tax revenues with a net positive impact on the municipality over the long term. TIGs are funded from the new incremental tax revenues that are not expected to be realized by the municipality. The goal set out from most of these incentives is to increase employment, property tax base, and property tax revenues for the municipality.

The Town of Grimsby, however, has less than 75 acres of vacant commercial and industrial land, so tax incentives could be wasted on firms that would have located in the community regardless of the incentive. A more important change that will improve the tax ratio is enhancing Grimsby's image as a more pro-business community that supports the attraction, retention and expansion of businesses. Exploring the possibility of maximizing industrial and commercial lot coverage, reviewing our current parking By-laws, and requesting residential developers to increase the commercial/retail component of their proposed development are major incentives for our local businesses that will inevitably result to a more favourable tax ratio.

Throughout the Niagara Region’s Grant and Incentives review, the Region has implemented the Niagara Business Attraction Program, which is a partnering program with municipalities. To access the program, the Town of Grimsby will need to implement an Employment Community Improvement Plan (CIP) that provides a TIG.

Since 2018, the commercial-to-residential tax ratios has been stable, averaging 9.2/90.8 respectively.

**Industrial/Commercial - Residential Tax Ratio 2018-2021** ■ R/F/M ■ C/I



Year	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
R/F/M	90.8%	90.6%	90.7%	91.0%	90.8%
C/I	9.2%	9.4%	9.3%	9.0%	9.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Town of Grimsby Finance Department, 2022



GO Bus and Scooters.

### Transportation Infrastructure – Growth Generator

The consolidated Regional transit system is targeted to be operational in 2023, and will provide significant customer use across the Region. When completed, the system will provide improved access to employment and services to the Region, as well as expand the potential for residents to explore work opportunities in Grimsby.

The proposed new GO Transit station in Grimsby is a significant investment that will benefit the community. The approved Secondary Plan provides a 20-year vision and planning framework to guide transit-supportive development and redevelopment. The area is well positioned to capture intensification opportunities because of the transportation infrastructure and the great views of the Escarpment and Lake Ontario. As the gateway into Niagara Region, this area can be leveraged to create a unique transit-oriented community node.



GO Transit

*GO Transit Train Station Site and Niagara Bus Transit Hub (Casablanca Blvd. and QEW).*



## Action Plan Implementation

Investment readiness is critical for the Town's economic development program. In the short term, the following programs will be implemented between 2022 and 2024:

- Implementing a robust business visitation program
- Establishing a Customer Tracking Tool for leads and follow-up
- Developing a value proposition
- Revisiting Grimsby's branding and developing a marketing action plan
- Developing marketing collateral that provides investors with updated information
- Creating a more visible Economic Development website presence
- Establishing a Business Ambassador Program

This strategic action plan is a guide in creating the fundamentals in local economic development. As a foundational document, the majority of the resources should be focused on engaging local businesses by understanding their growth opportunities to assist them in streamlining the development process and be an advocate at all government levels.

Resources, budget implications and timing is contingent on Council's continued commitment to Economic Development. The Action Plan initiatives identified for 2022 are budgeted. The actions in 2023 and beyond will be subject to Council's approval through the annual budget process.

## SWOT Analysis

### A cursory review of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The purpose of the SWOT analysis is to assess the business and economic competitiveness of Grimsby. This section is not intended as a characterization of Grimsby as a whole, but a reflection on those factors that are important in developing the local economy. A SWOT analysis is a widely used methodology that examines the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats that could help or harm Grimsby ([Appendix B](#)). In this instance, the evaluation criteria used included the GEDAC Working Group workshops with their thoughts and critiques plus the input provided by the business community through the BR+E survey ([Appendix C](#)), the Business Roundtable Discussions with small and large size businesses ([Appendix D](#)), and interviews conducted with Members of Council. commercial ventures will likely not be sustainable.



Charts and graphs showing data results.

Based on the results of the SWOT analysis, it appears that Grimsby has a strong foundation to support further economic development but needs to implement a business visitation program that is focused on assisting businesses and attracting the desired types of development to the Town.

The results of the **STRENGTHS** section demonstrate the community's value in sustainability and strengthening the community's high quality of life, which is appealing to many small business owners. Grimsby's picturesque character also plays into the attraction of new families and businesses. Without new residents coming into the community, many new commercial ventures will likely not be sustainable.

