

**PRESCOTT**  
EST 1784  
THE FORT TOWN

**FINAL  
REPORT  
&  
ACTION  
PLAN**

**TOWN OF  
PRESCOTT**



**BUSINESS RETENTION &  
EXPANSION 2017**





September 2017

In 2016 the Town of Prescott embarked on a Business Retention + Expansion (BR+E) project, the first in over ten years. The Prescott BR+E project is a municipally-driven partnership between the Town of Prescott, the Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), business and community leaders that formed both the Leadership Team and the Volunteer Team, and central community stakeholders including Grenville Community Futures Development Corporation, CSE Consulting, the Small Business Enterprise Centre, the Business Improvement Area, the South Grenville Chamber of Commerce, and Prescott Women in Business.

The Town of Prescott's BR+E process has identified the many ways that the Town stands out amongst the other towns and cities that dot the St. Lawrence Seaway shore as an excellent place to do business. The process has made the entire community more self-aware of the many assets of the Town that are a source of strength and growth, including Prescott's ideal location and low cost structure, while also revealing the opportunities for partnership and collaboration that exist in the area to guarantee a strong local economy moving forward. What is obvious from the BR+E process is that the Town of Prescott is full of motivated and enthusiastic citizens who believe in Prescott's potential. They work very hard and are eager to continue to do so to ensure that Prescott thrives as a multi-sectorial economy that provides good jobs, an excellent quality of life, and opportunity for many generations to come.

This report is an overview of the Town of Prescott's BR+E project. It provides an overview of the data generated from 66 in-person interviews with Prescott business owners that were conducted between February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017 and June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The Town has been quick to jump into action on identified issues and some recommendations from the business owner surveys are already in progress. At least one major activity, the hiring of an Economic Development Officer and the establishment of an Economic Development Office at the Town of Prescott, has already been completed. Through the excellent momentum built by the Business Retention and Expansion process, and the quality data generated, we have a strong foundation for economic development action that will progress Prescott business forward.

Finally, a huge thank you to everyone who has been involved in carrying this process out to its successful completion. Thank you to the 66 local business owners who participated and provided invaluable insight to this process and to all of the volunteers and staff who made this project a great success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brett Todd".

Mayor Brett Todd

## **A Special Thank You to All Volunteers**

### **Town of Prescott BR+E Leadership Team<sup>1</sup>**

**Shelley Bacon**, Owner, Northern Cables

**Judi Baril**, Community Representative, Former Executive Director of the United Way of Leeds and Grenville

**Carolyn Burpee**, Owner, Shoppers Drug Mart (Prescott and Brockville locations)

**Jag Chawla**, Regional Representative, Owner, Apex Logistics Inc

**Julie Marshall**, Employment Services Coordinator, CSE Consulting

**Chris O'Reilly**, Owner/Manager, Your Independent Grocer

**Dave Stephens**, Owner, Netfox and Dynamic Liquidation

### **Municipal/Provincial Officials and Staff**

**Mayor Brett Todd**, Town of Prescott

**Pierre Mercier**, Chief Administrative Officer

**Prescott Councillor Ray Young**, Economic Development Chair and Owner of Young's of Prescott

Special thanks to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Ministry of Rural Affairs Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Advisor **Katie Nolan**.

### **Town of Prescott BR+E Volunteer Team**

Anne Bowie

Brenda Fiske

Sandra Iseman

Nicholas Kennell

Allen LaFaver

Norman Lee

Martina Libby

Kaitlyn Mallory

Miranda Miller

Michelle Nel

Justin Noseworthy

Wendy Onstein

Rod Palmer

Lisa Temple

Brittney Veley

### **Staff Support**

Town of Prescott Staff: Kaitlin Mallory, Lindsey Veltkamp, Katie Allard, and Kimberley Casselman and Administrative Summer Student, Monica Wilson

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<sup>1</sup> Please see Appendix A1 for the letter that went out to prospective Leadership Team members and Appendix A2 for the Informational Document that accompanied the letter. A similar letter and invitation went out to prospective Volunteer Team members. Appendix A3 is the media coverage on the BR+E and the formation of the Leadership Team as it appeared in February 2017 in the Brockville Recorder and Times.

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## TOWN OF PRESCOTT OVERVIEW

The Town of Prescott is situated on the banks of the St. Lawrence River flanked on its north, east and west sides by some of Canada's most diverse urban areas: Ottawa, Montreal, Kingston, and – at a greater distance – Toronto, and is located directly across from the United States to the south. Prescott exists in a strategic location that boasts central and accessible transportation routes by land, sea, and air. It was this strategic location, and the accessibility that it offered, that led to the development of the Town of Prescott in history as an important forwarding station for goods and people along the rapids that used to course down the St. Lawrence River at Prescott's doorstep.

Long known as the Fort Town, the community offers a balance of the past and present through the historical time travel experience of Fort Wellington National Historic Site and its costumed interpretive guides, and its contemporary incarnation as a relaxed waterfront town featuring heritage architecture, an eclectic mix of retail shops and services, and an active and accessible waterfront park and marina.

Like many communities in rural Canada/Ontario, Prescott has undergone many economic booms and busts over its 232 year history and finds itself on the road to revitalization in the current era. As the Town's website states, "The history of Prescott mirrors the history of Canada. From a frontier settlement to a prosperous town integrated into its surroundings, Prescott today still reveals its proud past by the many historic buildings that are lovingly preserved."<sup>2</sup> Prescott like many other rural areas across the nation, acknowledges that it must reinvent itself in order to adapt to the changing economic climate of highly mobile global capital and the complexities of the knowledge-based economy. Prescott's strength lies in its ability to assess its current economic environment in order to best prepare for the future that lays ahead.

The Town of Prescott is home to 4,222 residents, many of whom are direct descendants of British Loyalists who settled the area. The town itself acts as a hub community for smaller rural areas that surround it, including the townships of Augusta and Edwardsburgh-Cardinal.

The Town of Prescott updated its comprehensive Strategic Plan in 2012. The Plan outlines an economic development strategy with some key areas of focus that include the development of industrial and commercial sectors, the expansion of residential development and an update to planning and development policy. The Town has also committed to revising its marketing strategy, including website and social media presence, and to complete current signage and wayfinding projects. These are broad-based goals that came into sharper focus with the Town's entrance into a Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) process in late fall/early winter 2016.

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<sup>2</sup> Retrieved August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 from <http://www.prescott.ca/en/live-here/Live-Here-History-and-Heritage.asp>

### **Economic Overview Highlights<sup>3</sup>**

- As of 2016, there were 3,354 jobs in the Town (employed and self-employed)
- The three largest industries (defined by the North American Industry Classification System) for employment were Manufacturing, Transportation and Warehousing, and Retail Trade
- Jobs in the region increased 13.3% between 2012 and 2016 which is over double the average growth in Ontario (6.2%) and Canada overall (4.2%) during the same time period
- Most businesses can be classified as small businesses meaning between 1 and 49 employees and 106 of those business employ 1 to 4 employees (of roughly 200 businesses total)
- Manufacturing, followed by Transportation and Warehousing, are the two largest industries for the net import of employees from outside the Town
- The largest growth occupations are: Elementary and secondary school teacher assistants, other metal products machine operators, retail sales supervisors, employment services, other electrical equipment and component manufacturing, full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places
- The occupations experiencing decline include: Other sales related occupations, restaurant and food service managers, retail and wholesale trade managers, other miscellaneous store retailers, basic chemical manufacturing, other general merchandise stores

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<sup>3</sup> All data provided by Analyst which is a web-based tool that provides data on regional economies and work forces. Analyst combines multiple national data sources, harmonizing them to take advantage of the strengths of each source including the following Statistics Canada data sources: Canadian Business Patterns (CBP); 2001, 2006, and 2011 Census data; Survey of Employment, Payroll and Hours (SEPH); Labour Force Surveys (LFS); Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS); CANSIM Demographics; Postsecondary Student Information System Education Data (PSIS). More information at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/edar/>, retrieved August 3, 2017.

## THE TOWN OF PRESCOTT BR+E

### Background

Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E), as an economic development tool, emerged out of the United States in the 1980s and was put into practice by the Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) in Ontario in the 1990s. Since then, over 230 BR+Es have been conducted by communities across the province. This community economic development effort has generated a massive amount of data from the over 9000 interviews with business owners that have been conducted across the province as part of this initiative.

The Town of Prescott recently added the data from 66 in-person interviews with local business owners to this impressive BR+E portfolio during a BR+E process started November 2016. This approach to economic development requires that an entire community comes together to support it as it is an initiative that impacts the community as a whole, not just the businesses within it. According to OMAFRA, BR+E is an “action-oriented and community-based approach to economic development” that focuses on nurturing existing businesses and “helps communities prioritize their [community economic development] efforts.”<sup>4</sup>

Prescott as a community and a municipality fulfilled this objective by enthusiastically supporting the BR+E project from the outset of the process. The major thrust of the BR+E are surveys administered via in-person interviews that are both standardized enough to be generalizable and customizable enough to be unique to each and every community via the community questions that each municipality (or groups thereof) gets to include. The Town of Prescott undertook this BR+E process after not having participated in a BR+E process in over ten years. In 2006, the municipalities that came together to constitute South Grenville undertook a joint BR+E. For this BR+E program, upon receiving funding from OMAFRA’s Rural Economic Development grant program, the Town of Prescott hired a Business Retention and Expansion Coordinator, Jacqueline Schoemaker Holmes, PhD, in late October 2016 to facilitate the process.

A Leadership Team of local business and community leaders was formed and the overall goal and objectives of the Town of Prescott’s BR+E was established in January 2017. The overall goal of the Town of Prescott’s BR+E is as follows:

*To work with a representative team of stakeholders to examine the Town of Prescott’s business environment through a sector-based overview approach in order to provide the data and insight needed to develop an economic development strategic plan that will move Prescott business forward for the next 10 years.*

The specific objectives that were articulated to carry out this goal were outlined as both short and long term as follows:

### Short-Term Objectives

- Build relationships with local businesses
- Demonstrate and provide community support for local businesses

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<sup>4</sup> Retrieved July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017 from <http://www.omaf.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/bre/index.html>

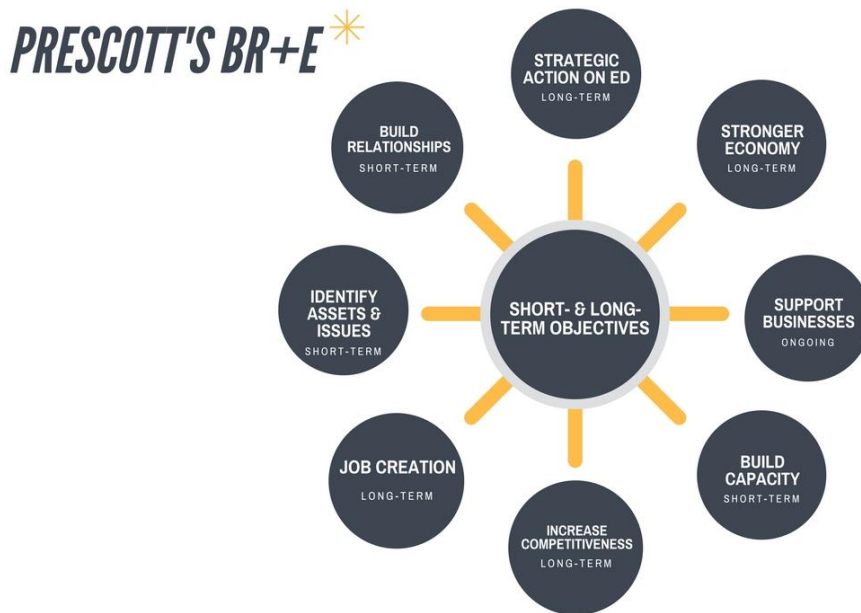


- Build capacity within the community and strengthen relationships between organizations
- Identify the positive and challenging attributes of the community as a place to do business
- Identify and address immediate concerns and issues of individual businesses through an assessment and referral process;
- Retain businesses and jobs where there is a risk of closure
- Collect business and market data to support economic development planning
- Establish and implement a strategic action plan to support existing businesses

### Long-Term Objectives

- Establish and implement strategic actions for local economic development
- Increase the competitiveness of local businesses
- Build a stronger viable local economy
- Job creation and new business development

Figure 1: The Town of Prescott BR+E Short- and Long-Term Objectives



A Volunteer Team was established by the Business Retention and Expansion Coordinator which consisted of interested business and community members who wished to devote at least four hours of their time for training in the interview process and to commit to undertaking a minimum of two interviews with local business owners. Prescott’s Volunteer Team of 15 was not large but it was a motivated group which included a number of key volunteers who participated in a number of interviews with the Business Retention and Expansion Coordinator (and a few interviews conducted solely by the team of volunteers). One volunteer was trained in the online interface for data management,

ExecutivePulse, to assist the BR+E Coordinator with data inputting which enabled the analysis of the data to begin immediately upon the close of the interview/data generation phase.

Prescott as a community fully supported the BR+E project from its inception and many local people rallied around the initiative and volunteered their time and energy. One of the most prevalent outcomes of the BR+E process overall was the will of Prescotttonians in the support of their Town and local economy. Residents of the Town of Prescott understand the connection between a vibrant community and a vibrant local economy and are enthusiastic about the potential of Prescott in all facets. This BR+E is the outcome of the people of the Town in Prescott to unflinchingly believe in power of progress for the Town, the local economy, and the community.

## **Methodology**

The Town of Prescott and the BR+E Leadership Team determined that the scope of the BR+E would be a broad-based overview of the entirety of the of Town's businesses. As mentioned above, the BR+E model provides communities with the opportunity to tailor the survey, and the sample it is meant for, to their own information requirements. Because a BR+E had not been done in the Town for some time, and one specifically for the Town of Prescott as a standalone municipality had never been done, it was important that all of the Town's business voices be heard.

The methodology was straightforward and started with the compilation of a comprehensive Business Directory.<sup>5</sup> The resulting directory revealed 192 Prescott businesses in 14 different industries (according to North American Industry Classification, or NAICS, codes). From this list of businesses, a random, representative sample of 66 of those businesses was generated all of which were contacted by mail. In-person interviews were conducted between February 21<sup>st</sup> and June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The interviews were conducted primarily by the BR+E Coordinator and a team of trained volunteers. BR+E volunteers committed to one two-hour training session delivered by OMAFRA's Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Advisor Katie Nolan and the BR+E Coordinator. In addition, volunteers committed to two one-hour interviews for the project.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This Business Directory was based on five sources: Leeds and Grenville Business Directory for the Town of Prescott; South August Chamber of Commerce Membership Directory; the Town of Prescott In-House Business Directory/Holiday Card List; Yellow Pages for Brockville and Area; Google search results for business name and location. In addition, peripheral businesses were also double-checked by address to ensure that they fall within the Town of Prescott proper and/or that they had a significant enough market in the Town of Prescott to warrant an interview about their experiences doing business in the Town. In May 2017, a review of the Directory was conducted by administrative summer student Monica Wilson and the BR+E Coordinator via Google search, phone call, visit to the location/former location of the store to "ground truth" and verify the existing information.

<sup>6</sup> For the Volunteer Recruitment Poster, see Appendix B.

Figure 2: Methodology/Survey Scope for the Town of Prescott's BR+E

## Survey Scope

### Methodology

The Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs has assisted over 230 communities across Ontario by supporting businesses and retaining and creating new job opportunities via Business Retention and Expansion projects.

For more information on BR+Es in Ontario visit: <http://www.omaf.gov.on.ca/english/rural/edr/bre/index.html>



Everyone involved in the project signed confidentiality agreements<sup>7</sup> and additionally, the Leadership Team engaged in a Memorandum of Understanding or MOU<sup>8</sup> with the Corporation of the Town of Prescott – the Lead Organization for the BR+E. In small communities especially, this assurance of confidentiality was key to securing interviews with local business owners as it guaranteed that the content of their participation would not be shared throughout Town.

The BR+E Coordinator organized all interviews by setting up an interview time with the business owner and then coordinating the schedules of owners and volunteers via a Doodle Polling system<sup>9</sup> where volunteers could sign up for already scheduled interviews with owners. The BR+E Coordinator would confirm volunteer interviews and generally the interviews were carried out by the BR+E Coordinator and one volunteer. Groups of two volunteers went out on their own in a few instances and this generally worked out very well. However given the timeline of the survey administration phase of the project, it was more expedient for the BR+E Coordinator to coordinate with one other person than to attempt to coordinate the schedules of three other busy people.

One interviewer was always the interviewer, that is, they took the lead on asking the questions, and the other interviewer acted as recorder. Early on in the process, both interviewers generally took notes and sometimes, the questions were asked by each interviewer on an alternating basis (by section of the survey). This approach enabled everyone to be engaged and often put business owners at ease because everyone was active in the “conversation.” Having both interviewers as recorders (or one as “jotter” and

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>9</sup> Doodle polls are generally set up to schedule meeting times and worked well as a tool for scheduling interviews. The link to the existing interviews times was sent out to the volunteers and they would sign up for available times that worked with their schedules. This way, all volunteers could see what others had signed up for and therefore eliminated any possibility that too many volunteers would be scheduled for any given interview. For more on Doodle see <http://doodle.com/>

the other as recorder) enabled the BR+E Coordinator and all other data inputters to have a more robust account of the interview and a second reference when handwriting or other details would have meant lost information with only one recorder. While it did make for “extra” work during data inputting, it ensured more accurate and thorough data.

Interviewers were expected to debrief at the close of the interview at an appropriate time and place in order to identify if any immediate follow-up was required. Immediate follow-ups included both “Red Flag” and “Green Flag” issues. Both Red and Green Flags are Urgent, short term situations that require immediate attention, such as the business:

- Is about to close or relocate
- Is about to downsize
- Is considering expanding
- Identifies opportunities for convergence or building collaborative ventures
- Is aware of another business that might be interested in locating within the community

If any Flags were identified, one of the volunteers would inform the BR+E Coordinator as soon as possible (or the BR+E Coordinator herself would identify the flag) so that the issues or opportunities could be addressed. In the Town of Prescott’s BR+E the following successes can be identified (including Flagged issues/opportunities):

✓ # of businesses visited	66
✓ # of volunteers	15
✓ # of red flag issues identified	5
✓ # of referrals	8
✓ # requests for information	42
✓ Funding Fundamentals for Business Owners Workshop held May 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2017 – 30 attendees <sup>10</sup>	
✓ Business Directory on the Town’s website launched	
✓ Hiring of an Economic Development Officer	
✓ Excellent ongoing stakeholder collaboration	

The number of requests for information bears a direct relationship to the excellent Community Questions submitted by stakeholding organizations. For example, Grenville Community Futures Development Corporation (GCFDC) and CSE Consulting submitted questions relevant to their need for information in order to best serve their clients, but that also asked potential clients (business owners) if they would like to receive more information on their agencies. An example from GCFDC is as follows:

- *When you require business advice, who do you consult:*
  - *Municipality*
  - *Chartered Bank*  
*BDC*
  - *Small Business Enterprise Centre*

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix E for further details on this event.