**THREATS** discussed as part of the analysis demonstrate concerns globally, provincially, regionally, and locally. Some are within the control of the Town, while the Town only plays a small or no part of the others. A key local level Threat identified during workshops is that participants felt there is a perceived resistance to change within the community. Based on the results of this SWOT, there is a desire for growth within the community; therefore, changing the perception that growth is not wanted is very important. This can be accomplished by streamlining the land use process, changing the approach that create challenges for incoming businesses and developers, and simply developing an advocacy group within the community who are willing to support desirable residential and Industrial Commercial Institutional (ICI) development projects.

The results of the SWOT analysis demonstrate a desire for growth in Grimsby in ways that enhance the character of the community by supporting local businesses to expand, encouraging new residents to locate to the Town, and seeing improvement in high-potential areas of development.

# Strategic Directions

Goals, Objectives & Actions

*Find your way to Grimsby.*

**CIMCORP+**

*Cimcorp - Modernizing Intralogistics with software-driven automation.*

# Strategic Directions



## 1. Support Business Retention & Expansion

As identified through the BR+E survey and Business Roundtable discussions, the importance of reaching out to the business community through a business visitation program will support the retention and expansion of jobs. This is an essential and fundamental priority for the Town's economic development program. Over 90% of new jobs created in a community come from existing businesses. Grimsby needs to develop proactive relationships with existing businesses to help remove barriers that prevent or delay plans for growth. The need to reduce red tape to facilitate new investment and expansion was also an opportunity identified during the strategy consultations.

Through the implementation of a business visitation program, Grimsby will identify opportunities to support its business community on such issues as the development process, supply chain, and workforce; connect businesses to funding opportunities and other sources; and explore greater industrial lot coverage of existing and future employment lands. By supporting businesses, the Town would support business growth, the creation of jobs and an increase in the industrial/ commercial tax base. Grimsby's Residential vs Industrial/Commercial tax rate has been relatively stable over the past five (5) years. The goal of this strategy is to support growth in the commercial/industrial sector in order to offset the residential ratio.



## 2. Workforce Development & Alignment

Data suggests that employment levels will rebound in 2022 to pre-COVID levels; however, there has and continues to be a skills gap in regards to the labour force seeking employment and the type of work available. Employers cite a deficit in technology capabilities, interpersonal and communication skills, and organizational management. Skills shortages are also a result of many students pursuing careers in fields that have very limited opportunities. When new graduates are unable to find a job, they end up working in positions they are overqualified for, essentially edging out the lesser qualified people from the labour market. As a result, employers are unable to find properly trained and/or educated candidates to fill their specific roles

To confront workforce development barriers, the Ontario government and educational institutions are focusing on enhancing experiential learning opportunities of secondary and post-secondary students to implement more job-placement and co-op programs that are proven to improve graduate employability. In addition, businesses need support from governments to strengthen a systems-based approach to training, and updating the existing apprenticeship framework to better support entrants in the skilled trades. Transitioning students from school to the workforce and providing access for everyone to learn a trade or skill are the most important measures to ensure a competitive economy.

As part of the Grimsby's business roundtable discussions, most participants identified attracting and retaining talent as a top issue of concern, both at the present time and over the next three (3) years. Several participants emphasized the importance of having and developing a diverse and skilled local labour pool in or near Grimsby.

No single issue emerged as the primary obstacle in workforce attraction. However, the most common issues identified by both large and small businesses included:

- General high cost of living in Grimsby
- Housing affordability
- The rapid emergence of remote work opportunities has created a significantly more competitive market for top talent, particularly among highly skilled and more specialized professions within the advanced manufacturing businesses
- Transit to the central business locations in Grimsby is extremely limited, making it unattractive or impossible for prospective employees living in communities as close as Stoney Creek and St. Catharines to want to work in Grimsby

Grimsby employers offered several recommendations to help address these issues:

- Facilitate greater collaboration between Grimsby's business and industrial communities and local secondary schools to educate students on the attractive and diverse career opportunities available in their hometown
- Support Niagara Economic Development to increase promotion of Grimsby as a great place to live and work throughout the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA)
- Conduct local job fairs to better inform skilled workers living in Grimsby about the career opportunities in their own community
- Ensure integration and timing of newly created Transit Commission align with business needs

### Skills Development and Training

In addition to challenges associated with attracting and retaining talent, participants observed that technology is driving significant change in many trades and professions. Long tenured employees must be able to adapt to changing market and professional requirements for businesses to remain competitive in innovative global markets.

Up-skilling and re-skilling has become a central focus for many businesses, particularly in the manufacturing sector. Also, students and new entrants into the job market must be kept apprised of innovations in their chosen career path to “hit the ground running” in their new jobs with local companies.