- *Community Futures Development Corporation*
  - *Family*
  - *Accountant*
  - *Lawyer*
  - *Other:\_\_\_\_\_?*
- *Are you aware of the many services provided by Grenville Community Futures Development Corporation to the business owners of South Grenville?*
- *Would you like more information on the Grenville Community Futures Development Corporation?*

This excellent engagement by community stakeholders at the outset of the BR+E process meant that the interviewing phase could be beneficial overall – for both stakeholders and business owners – because it addressed immediate needs for information while gathering necessary data for the project. The beneficial process of the BR+E itself is part of what makes the BR+E so effective both during the project development process and into the future implementation phase of the resulting data-driven actions.

Data was inputted over the duration of the interview phase which provided the ability for immediate and on-going analysis. The data was organized into major themes as viewed through the lens of the overall BR+E Goal and Related Objectives. This process resulted in four main business owner priorities being identified. These are:

1. Support Businesses/Strategic Action on Economic Development
2. A Stronger Local Economy
3. Build Capacity & Relationships
4. Increase Competiveness/Job Creation

These priorities are in ranked order, meaning that the numbering reflects the import to business owners. Possible actions that were either directly recommended by business owners or that would be the result of recommendations by business owners, were included as possible actions to take as an outcome of the data.

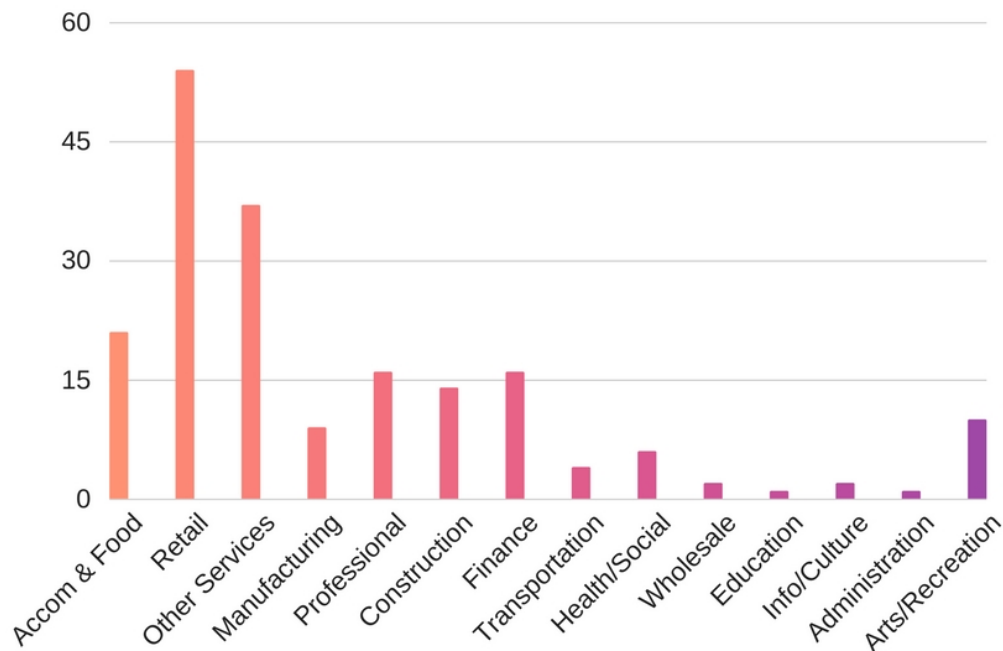
This information was presented to the Leadership Team and other stakeholders in order to ensure that not only was the data disseminated in a systematic way, but that all those individuals who had contributed to the formation of the survey specific to Prescott had an opportunity to weigh in on possible actions moving forward. The data results, priorities, and possible actions were then presented at the BR+E Community Action Planning Retreat held at Fort Wellington National Historic Site in Prescott and open to everyone who was involved in the overall BR+E process. The final action plan that is the result of the surveys and outreach will be presented at the Town of Prescott's first annual Economic Development Summit to be held at the Prescott Golf Club on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

## PARICIPANT PROFILE

The Prescott business community, by and large, embraced the Town of Prescott’s BR+E and put their support behind the project. Jag Chawla, a member of the Leadership Team who acted as a regional representative and who owns a Brockville-based warehousing, commercial and logistics business called APEX Logistics Inc., indicated at the first meeting of the Leadership Team that the BR+E itself should be referred to as a process, not a project, because the BR+E has multiple stages, and represents an ongoing commitment to community economic development. It is this vision that has guided the delivery of the BR+E as a process that can only succeed if business people, as well as the entire community, buy into the process as beneficial for both the economy and the community as a whole. Further, like many small communities, Prescott has seen its fair share of consultants come through the Town, ask questions, and leave without the tangible results that the initiation of such a project appears to promise. The fact that so many Prescott businesses stepped up to have their voices heard was very heartening and demonstrates a commitment on behalf of local business owners to the Town of Prescott as a community.

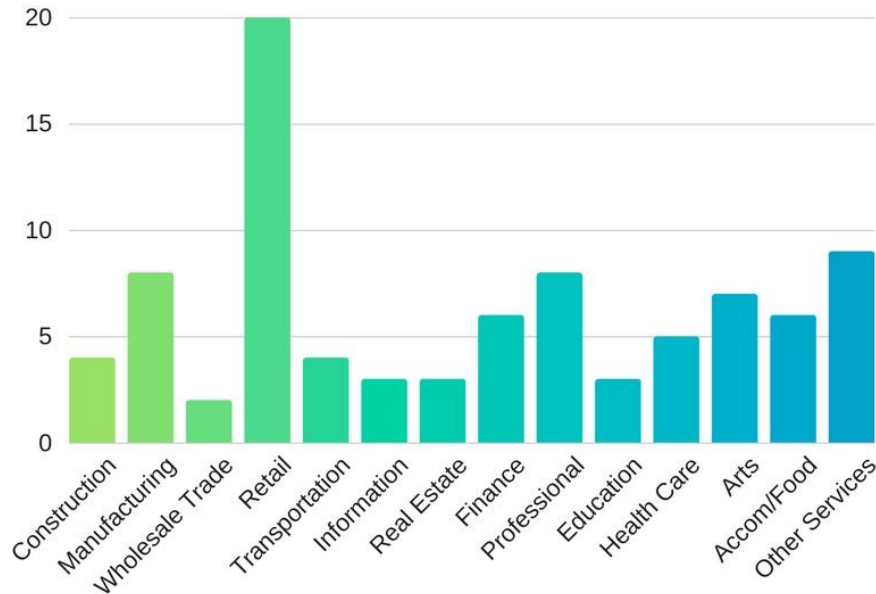
The 66 business owners who did participate in the overall process are representative of Prescott business as a whole and included every industry that exists in the Town as defined by NAICS code. The graph below indicates the total breakdown of business by industry and the graph (Figure 3) following that chart (Figure 4) depicts the breakdown of the sample of 66 businesses that participated in the survey by industry.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 3: All Prescott Businesses by Industry



<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that the majority of the charts represent the numerical values (actual numbers) of businesses. Only in some cases (pie charts specifically), are the values represented as percentages.

Figure 4: Number of Businesses in Survey Sample as Represented in Each of Prescott's 14 Industries (by NAICS Code)



This graph demonstrates the number of surveyed businesses by industry. A numerical and percentage breakdown is as follows (by NAICS Code):

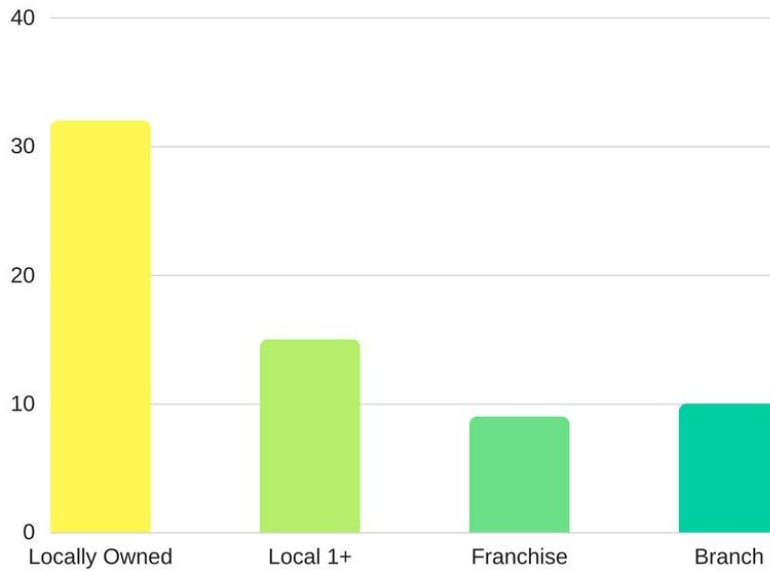
23 = Construction – 4 (5%)
32-33 = Manufacturing – 8 (9%)
42 = Wholesale Trade – 2 (2%)
44-45 = Retail – 20 (22%)
48-49 = Transportation – 4 (4%)
51 = Information – 3 (3%)
52 = Finance & Insurance – 6 (7%)
53 = Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing – 3 (3%)
54 = Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services – 8 (9%)
61 = Educational Services – 3 (3%)
62 = Health Care & Social Assistance – 5 (6%)
71 = Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation – 7 (8%)
72 = Accommodation & Food Services – 6 (7%)
81 = Other Services Except Public Administration – 9 (10%)

This sample is largely a proportionate representation of Prescott-based businesses. The only almost-full participation by an industry was in Manufacturing as almost all of Prescott's manufacturers were keen to participate in the BR+E.<sup>12</sup>

Seventy-one percent of participating businesses were locally owned and operated – the majority with one location (32 or 48%). The breakdown answer to the question *Which of the following best describes your business* is as follows:

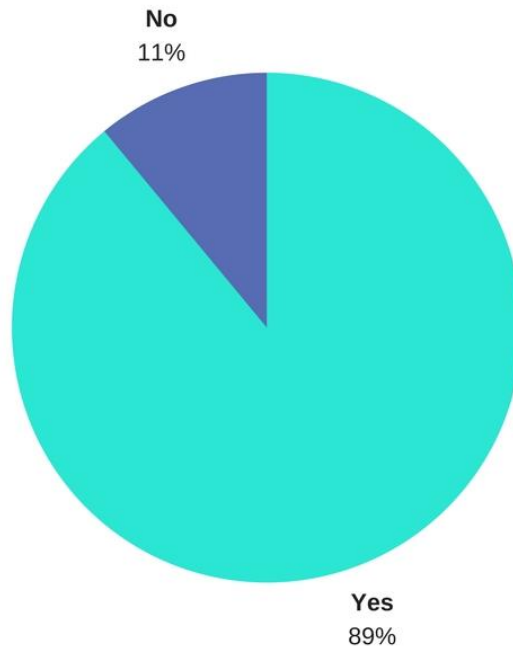
<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that businesses could also request to be interviewed.