Grimsby is fortunate to have highly regarded secondary and post-secondary institutions in proximity. However, participants felt there was an opportunity to strengthen collaboration with those organizations on a number of fronts, including:

- Facilitating greater local business awareness of and participation in co-op programs offered by schools in the region
- Supporting and investing in the growth of existing programs at educational institutions, union training centres and private trainers
- Identifying education centres in/and around Grimsby that focus specifically on local workforce training needs

To help address the workforce development needs of Grimsby, there is an opportunity to align regional and local organizations with employers to establish a Workforce Development Alliance Group (WDAG) focused on identifying the gaps and possible solutions. The WDAG can “advocate for policies and programs that will develop a highly-skilled talent pipeline to ensure continued economic growth in our region. Partnerships between educators and employers, whether they be internship or apprenticeship opportunities, curriculum development collaboration, cooperative education programs or other forms of experiential learning, are vital to strengthening pathways to success and proving opportunity for students.” ([NewEnglandCouncil.com](http://NewEnglandCouncil.com))



### 3. Business Attraction & Investment Readiness

The attraction of new investment is challenging for most small communities. Given that Niagara Economic Development is the lead in the attraction of foreign and Greater Toronto Area (GTA) investments, Grimsby will focus on business retention and expansion. By supporting the Niagara partnership, Grimsby’s value proposition and opportunities will strengthen the Town’s chances to attract new investment. Collaborating with neighbouring economic development organizations, Federal and Provincial ministries, and non-government organizations (NGOs) will be beneficial in fostering new relationships that will identify Grimsby as a high priority for business expansions or relocations.

To compete for the attention of sophisticated investors who make decisions based on their business needs, available infrastructure supports, and the flexibility and ease of local planning and development processes, Grimsby must have the necessary tools and information to meet their demands and be positioned to win investment opportunities. The economic development officer has identified Grimsby’s investment readiness gaps and has reviewed the Town’s existing planning processes in order to add value to the processes to attract and retain investment and jobs.

Investment readiness is comprised of six (6) sections that represent key considerations for investors. These include:

1. Community profile;
2. Industrial and commercial land inventory;
3. Investment marketing;
4. Land use planning and economic development;
5. Dealing with site selectors; and
6. Monitoring investment inquiries.

These six (6) essential tools will be initiated as part of the three-year action plan.

### 4. Collaborative Marketing



The Town of Grimsby’s current slogan is “Friendly by Nature”; however, it has not been widely adopted or promoted so that the slogan is intrinsically associated with the Town. Grimsby should engage a branding/marketing firm to shape an economic development brand that builds on the Town’s notable convergence. The key to branding is differentiation; ensuring Grimsby promotes itself as a unique entity in comparison to neighbouring communities. Brand development will also require a multi-year marketing plan, at the centre of which will be a notable economic development website presence.

Investors considering relocation or expansions will often visit the community website prior to requesting a personal meeting. It is important to have a comprehensive economic development website that highlights; a value proposition and marketing collateral; detailed downloadable data; social media integration; a community profile that provides updated demographic information, workforce availability, real estate data base focused on vacant commercial and industrial land, data on post-secondary institutions and their graduates, cost comparison of doing business in Grimsby (development charges, utilities, tax rates and incentives), current and proposed transportation infrastructure, links with key partners, contact information for the economic development team; and a business directory listing of all employers.

Grimsby must be investment-ready prior to launching a marketing program. Generating investment interest and not providing the information required by the investors would be detrimental and a waste of resources.

## 5. Support Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Home Businesses

Firms that innovate more consistently employ more workers, demand higher skills, pay higher wages, and offer more stable prospects for their workforce. Innovation and entrepreneurship are interlinked and Grimsby has a growing entrepreneurial environment that can foster innovation. The innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem that enables micro-enterprises to scale up is active in Niagara and should be expanded to Grimsby. There are many organizations in the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Niagara that can be leveraged to provide support to our local entrepreneurs and home-based businesses:

- The St. Catharines Enterprise Centre
- Civiconnect – Youth Digital Skills Studio
- Innovate Niagara and the Regional Innovation Centre
- The National Research Council’s Industrial Research Assistance Program
- Ontario Centres of Innovation
- Venture Niagara – Community Futures Development Corporations
- Brock University research and innovation and business development office
- Trade accelerator program – Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce
- Niagara College and the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre

Two (2) out of three (3) companies begin in a garage, spare bedroom, or basement. That’s how Apple/Microsoft, Google, Linamar, and many others began. Increased bandwidth in conjunction with workforce changes introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have made operating a virtual company from home more feasible and popular than ever.