Figure 5: Which of the following best describes your business?



Almost 90% of owners are involved in the day to day operation of the business:

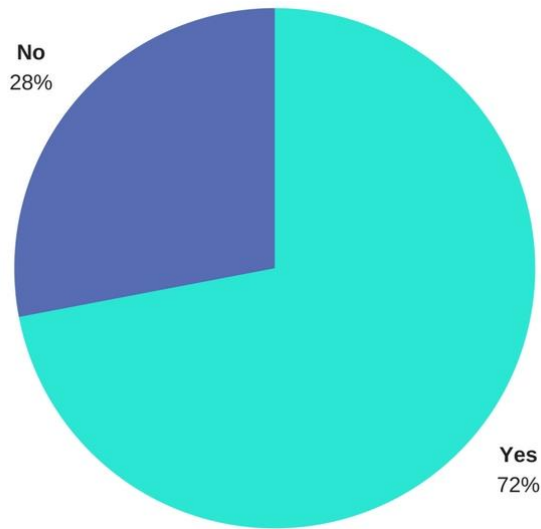
Figure 6: Is at least one of the owners involved in the day-to-day operation of the business?



Over 70% of owners are residents of the community. It should be noted that the majority of those who responded “No” to this question live in neighbouring municipalities.

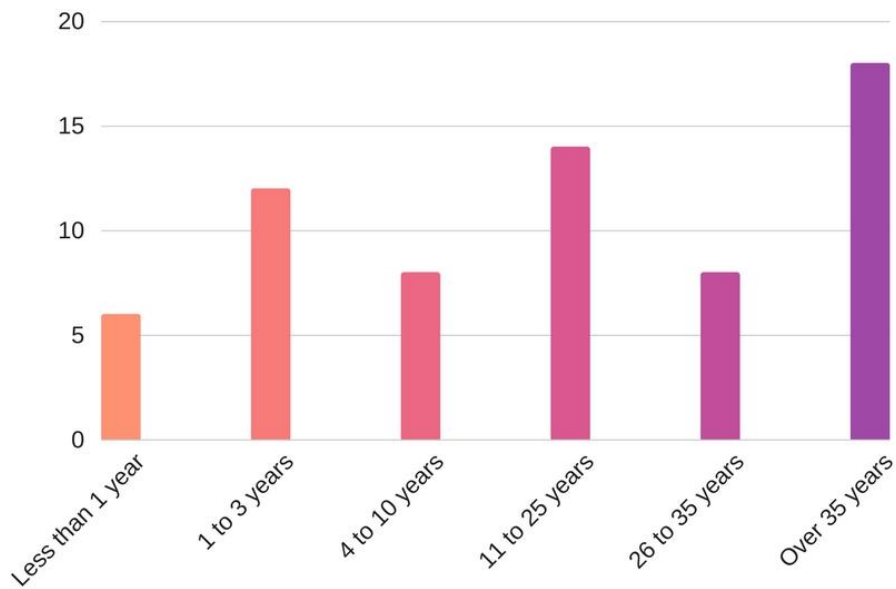


Figure 7: Is at least one of the owners a resident of the community?



Sixty-two percent of these local businesses have been in operation for over 10 years and the majority of business owners interviewed (28%) have been in business for over 35 years.

Figure 8: How many years has your business been in operation in this community?



This kind of representation from the business community means that the BR+E captured both relatively new businesses to those businesses who have been here, have seen “it all” when it comes to Prescott business over the recent past, and can speak to the booms and busts of the Prescott economy since the early 1980s.

Most businesses are small businesses employing one to four employees (common for Canadian business in both rural and urban regions according to OMAFRA and illustrative of Prescott’s business makeup which classifies 106 businesses as “small businesses” – 1 to 49 employees<sup>13</sup>) and the majority serve a regional population as indicated below.

Figure 9: Including owner/owners, how many employees work at this location?

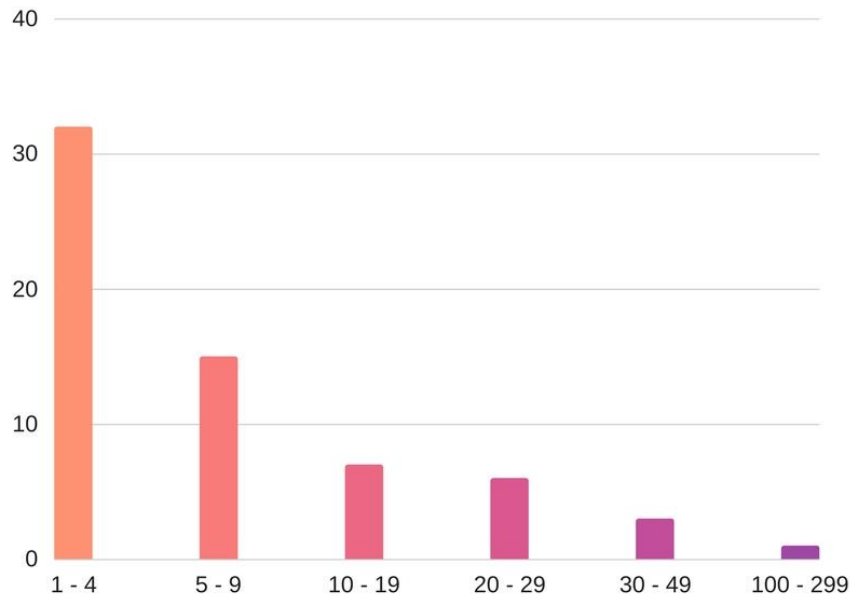
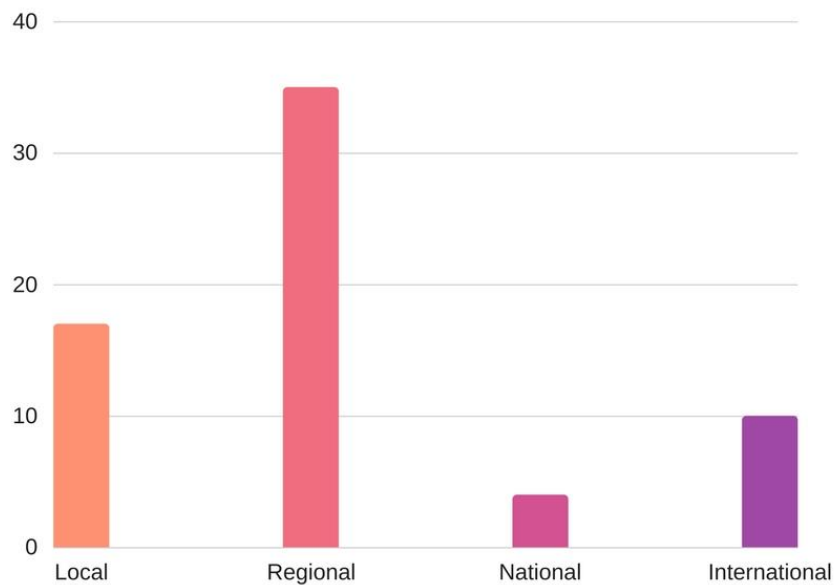


Figure 10: The primary market of your business is?



<sup>13</sup> Information courtesy of Analyst.

As will be discussed in further detail in what follows, this regional market is very important as the majority of local business owners feel that community support for local goods, products, and services is quite low considering the diversity of businesses that exist for a relatively small population. This reliance on regional markets, or markets farther afield, is very important to the success and growth of individual Prescott business. It is also important to note that for such a small economy, Prescott's reach into international markets is impressive and provides opportunities both for the growth and expansion of existing businesses and possible networks and markets for the attraction of all sizes of business.

The participant profile illustrates the extent to which the Town of Prescott's BR+E reflects both the on-ground reality of Prescott business through the relatively recent past and present, as well as the multiple voices that make up the local business community. Prescott's BR+E benefitted greatly from the will of Prescott business owners to participate in a process engineered to meet their needs and the needs of the wider community.

## **SUMMARY OF RESULTS: WHAT WE LEARNED**

This section of the Report presents a summary of the Town of Prescott's BR+E Retention and Expansion and Community surveys as analyzed via the overall BR+E Goal and Objectives and organized according to the business owner priorities that emerged from the data.

All participants answered questions from both surveys which were compiled into one survey that took roughly one hour to one hour and a half to fully deliver and answer in person.