Grimsby has a large micro home business community that can leverage innovation and business expansion in the future. However, home-based businesses are concerned if their new business can legally operate from home. While many communities have modernized their zoning By-laws to recognize that a computer-based business is not like a noisy auto body repair shop, an odorous hair salon or an early gathering point for construction or cleaning crew, many communities ban certain kinds of businesses and prescribe limitations that may handicap others. Grimsby needs to be proactive and revisit this By-law to ensure it encourages micro enterprises to flourish and eventually expand into a commercial unit.

For many home-office entrepreneurs, establishing and maintaining a professional image is important. Many communities have encouraged landowners to develop small business incubators that are designed to help start-ups grow and succeed by providing free or low-cost workspaces, mentorships, access to investors, and in some cases, working capital in the form of a loan.

Some private real estate developers have taken the initiative to create co-working spaces that provide a workspaces at a reasonable price. They also offer shared office facilities and ensure a high level of security. Co-working spaces allow the start-up to be independent and don’t require any seed investment.

**Boone Dog Office Spaces** have expanded their affordable work solutions and serve as a home base for a variety of businesses including start-ups, consultants, artists, non-profits, and entrepreneurs. Located in downtown Grimsby, Boone Dog provides the choice of customizable offices or shared workspaces with common office amenities. The Town of Grimsby should encourage more developers to attract similar office spaces for the growing home-based business community.

### Emerging Sectors

Grimsby will need to focus on sectors that demonstrate the possibility of supporting local expansions and/or prospects considering new business locations. While Grimsby does not have a notable concentration of employment among digital technologies representing future job growth, over the next three to five years the community is likely to emerge as a more prominent location for firms in the professional and financial services space. Grimsby has already attracted head-quarters and satellite operations for professional offices (**DeSantis Homes** and **Salit Steel**) because of its prominent location straddling the GTA and Niagara. Access will increase when the new GO Transit station is constructed in the near future.

NWPB’s report identified potential growth sectors that include:

- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services;
- Healthcare and Social Assistance;
- Administrative and Support; and
- Waste Management and Remediation Services.

In addition, several emerging sectors have been identified for potential growth opportunities in Grimsby. Health and Science, Film Industry and Agricultural-Food & Beverage sectors indicate medium and long-term opportunities that Grimsby should explore and develop specific action plans for in the future.

Grimsby’s challenge is to ensure dedicated economic development resources are allocated to fully implement the action plan and beyond for the following emerging sectors.

## Health and Science Sector

The current boom in life sciences development is concentrated in the major market of the Greater Toronto Area. However, biotech and life sciences facilities are expanding to suburban communities that have excellent quality of life and mass-transit accessibility. The West Lincoln Memorial Hospital expansion has the potential to attract an innovative life sciences centre that can be a catalyst for investment and development.

Human capital is the most competitive advantage when it comes to creating and retaining companies. The life sciences sector fully depends on talent. Life science hubs are innovation districts that are supported by universities, hospitals and private investors. Minutes away in Hamilton is Canada's fourth largest health science sector, including the **McMaster Innovation Park**. Leveraging Hamilton's ecosystem and connectivity with Grimsby's transportation infrastructure, excellent quality of life, a newly expanded hospital, and proximity to the US border, our community is well positioned for life sciences investments.

## Film Industry

Niagara Region has many unique locations for film and television series. The sector has many tangible benefits that make it attractive to municipalities across Niagara. While this sector is concentrated in the Toronto area, production is spreading to other areas and upper levels of government offer incentives to attract film production. Over time, it is conceivable that new centers of film production will emerge and add a significant new dimension to local economies. Anecdotal evidence suggests that citizens enjoy having films shot in their neighbourhoods and appreciate the image it sends to the rest of the world.

Over 300,000 Canadians work in the TV and film sector. There are 259 businesses in Niagara that have expanded their roles in the industry. In collaboration with Niagara Economic Development, Grimsby has an opportunity to build capacity by exploring this sector.

## Agri-Food & Beverage Sector

The NWPB study identified the agri-food & beverage sector as an industry with good potential that can expand and add value to agri-based ventures. This sector is the second largest manufacturing industry in Canada in terms of value of production, and the country's largest manufacturing employer.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs continues to invest in research and new technologies that will modernize and strengthen the food supply chain, create new market opportunities and grow our economy. Adopting innovation and technologies is key to the success of our agri-food and beverage sector. Grimsby should ensure the agri-food and beverage sector is aware of the opportunities and participate in the Canadian Agricultural Partnership which is aimed at generating economic growth.



# Town of Grimsby Economic Development

## Action Plans

1. BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION
2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & ALIGNMENT
3. BUSINESS ATTRACTION & INVESTMENT READINESS
4. COLLABORATIVE MARKETING
5. SUPPORT INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
A& HOME BUSINESSES

Grimsby on the Lake.



## BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

Goal: Support Business Retention & Expansion

### Objectives:

1. Proactively improve partnerships with the local business community by implementing an ongoing monthly business visitation program of 2-3 businesses per month
2. Establish quarterly information and networking events starting 2023
3. Support Downtown and Grimsby on the Lake businesses and shop local campaigns
4. Streamline and facilitate the planning approvals process on business expansions by 2024
5. Explore bylaw changes to increase industrial lot coverage in Grimsby by 2024

### 1. Proactively improve partnerships with the local business community by implementing an ongoing monthly business visitation program

**Actions:** Develop an enhanced business visitation program to proactively support businesses  
**Team:** GEDAC Working Group; EDO • **Timing:** 2022 • **Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources  
**KPIs:** Completion

**Actions:** Implement a Customer Tracking Tool to track and report on business visits, site selection inquiries, investment lead servicing, and development assistance • **Team:** EDO; ITS department  
**Timing:** 2022 • **Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources • **KPIs:** Completion

**Actions:** Identify top cluster businesses to visit • **Team:** GEDAC; EDO; Niagara Region; Mayor  
**Timing:** 2022 • **Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources • **KPIs:** # of businesses per cluster

**Actions:** Meet with 2-3 businesses per month • **Team:** EDO/Mayor GEDAC; • **Timing:** 2022 Ongoing  
**Cost & Resources:** \$5,500/year • **KPIs:** # of businesses visited/month

**Actions:** Annual Report to Council • **Team:** EDO • **Timing:** Q4 2023 • **Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources • **KPIs:** Completion

### 2. Establish regular information networking events starting in 2023

**Actions:** Develop an information series of network events with the business community  
**Team:** EDO; Chamber of Commerce; DIA; Niagara Manufacturer's Association; Niagara Region  
**Timing:** 2023 • **Cost & Resources:** \$1,500 per event • **KPIs:** # of attendees, # of issues identified  
# of follow-ups, # of closed files

**Actions:** Create a participation list of businesses and associations • **Team:** EDO; Chamber of Commerce; DIA; Niagara Manufacturer's Association; Niagara Region • **Timing:** 2023  
**Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources • **KPIs:** # of businesses identified, # of businesses attended,  
# of follow-ups, # of resolved issues



*Andrew Peller Ltd. - One of Canada's largest wineries.*



### 3. Support Downtown and Grimsby on the Lake businesses through a shop local campaign program

**Actions:** Identify specific events and collaborate with local business associations to attract tourism  
**Team:** EDO; Chamber of Commerce, DIA • **Timing:** 2023 • **Cost & Resources:** 10,000  
**KPIs:** # of events

**Actions:** Continue the Digital Main Street Program by providing direct assistance to businesses transitioning to a digital economy • **Team:** EDO; DMS Coordinator; DIA; Chamber of Commerce  
**Timing:** 2022 ongoing • **Cost & Resources:** Funded by Province • **KPIs:** # of businesses uptake of program, # of grants received

### 4. Streamline and facilitate planning approvals process for business investments by 2024

**Actions:** Implement information events with the development industry, ICI realtors, construction sector to provide feedback on development issues • **Team:** EDO; Chamber of Commerce, Niagara Economic Development; Neighbouring Municipalities; Private sector • **Timing:** 2023 and ongoing  
**Cost & Resources:** \$2,500 each • **KPIs:** # of attendees, # of issues identified, # of issues resolved and implemented

**Actions:** Communicate the changes made to the development process to the development industry  
**Team:** EDO • **Timing:** 2022 and ongoing • **Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources  
**KPIs:** # of communiqués, # of responses/ feedback

**Actions:** Strengthen the concierge program for the business community Town and Regional staff  
**Team:** Town and Regional staff • **Timing:** 2022 and ongoing • **Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources  
**KPIs:** # of issues identified, # of issues resolved, # of new jobs, # of gross floor area

**Actions:** Explore a Business Investment CIP for the Town • **Team:** Town and Regional staff  
**Timing:** 2023 • **Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources • **KPIs:** # of meetings with staff

**Actions:** Develop organizational capacity for employment opportunities with Planning and Economic Development staff • **Team:** CAO and Economic Development staff • **Timing:** 2023  
**Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources • **KPIs:** Completion

### 5. Explore bylaw changes to increase industrial lot coverage in Grimsby by 2024

**Actions:** Explore higher lot coverage for existing businesses that want to expand • **Team:** EDO; Planning and Building; Chamber of Commerce; Niagara Manufacturer's Association; Niagara Region  
**Timing:** 2024 • **Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources • **KPIs:** # of attendees, # of issues identified, # of follow-ups

**Actions:** Create a task force to research and review the lot coverage by-law and report the findings for action to Council • **Team:** EDO; Planning and Building; Chamber of Commerce; Niagara Manufacturer's Association; Niagara Region  
**Timing:** 2025 • **Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources  
**KPIs:** # of meetings, Completion



## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ALIGNMENT

Goal: Workforce development and alignment

### Objectives:

1. Establish a Workforce Development Alliance Working Group by engaging local employers to be receptive to working with educational institutions and support student co-ops and bring students into the workplace by 2023
2. Strengthen public transportation mobility through Niagara One Transit and GO Transit by opening communication updates and status with Metrolinx and Niagara Region by 2023

### 1. Establish a Workforce Development Alliance Working Group by engaging local employers to be receptive to working with educational institutions and support student co-ops and bring students into the workplace by 2023

**Actions:** Develop a Workforce Development Alliance Group by leveraging existing workforce collaboration among universities and colleges and private sector to collectively facilitate and advocate for the development, retention and recruitment of a wide range of skilled workers to meet the current and future economic and social development needs of Grimsby  
**Team:** EDO, Chamber of Commerce; Employment Help Centre; Educational Institutions; Niagara Workforce Planning Board; Niagara Manufacturer's/ Industrial Association • **Timing:** 2023  
**Cost & Resources:** \$5,000 • **KPIs:** # of meetings, # of participants, # of placements

### 2. Strengthen public transportation mobility through Niagara One Transit and GO Transit by opening communication updates and status with Metrolinx and Niagara Region by 2023

**Actions:** Meetings with Regional staff to ascertain project implementation dates • **Team:** EDO; CAO  
**Timing:** 2022 ongoing • **Cost & Resources:** Nil • **KPIs:** # of meetings

**Actions:** Community e-newsletter updates on the Niagara Region Transit and GO Transit Station  
**Team:** EDO • **Timing:** 2023 ongoing • **Cost & Resources:** \$2,500 • **KPIs:** # of newsletters  
# of unique visitors

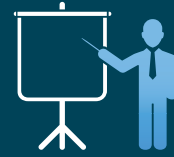


DISTINCTLY SMOOTH  ASSURÉMENT ONCTUEUX  
**FORTY CREEK**

*Gift Shop at Forty Creek Distillery.*

## BUSINESS ATTRACTION & INVESTMENT READINESS

Goal: Build a more resilient economy with diverse emerging sectors



### Objectives:

1. Leverage **West Lincoln Memorial Hospital** by exploring the development of a health campus by 2025
2. Identify local Agri-tourism opportunities and determine value
3. Explore film and television sector by leveraging the Region's film program

### 1. Leverage **West Lincoln Memorial Hospital** by exploring the development of a health campus by 2025

**Actions:** Explore the development of a health campus • **Team:** EDO; West Lincoln Memorial Hospital; Niagara Region; Hamilton Health Sciences; Universities and Colleges; Consultant  
**Timing:** 2024 • **Cost & Resources:** \$10,000 • **KPIs:** # of case studies reviewed, # of reports to GDAC and Council

**Actions:** Create a health campus Advisory Group • **Team:** EDO; GDAC; Niagara Region  
**Timing:** 2025 • **Cost & Resources:** \$5,000 • **KPIs:** # of participants, # of meetings

### 2. Identify local Agri-tourism opportunities and determine value

**Actions:** Review a Tourism cycling trail (GO Station to neighbouring municipalities) • **Team:** EDO; Region, Lincoln • **Timing:** 2023 • **Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources • **KPIs:** # of options prepared

**Actions:** Develop an e-brochure focusing on bike trails • **Team:** EDO; Region; Lincoln; Parks and Recreation • **Timing:** 2024 • **Cost & Resources:** \$5,000 • **KPIs:** # of businesses participating # of Social Media hits

### 3. Explore film and television sector by leveraging the Region's film program

**Actions:** Explore opportunities in the film and television industry • **Team:** EDP; Region; neighbouring municipalities • **Timing:** 2023 ongoing • **Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources • **KPIs:** # of meetings, # of prospects

**Actions:** Collaborate with Niagara and private sector for TV and film site selections • **Team:** EDP; Region; Private Sector • **Timing:** 2024 ongoing • **Cost & Resources:** \$5,000 • **KPIs:** # of films and TV shows shot in Town