The survey sections are as follows:

- 1. Business Information**
- 2. Business Climate**
- 3. Future Plans**
- 4. Business Development**
- 5. Workforce**
- 6. Town of Prescott Community Questions**
- 7. Community Development**

And here are the "lenses" through which the data was organized and examined:

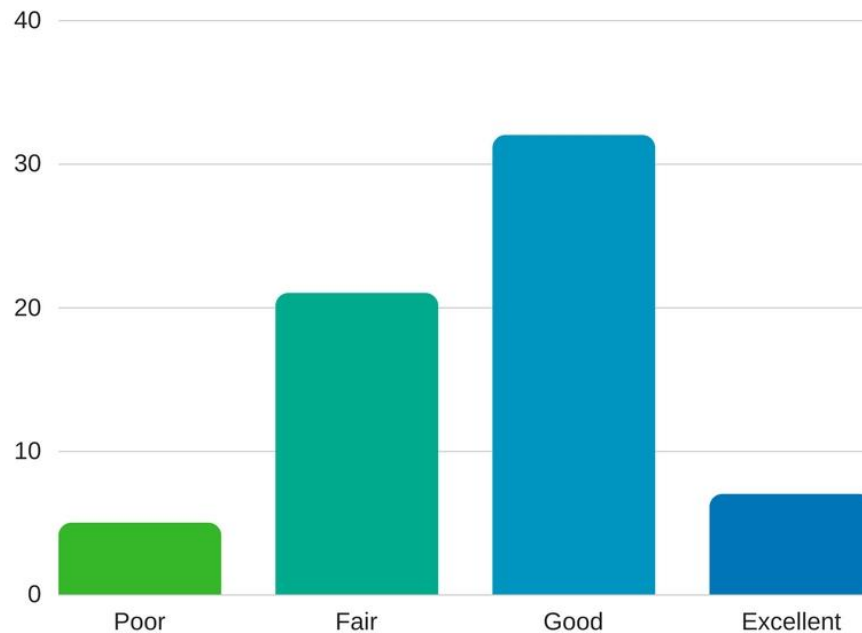
- 1. Support Businesses/Strategic Action on Economic Development**
- 2. A Stronger Local Economy**
- 3. Build Capacity & Relationships**
- 4. Increase Competitiveness/Job Creation**

These lenses reflect an analysis of the data through first, the lens of the overall BR+E Goal and Objectives, and second, the organization of the data according to the business owner priorities. These priorities are listed in ranked order in the list above. Priorities #3 and #4 are equally weighted and so can be seen as interchangeable on the list. Each section of the survey will be presented within this framework after a look at overall business owner impressions on the Business Climate.

### **BUSINESS CLIMATE**

Business Climate as part of the Retention and Expansion survey asks businesses owners generally the question of what it is like to do business in Prescott as well as what factors contribute to a thriving business or which of those factors could be improved to better contribute to the success of local businesses. According to the business owners of Prescott, the Town is a good place to do business:

Figure 11: What is your general impression of this community as a place to do business?

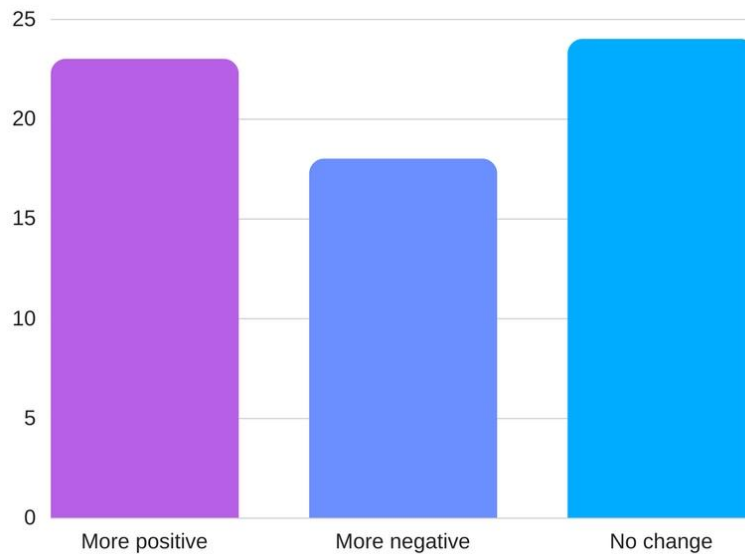


Just under 50% (32) of business owners rated the Town of Prescott as a “Good” place to do business, closely followed by “Fair” at 21 business owners or 32%. Business owners indicated that current conditions in Prescott were not ideal for certain kinds of trade (e.g. the condition of Downtown for local retailers as the vacancy rate is quite high in the Downtown) but a number indicated that they had reason to be optimistic about the Town’s direction with regard to where business was headed.

Many business owners were very open about the fact that they could use more municipal and community support. One business owner stated, “I really like the area/community – if we can boost the Town itself. Some smart things have been going on and I really do believe that as you get these businesses, the community will grow. It doesn’t need to be a retirement community.” This business owner is touching on an important perspective that resists the framing of rural communities like Prescott as aging, “dying,” out of touch and off the grid.<sup>14</sup> Like many rural Ontario communities, demographics in the Town of Prescott are shifting to a more aged population which de facto gives these rural areas claims as “retirement communities.” Many of rural areas in recent years have pushed back against this kind of imposed branding and are looking to rebrand in ways that reflect the above noted business owner’s framing – that the Town has the potential for vibrancy within and beyond its current demographic make-up.

<sup>14</sup> This is not to suggest that the elderly are any – or bring any – of these issues/ideas/approaches, but rather to point to the context that this business owner was speaking about and the underlying discourse of the “retirement” community as used in common parlance in the context of Eastern Ontario.

Figure 12: In the past three years has your attitude changed?



Thirty-five percent (23 total) of business owners felt more positive about Prescott as a place to do business in the past few years and many noted the positive things going on in Prescott and surrounding area – particularly the Giant Tiger Distribution Centre coming to the neighbouring Township of Edwardsburgh-Cardinal and, in general, a more pro-business approach by the Town of Prescott as a municipality. Just under 30% (18 total) of business owners felt more negatively toward Prescott as a place to do business mainly because, in their view, local people do not shop local or support local businesses and the Town as a municipality is not as supportive as they would like. For example, businesses do not know who to contact at the Town for support due to staff turnover and feel that the municipality does not use a diversity of local businesses even for its own needs. The main work that needs to be done here as a municipality is supporting all business owners, but particularly those who feel negatively or have not experienced a change in their perspective on doing business in the community in recent years.

Of 20 relevant factors applicable to doing business in the community, including support from the municipality, support from other businesses and local residents, development and building permit process, availability of space for rent or lease, land costs and taxes, all were rated “Good” with the only exception being Cost of Electricity which was rated “Poor.” Business owners noted that although there is a great deal of space for rent or lease, the condition of the buildings (i.e. bringing them up to code) is an issue that needs immediate attention by the Town.

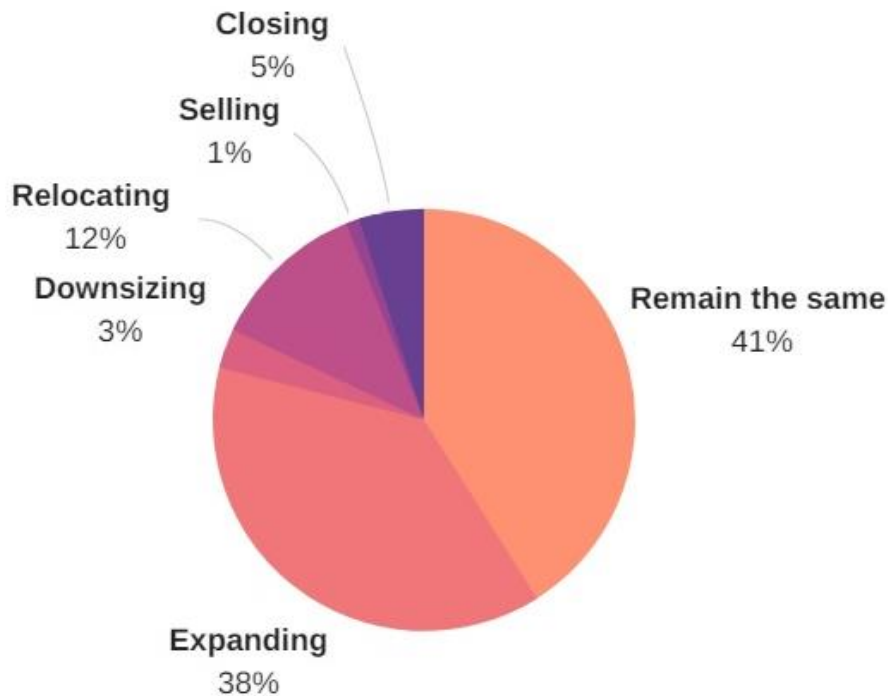
The issue of vacant commercial space is being addressed, in part, by the Town of Prescott insofar as the Ministry has recently left it up to individual municipalities as to whether they want to continue administering vacancy rebates to building owners. The Town will be discontinuing the rebates by 2018 and roll the savings into the Community Improvement Program which is a grant program offered by the Town that helps with signage and façade improvements primarily. Some business owners felt that taxes were quite high especially when compared to more urban areas even though Prescott does not have the range of services and amenities.

In response to a question asking business owners to rate their level of satisfaction with local government and community services including 20 relevant categories such as schools and child care services, cultural facilities, garbage/recycling, the Chamber of Commerce, and snow removal, all received a “Good” rating except for the Business Improvement Area (BIA) which received a “Fair” rating and the Leeds and Grenville Small Business Enterprise Centre which received an “Excellent” rating. It is an important finding that the majority of business owners indicated that they are invested in the success of the downtown core yet the BIA received a “Fair” rating. This finding indicates an opportunity to explore how the BIA can improve in order to address local business expectations.

Other local agencies such as the Grenville Community Futures Development Corporation (the local CFDC) and CSE Consulting, a career consulting agency, also received very high praise from local business owners. Local government services all scored “Good” except for Police services and Fire services which received an “Excellent” rating, as did Parks and Open Spaces. No factor in this section received a rating of “Poor.”

Finally, in this section on Business Climate, data gathered on Future Plans is very encouraging in terms of the possible expansion of businesses. The following projections are for either space or increased workforce/employees – or both – over the next 18 months.

Figure 13: *Within the next 18 months, do you plan on:*

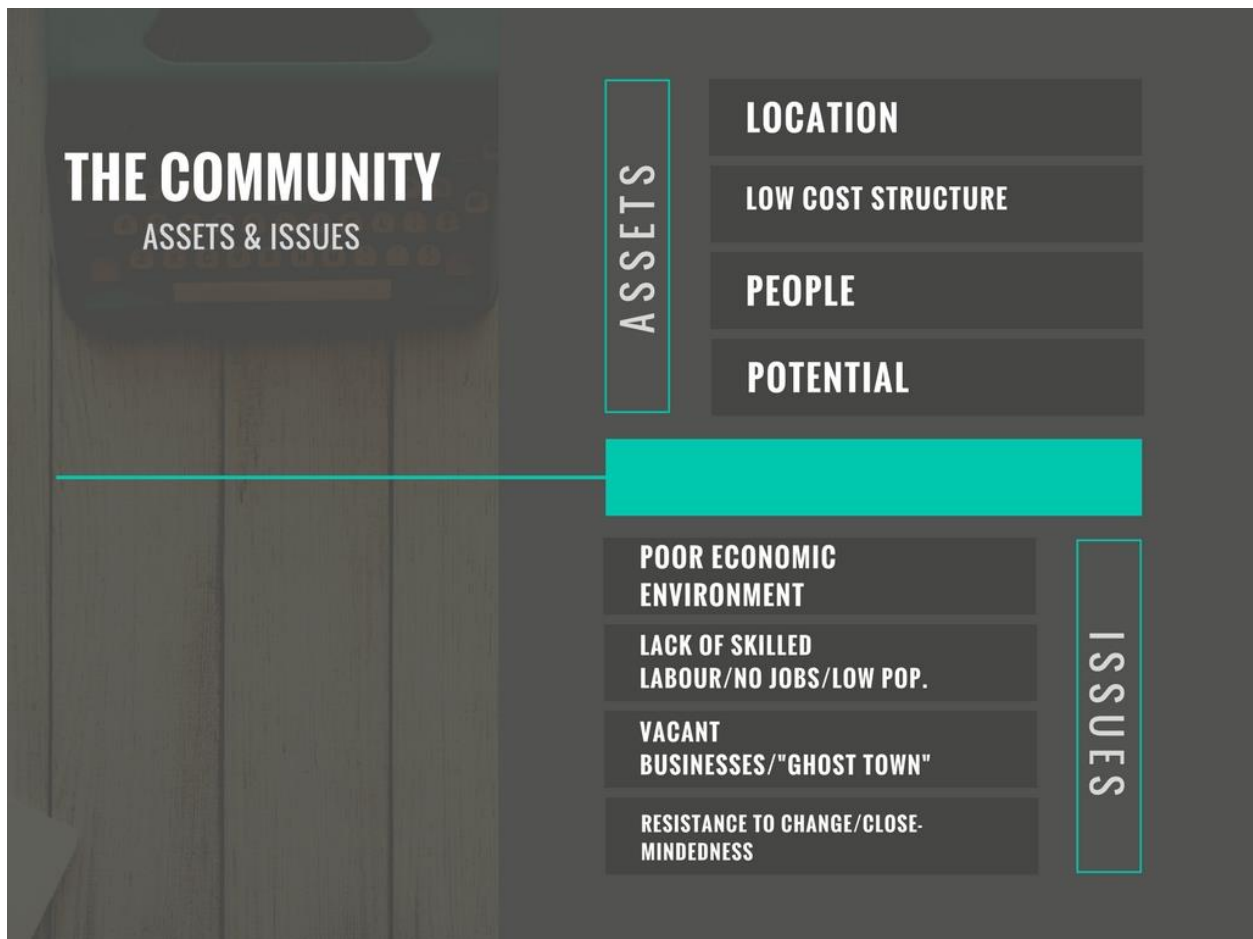


## DATA TRENDS + BR+E GOAL & OBJECTIVES

In order to begin this discussion on data trends as guided by the BR+E Goal and Objectives, and ranked by business owner priorities, it is important to provide an overview of the Town of Prescott's issues and assets as identified by participating local business owners.

In response to a Retention and Expansion survey question that asks business owners to rank the top three advantages and disadvantages as a place to do business, business owners identified the following list:

Figure 14: *What are the community's top three dis/advantages as a place to do business?*



This overview of local assets and issues as defined by Prescott business owners provides a framework for understanding their priorities, and the respective ranking of these priorities, which will be explored below.

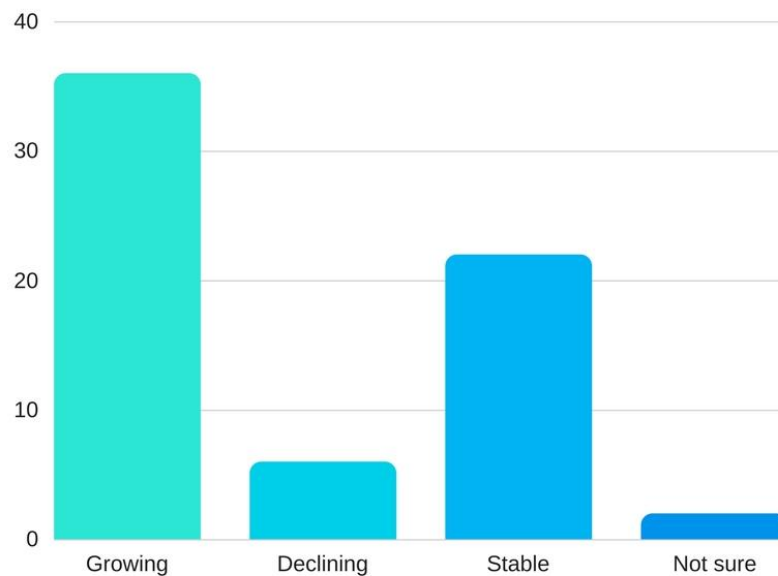


## Business Owner Priorities

### *Support Businesses & Build a Stronger Local Economy*

As mentioned above, the highest ranked business owner priority was Support Businesses & Build a Stronger Local Economy. While the future outlook for growth, in both individual businesses and industries (see graph below) is positive, some industries are challenged by the changing, or stagnant, nature of their overall industries such as retail.

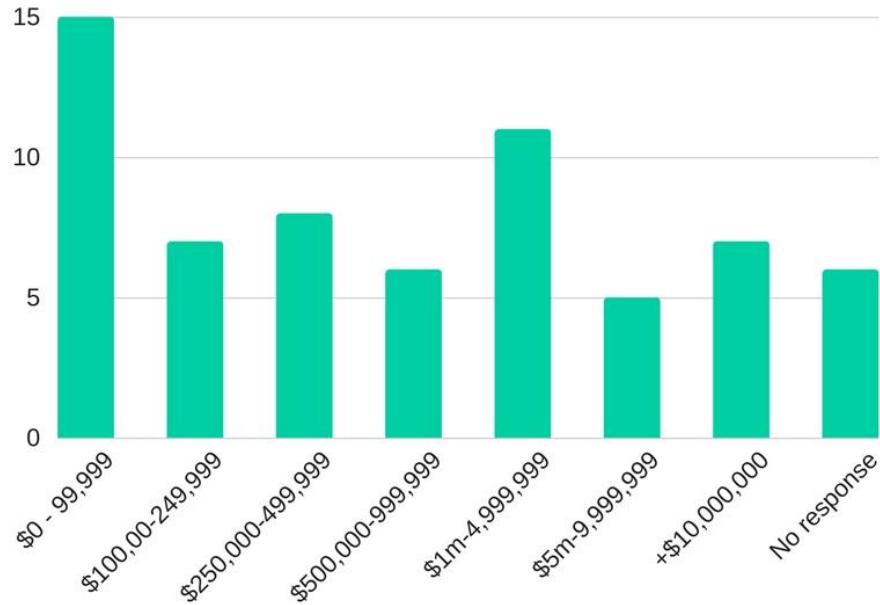
Figure 15: What is the outlook for your industry?



Over 50% of business owners anticipate growth in their overall industry which is extremely promising and encouraging. However, 30% of business owners felt their industries were stable which has impacts on their own ability to grow within the industry. Many of the local businesses that were growing felt that because they were not reliant on the local economy, they had more opportunities for success – that is, they were tapped into other markets. Retail businesses fell largely into the declining and stable businesses due to the changing nature of the retail industry, e.g. box stores, online shopping.