## COLLABORATIVE MARKETING

Goal: Support Business Retention & Expansion



### Objectives:

1. Develop an information database and collateral material to attract, retain and expand businesses

### 1. Develop an information database and collateral material to attract, retain and expand businesses

**Actions:** Develop and update a digital Business Directory • **Team:** EDO; Niagara Enterprise Centre; Niagara Region • **Timing:** 2022 • **Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources • **KPIs:** Completed

**Actions:** Develop a Community Profile • **Team:** EDO; Niagara Region; Stats Can 2021 Data  
**Timing:** 2022 • **Cost & Resources:** \$2,500 • **KPIs:** Completion

**Actions:** Create Video Newsletters focused on specific projects • **Team:** EDO; GDAC; External sources • **Timing:** 2022 and ongoing • **Cost & Resources:** \$2,000 • **KPIs:** # of videos, # of Social Media Platforms, # of hits and comments

**Actions:** Joint promotional activities and marketing to promote Grimsby businesses **Team:** EDO; Niagara Region; Neighbouring Municipalities; Private Sector • **Timing:** 2022 and ongoing  
**Cost & Resources:** \$2,000 • **KPIs:** # of activities, # of responses, # of prospects

**Actions:** Review Grimsby's brand and develop a marketing plan, value propositions, marketing collateral to support economic development efforts • **Team:** EDO; NGOs; Brand/Marketing Consultant • **Timing:** 2023 • **Cost & Resources:** \$20,000 • **KPIs:** # of brand options, # of value propositions

**Actions:** Refresh Grimsby's digital presence by creating a new economic development web page promoting economic development activities • **Team:** EDO; Consultant; Staff • **Timing:** 2023  
**Cost & Resources:** \$5,000 • **KPIs:** # unique visitors Completion

**Actions:** Develop a Business Ambassador Program to engage businesses to promote Grimsby  
**Team:** EDO; Chamber of Commerce • **Timing:** 2023 • **Cost & Resources:** \$4,000  
**KPIs:** # of applicants # of ambassadors



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Casablanca Corporate Centre - DeSantis Homes and Salit Steel HQ.

## SUPPORT INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND HOME BUSINESSES

Goal: Support Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Home Businesses



### Objectives:

1. Explore the opportunity to engage the **St. Catharines Enterprise Centre** and bring Entrepreneurship services to West Niagara in 2024
2. Encourage home-based business growth and expansion by attracting Co-working spaces for start-ups by 2023

### 1. Explore the opportunity to engage the **St. Catharines Enterprise Centre** and bring Entrepreneurship services to West Niagara in 2024

**Actions:** Explore the feasibility of Co-sharing entrepreneurship services with neighbouring municipalities • **Team:** EDO; St. Catharines; Lincoln • **Timing:** 2024 • **Cost & Resources:** \$20,000/year • **KPIs:** # of days allocated to Grimsby, # of activities for entrepreneurs, # of start-ups, # of home businesses assisted

### 2. Encourage home-based business growth and expansion by attracting Co-working spaces for start-ups by 2025

**Actions:** Position Grimsby as a home-based entrepreneurial hub and collaborate with the Private Sector to facilitate the creation of co-working spaces • **Team:** EDO; Niagara Region, Chamber of Commerce; Private Sector • **Timing:** 2023 ongoing to 2025 • **Cost & Resources:** \$5,000

**KPIs:** # of prospects, # of spaces created, # of spaces leased, # of jobs created

**Actions:** Review the Zoning By-law to support home-based businesses • **Team:** EDO; Town Planning and Building staff • **Timing:** 2023 ongoing to 2025 • **Cost & Resources:** Existing Resources

**KPIs:** # of meetings, # of reviews

**BOONE DOG**  
— OFFICE SPACES —



Boone Dog Office Spaces - Meeting Center and Coworking Space.

## Performance Measurement Indicators

Economic development action plans need to be aligned with a performance measurement plan and integrate current annual reporting. Performance Measurement Metrics is a systematic approach used to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Strategic Action Plan. Metrics are reflective of if the Town is on track in achieving the Strategic Action Plan goals and objectives, and help to demonstrate the value of the economic development efforts. The monitoring and evaluation process enables learning from what is happening with the action plans and extracts lessons to inform future practices.

Quantitative and qualitative indicators are equally important in describing performance. General indicators of economic change in a community is usually provided in a dashboard format. The indicators are partially influenced by the Town's economic development programs but not to the extent of a valid cause-effect relationship. Nevertheless, they underline broad economic change as a context for the Town's programs.

The monitoring process includes periodic evaluations of each action plan performance and an evaluation of the cumulative costs, benefits, and degree of goal attainment of the economic development program. If unfavorable results are identified during the implementation of an action, further review and possible implementation of remedies will be required.