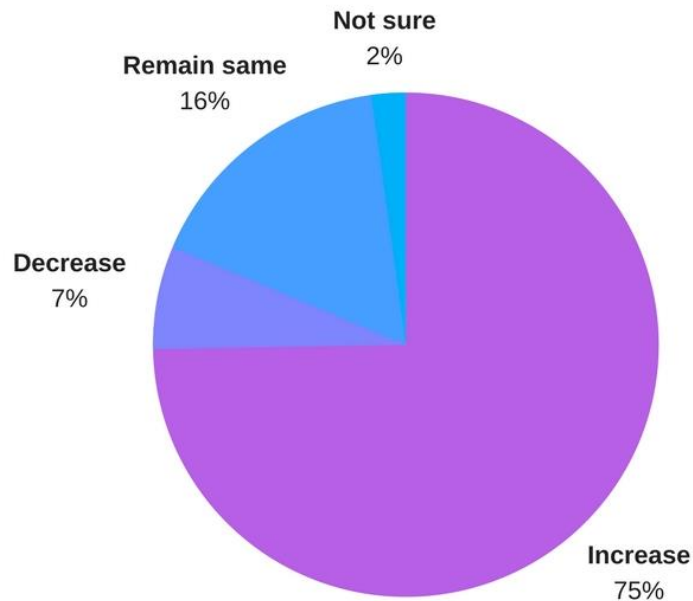
In other very promising economic news for the Town of Prescott, successful local businesses are diversified in in terms of their markets and also enjoy a range of sales differentials which helps to paint a picture of this multifaceted rural economy.

Figure 16: Please give an approx. annual sales range for your business:



Additionally, most Prescott business owners, 75%, were very optimistic about the growth of sales/business into the next year. This optimism was the result of planned expansion of services/products/markets, marketing/advertising, and other additions to the enterprise that business owners are actively pursuing. This is informed optimism and not based solely on hope.

Figure 17: Are your projected sales in the next year expected to:



## OUR PROPOSED RESPONSE: ACTION PLAN

In order to help ensure that this positive momentum continues into the next year and beyond, all priorities were examined according to desired outcome, actions, and measures of success.<sup>15</sup>

### Priorities 1 & 2: Support Business/Build a Strong Local Economy

- The desired outcomes for these priorities as identified by local business owners are:
  - to retain existing businesses and fill empty storefronts
  - Stabilize or increase population
  - increase the number of businesses
  - increase tourism.

The Town of Prescott will undertake the following actions in pursuit of this outcome:

1. Downtown Revitalization via the Community Improvement Program (CIP) and guided by OMAFRA Principles
  - The Town of Prescott's Downtown Revitalization will be led by the Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs' (OMAFRA) four guiding principles:

**Economic Development**  
**Leadership and Management**  
**Marketing and Promotion**  
**Physical Improvements**

2. Establish an Economic Development Office, and hire the Town's first Economic Development Officer, at Town Hall (Completed).
3. Establish a Town Hall Downtown Presence/Business Resource Centre.
4. Quarterly EDO Business Visits/Personal Contacts.
5. Advertise & Celebrate Local Business/Service Clubs.
6. Increase Marketing of Prescott as a Year-Round Tourism Destination.
7. Undertake a Parks and Recreation Master Plan
8. Rebrand Prescott.

Here is an indication of the import of these priorities for business owners in their own words:

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<sup>15</sup> The full chart detailing the Final Action Plan and Implementation Plan, the lead facilitator, completed actions, and timelines, can be found in Appendix F. It should be noted that the Final Action Plan is the result of the 66 local business owner interviews, data debriefs and consultations with five stakeholding organizations, the Community Action Planning Retreat, and an online survey offered on the Town of Prescott website to solicit feedback on possible actions to take based on the data for those who could not be at the Retreat in person (and any other community member who wanted to weigh in on the results).

- ❑ “I think this is a good thing for Prescott to be doing this program. Important for council to know positive, negative aspects of Prescott. Maybe if enough people talk about empty storefronts maybe something will change.”
- ❑ “Community clean-up.”; “Up-keeping the Town in general.”
- ❑ “The Town being friendlier towards new and existing businesses alike. Promoting the downtown more.”
- ❑ “10 year business plan for the Town itself and cohesion between all the players.”
- ❑ “Economic development is what people are worried about.”
- ❑ “A coming together of a strong, well-supported economic development committee. A group that would have the capability of working with multiple levels of government.”
- ❑ “Everyone is in survival mode, especially in the downtown.”
- ❑ “Community calendar of events, central location for these - for grand openings.”
- ❑ “Any efforts possible to improve internet services is the most valuable thing that can be done.”
- ❑ “Internet is a huge concern. Prescott is behind the times.”
- ❑ “The main thing is working on the tax base. Lower what they [the Town] have in terms of taxes and increase tax base. They need someone who knows what’s going on in terms of attraction of companies and housing. Need more people to share the tax load. Need professional help to deal with the attraction of new businesses.”
- ❑ “Prescott is full of potential. Location is one of the biggest assets. Close to Ottawa, the 416, why it hasn’t hit here yet [development], I don’t know why. No service, we don’t get development here, downtown [needs to be] revitalized, more housing, [build on the] tourism aspect.”
  
- ❑ “This [the BR+E] is a great example of what the Town can do – retain and expand businesses. New ways to rebrand the Town into something.”
- ❑ “Give me good support on social media and local media.”
- ❑ “Promote all local businesses, recognize milestones and achievements...”
- ❑ “I would like to see Prescott as a business and tourist friendly community that is a great place to raise a family.”
- ❑ “I want to bring in businesses to the Town and I want to put Prescott on the map. We need more dynamic people to resolve small town issues that are here. Prescott should have meetings to draw in entrepreneurs.”
- ❑ “I would like to see it reinvent itself like a Perth, [Merrickville], or Carleton Place. Prescott has the opportunity to be greater.”

Measure(s) of success for this desired outcome include:

- Businesses will stay and grow verified through regular data base updates
- Increased population verified through census data
- Increased tourist visitation especially during peak season (summer) verified through records held by tourism agencies
  - Building permit activity

### **Priorities 3 & 4: Build Capacity & Relationships/Increase Competitiveness & Job Creation**

- The desired outcomes for these priorities include:
  - facilitating a unified voice for Prescott Business
  - an educated workforce for Prescott

- opportunities for small business ownership/start-up
- retention of residents (long-term)
- attraction of residents

The Town of Prescott will undertake the following in pursuit of these outcomes:

1. Build Networks Between Existing Businesses and Business Owners.
2. Develop Partnerships with Local Business Development Agencies.

Here is an indication of the import of these priorities for business owners in their own words:

- “The business community can advertise with us.”
- “Didn’t know there was a Chamber.”
- “Collaboration and communication...We need to build on a strong spirit of knowledge, collaboration and communication.”
- “Come together and talk to business; how can we improve?”
- “Collaborate in partnership as what affects one, affects us all.”
- “[We] need to work together; a lot working independently.”
- “Everybody has to work together. Don’t complain, pitch in. Collaborate and don’t reinvent the wheel.”
  
- “There should be more diversity in Town. We should move in immigrants – they bring ideas, culture and population vibrancy. Attracting people is difficult because we are a little farther from Ottawa but once you attract more diversity, you bring more money that is invested in the community and the skills that build that community.”
- “I don’t know how much support for lower income people there is. The Town has been hit really hard by the loss of manufacturing and there aren’t supports in place.”
- “I have a project idea: A match-making service – instead of replicating businesses, you have a list of community members’ needs - all of the different services people want. If you want to open a business, you look at this registry so that you can find out if your business would be successful.”
  
- “Learn from people who know how to attract. Have a committee and do something about it.”
- “We need more people and housing.”
- “Build-sharing so it’s not daunting to open up.”
- “Hub-type space for shared shops.”
- “Help for people to get started.”
- “The people you get to move here are the people who want to be here. Follow the people who grew up here – track them down and entice them to come back. People that have roots and like small towns.”

Measures of success for these outcomes include:

- Increased knowledge, awareness, and referral between local businesses
- Level of participation at events and in programming
- Level of educational attainment

- Business start-ups and potentially pop-ups.

The implementation of these action items will come as a result of the Economic Development Officer:

- Reviewing the Action Plan often;
- Prioritizing and revising Action Items, as necessary;
- Monitoring Progress; and
- By being proactive and flexible as the process moves forward.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Without a doubt, the Town of Prescott's Business Retention and Expansion process was a success in its first three phases due to the generous support of the community, from the Leadership and Volunteer Teams to all the business and community leaders that took part.

Prescott business owners believe in Prescott's potential and want to see the Downtown, and the Town in general, flourish. Local business owners are encouraged by the BR+E and all actions related to economic development in the Town and are very open to the widespread support of the municipality and the community. Prescott business leaders are invested in Prescott as a destination or "brand" and are very hopeful that BR+E actions can enhance the quality of life in Prescott and create a sustainable community through the pursuit of diverse socio-economic opportunities and by supporting community economic development whenever possible.

## APPENDIX A1: DRAFT LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS

Jacqueline Schoemaker Holmes, Ph.D  
Business Retention and Expansion Coordinator  
Corporation of the Town of Prescott

Dear [LEADER],

My name is Jacqueline (Jackie) Schoemaker Holmes and I am writing to you today in an effort to recruit you to a Leadership Team that will work with the Town of Prescott on an exciting new initiative that will progress Prescott's business future into the next ten years.

As the new Business Retention and Expansion Coordinator with the Town of Prescott, I am convening a Leadership Team that will provide executive-level strategic guidance in partnership with Town staff and community stakeholders as they work to conduct a Business Retention and Expansion Program for the Town.

The Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) is a community-based economic development program with a focus on supporting existing businesses. It provides a systematic approach to assist communities in developing strategies to support businesses, retain and create new jobs and opportunities. BR+E uses an in-depth, four stage process to assist communities in developing and implementing concrete action plans. BR+E has been very successful across Canada and the United States and is proving to be a helpful component of economic development plans in our region, in communities as close by as North Grenville.

You are among 10 highly esteemed and well-respected leaders who are being invited to serve in this honorary role. In terms of scheduling, the Leadership Team commitment will involve a minimum of five meetings over the course of the 10 month initiative and a commitment of two hours a month when necessary (and with advanced notice).

Thank you, in advance, for considering this request. It would be my great pleasure to follow up with you on this request in person. I will call in a few days to discuss your potential role as a key leader for Prescott's exciting new BR+E initiative.