### Economic Development Indicators

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Population	28,883				
Res/Ind & Com Tax Ratio %	90.8/9.2				90.0/10.0
Total Investment*	\$28.3M				
New Businesses					
Employment Growth	11,214		12,000	12,500	13,000
Business Expansions					
Business Visits		18	24	24	36

\*Total Value of Building Permits ([Appendix E](#))

## Conclusion

Grimsby's strong business community will continue to drive growth. The Economic Development Strategic Action Plan 2022-2025 focuses on the attraction, retention, and expansion of businesses by implementing a variety of actions.

Grimsby is committed to seizing current and future economic development opportunities by accommodating growth. The community's culture of being proactive in solving issues and embracing new opportunities will continue to grow as Town staff further strengthen their engagement with and support for community stakeholders.

This is an exciting time and opportunity for Grimsby that must be seized. Grimsby must continue to build capacity in order to accommodate future pressures related to its growing community. With the support of Council and staff, the economic development office will embrace the change necessary to prepare the Town for the future needs of the business community.

### Thank you

Thank you to the many businesses and volunteers, who took the time to provide insight, share ideas, and participated in the development of the Economic Development Strategic Action Plan. Staff and Council appreciated your commitment and input that will play a key role in promoting sustainable economic growth in Grimsby.

Grimsby's Economic Development Office would also like to thank GEDAC members and staff who played a crucial role in this strategies development

### Grimsby Economic Development Advisory Committee

Councillor Dave Kadwell  
 Councillor Kevin Ritchie  
 Alejandra Wichartz - Chair, Economic Development Working Group  
 Richard Dunda  
 Michael Marini  
 Rebecca Shelley - Chamber of Commerce Liaison  
 Michael Williscraft - Downtown Improvement Area Liaison

### Staff

Harry Schlange - Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Grimsby  
 Ken Scholtens - Business Development Manager Economic Development, Niagara Region  
 Frank Miele - Economic Development Officer, Town of Grimsby

## Appendices

- A. [Niagara Workforce Planning Board Economic Analysis \(Situational Analysis\)](#)
- B. [SWOT Analysis](#)
- C. [Business Retention & Expansion Report](#)
- D. [Business Roundtable Summary Report](#)
- E. [Building Permits 2018-2021 Report](#)

## Glossary

### Co-working

Co-working is an arrangement in which workers of different companies share an office space, allowing cost savings and convenience through the use of common infrastructures, such as equipment, utilities, and receptionist and custodial services, and in some cases refreshments and parcel acceptance services. It is attractive to independent contractors, independent scientists, telecommuting larger work teams that want flexibility and to avoid wasted real estate space if some employees are working from home, and work-at-home professionals, and people who travel frequently. Additionally, co-working helps workers avoid the feeling of isolation they may experience while telecommuting, traveling, or working at home alone, and eliminate distractions. Most co-working spaces charge membership dues. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coworking> - Retrieved on April 12, 2022).

With so many people working from home these days, either with their own business or because they are telecommuting with their employer, the demand for shared working space has risen. Sensing this trend, some smart investors are setting up “co-working” spaces (**Boone Dog Office Spaces**) where people can rent a cube/desk/room per day, multiple days, or per month. It gives the personal space entrepreneurs need without the expensive rent. Plus, they get to be around other like-minded entrepreneurs daily.

### Location Quotient (LQ)

The LQ is a way of discovering the industries or occupations that are truly unique and specialized in a Grimsby (compared to the provincial average). For example, the beverage manufacturing sector in Grimsby accounts for 9.7% of jobs but only 1% of jobs provincially, then Grimsby’s beverage manufacturing sector have an LQ of 9.8 which means that this industry is 9.8x more concentrated in Grimsby than the typical community in the province. This is a high LQ that reflects nine-and-a-half times that of the Ontario baseline.

A LQ equal to 1.0 reflects a local industry sector that is exactly meeting the needs of its community. When a LQ exceeds 1.0, that sector can be seen as generating economic activity through the export of goods and services to other communities ([Economodeling.com](#) and [NWPB](#)).

### Business Clusters

A business cluster is a concentration of interconnected businesses and suppliers in a particular industry sector. Business clusters can increase the productivity of the companies by driving innovation and by stimulating new businesses in the field. The competitive advantage of clusters is continual innovation. This is supported by recent research in regional and rural areas where more innovation takes place in communities which have stronger inter-personal networks ([Wear, Andrew \(2008\)](#)).

*“Innovation and community strength in Provincial Victoria”.*  
*Australasian Journal of Regional Studies. 14 (2): 195.*



**Town of Grimsby**

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