With warm regards,

Jacqueline Schoemaker Holmes, Ph.D  
Business Retention and Expansion Coordinator  
Corporation of the Town of Prescott





# Prescott's Business Retention and Expansion

## What is Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E)?

Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) is a community-based economic development program with a focus on supporting existing businesses. It provides a systematic approach to assist communities in developing strategies to support businesses, retain and create new jobs and opportunities. BR+E uses an in-depth, four stage process to assist communities in developing and implementing concrete action plans.



## Why is it important?

Undertaking a BR+E helps communities understand local business needs and respond – so that businesses stay, grow, and become more competitive in the community. It is important to recognize that few communities can do everything they would like to in order to support existing businesses. The BR+E program helps communities to identify their priorities. The BR+E program involves trained volunteers visiting businesses to conduct confidential interviews with senior level management, owners or managers. Data analysis and action planning is then undertaken to address issues and opportunities.

## Prescott's BR+E Goals

**Goal:** *To work with a representative team of stakeholders to examine the Town of Prescott's business environment through a sector-based overview approach in order to provide the data and insight needed to develop an economic development strategic plan that will move Prescott business forward for the next 10 years.*

### Short-Term Objectives

- Build relationships with local businesses
- Demonstrate and provide community support for local businesses
- Build capacity within the community and strengthen relationships between organizations
- Identify the positive and challenging attributes of the community as a place to do business
- Identify and address immediate concerns and issues of individual businesses through an assessment and referral process; Retain businesses and jobs where there is a risk of closure
- Collect business and market data to support economic development planning
- Establish and implement a strategic action plan to support existing businesses

### Long-Term Objectives

- Establish and implement strategic actions for local economic development
- Increase the competitiveness of local businesses
- Build a stronger viable local economy
- Job creation and new business development

## What Does Leadership Team Membership Entail?

- Works in collaboration with the Town of Prescott, the Lead Organization
- Comprised of 6-12 key community leaders and partners
- Co-manages the overall BR+E in the community
- Sets clear, attainable and manageable objectives for the project
- "Champions" the project, and motivates others
- Assists in securing endorsements and volunteers from the community
- Can conduct business visits
- Works to address local concerns and problems cited within the survey
- Supports the implementation of the action planning
- Should be able to attend quarterly Team meetings and contribute up to 2 hours per month when necessary

## Questions?

**For questions and any further information, please contact Business Retention and Expansion Coordinator Jacqueline Schoemaker Holmes, PhD at 613-925-2812, ext. 6221.**

## **Appendix A3: DRAFT TOWN OF PRESCOTT BR+E MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Media Release: Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Leadership Team Identified**

Contact: Jacqueline Schoemaker Holmes, PhD at [jschoemakerholmes@prescott.ca](mailto:jschoemakerholmes@prescott.ca) or 613-803-7122

The Town of Prescott has implemented a local economic development project called the Business Retention and Expansion, or BR+E, project focused on nurturing existing businesses and promoting job growth and economic prosperity, according to Dr. Jacqueline Schoemaker Holmes, the project's Coordinator.

The Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) project has identified its Leadership Team, which is a Committee of local business and community leaders who provide executive-level leadership for the project in collaboration with the Lead Organization, the Corporation of the Town of Prescott.

**“We have assembled a fantastic group of enthusiastic leaders who will help guide this community-based project with their expertise and their essential on-the-ground experience.”** said Schoemaker Holmes.

The main objective of the BR+E project is to assist existing businesses within the community to become more self-aware of its strengths and opportunities, to become more competitive, and to identify its economic and community development priorities. According to Schoemaker Holmes, helping businesses become more competitive increases the chances of those businesses staying in the community; hence, the name of the project.

Schoemaker Holmes said that the focus of the project is on assisting existing businesses because existing businesses account for about 74% to 90% percent of all new jobs according to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

To assist existing businesses, volunteers, who are still being actively recruited for the project, will visit about **65** local businesses in the next few months to gather information. The volunteers and Coordinator will use a survey to identify, among other items, the businesses' needs, concerns, and impressions about the community as a place to do business. A local Task Force of community leaders reviews this information and will try to solve the problems.

Local leaders serving on the Leadership Team are:

**Shelley Bacon, Owner, Northern Cables**  
**Judi Baril, Community Representative**

**Carolyn Burpee, Owner, Shoppers Drug Mart (Prescott and Brockville locations)**

**Jag Chawla, Regional Representative, Owner, Apex Logistics Inc**

**Julie Marshall, Employment Services Coordinator, CSE Consulting**

**Chris O'Reilly, Owner/Manager, Your Independent Grocer**

**Dave Stephens, Owner, Netfox and Dynamic Liquidation**

Council Members:

**Brett Todd, Mayor**

**Ray Young, Council Member, Chair of the Economic Development Standing Committee**

An attraction initiative intended to compliment the BR+E is schedule to follow the project in the spring.

For questions, further information, or to volunteer to participate in the research phase of the project as a business visitor, please contact Business Retention and Expansion Coordinator Jacqueline Schoemaker Holmes, PhD at 613-925-2812, ext. 6221 or visit <http://www.prescott.ca/en/do-business/prescott-s-business-reenention-and-expansion.asp>

CALLING  
ALL

# VOLUNTEER TEAM MEMBERS

FOR PRESCOTT'S BUSINESS RETENTION AND  
EXPANSION (BR+E) PROGRAM



BR+E is a community-based, action-oriented economic development strategy that promotes job growth and economic prosperity. We are recruiting volunteers to administer confidential surveys to business owners.

Upcoming training in Prescott at CSE Consulting February 9th  
and in North Grenville on Feb. 1st.

CALL JACQUELINE SCHOEMAKER HOLMES @  
613-925-2812, EXT. 6221 FOR DETAILS AND TO  
REGISTER

**APPENDIX C: TOWN OF PRESCOTT BR+E CONFIDENTIALITY DECLARATION**

***Confidentiality Declaration***

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby declare to the Corporation of the Town of Prescott (hereafter, “the community”) that I fully comprehend the significance of and need for confidentiality in the course of my duties in support of its Business Retention and Expansion projects, and that I will:

- 1) keep strictly confidential any information that becomes known to me in the course of my discussions and the conduct of surveys with each and every local business regarding their respective Business Retention and Expansion projects. I acknowledge that this includes all oral, written, electronic or otherwise recorded information that is confidential by its nature or in the circumstances in which it is received, whether or not that information is marked or expressly designated as confidential;
- 2) not copy, use, disclose or otherwise disseminate any information referred to in paragraph 1 in my possession or control by any means, including by verbal, written or electronic communications, to any person except those employees or volunteers of the community with a need to know such confidential information for the purposes of respective their Business Retention and Expansion projects;
- 3) take strict precautions to safeguard, protect and secure from direct or indirect disclosure to any person or entity any information referred to in paragraph 1; and
- 4) return to the community or an affected business as the case may be all materials relating to the information referred to in paragraph 1, as well as all copies or extracts thereof, immediately upon request.

I understand that the obligations set out above will not apply to information that:

a) now is or hereafter becomes publicly available without breach of this Confidentiality Declaration;

b) I can demonstrate that I developed independently of my duties to a Business Retention and Expansion project or that was within my knowledge or possession prior to my involvement with a Business Retention and Expansion project; or

c) is required to be disclosed by federal, provincial or municipal laws or by order of a court or tribunal.

I further acknowledge that:

a) this Confidentiality Declaration shall not be construed as granting or conferring upon me any rights by licence or otherwise in any of the information referred to in paragraph 1. All rights, title and interest in and to all the information furnished to me, and all modifications, additions or deletions thereto, shall remain with or otherwise belong to the community or the affected business within it as the case may be;

b) nothing in this Confidentiality Declaration affects any of the rights of the Crown in right of Ontario in law or equity; nor does this affect the community's responsibilities under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter M.56; and

c) my obligations in relation to the confidential information set out above shall continue indefinitely and that they will survive the expiry or termination of my relationship with the community and its Business Retention and Expansion projects.

Solemnly declared this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ in Prescott, Ontario.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Appendix D: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN LEAD ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Progress Prescott Leadership Team**

**Memorandum of Understanding**

**Memorandum of Understanding**

Between

The Corporation of the Town of Prescott – Lead Organization

and

Leadership Team Members

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets for the terms and understanding between the Corporation of the Town of Prescott and the Leadership Team to collaboratively work together to ensure the success of the Business Expansion and Retention (BR+E) Program (2016-2017) for the Town of Prescott. These groups are collectively referred to as *the Committee*.

**Background**

Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) is a structured action-oriented and community-based approach to business and economic development. It promotes job growth by helping communities learn about issues as well as opportunities for local businesses, and sets priorities for projects to address these needs. As a community-based initiative, the BR+E Program links various actors in the community including a Lead Organization (The Corporation of the Town of Prescott) and a Leadership Team. The **Lead Organization** coordinates the forming of the Leadership Team and the hiring or identification of the BR+E Coordinator. It is also the organization that is financially accountable and may seek funding opportunities to support the project. The **Leadership Team** is the executive committee for the project. The Leadership Team should be comprised of individuals who will “champion” the project and motivate others to take action so the project can succeed. The team introduces and promotes the project in the community and is responsible for the immediate follow-up on the survey results. Additionally, the team ensures the action plan is developed and implemented. Together the Lead Organization and the Leadership Team work together to ensure the overall success of any BR+E Program.



## **1.0 Purpose**

The Purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish the roles, responsibilities and protocols for the Town of Prescott's Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Committee including the Lead Organization, the Corporation of the Town of Prescott, and the Leadership Team Members. The following individuals and their respective organizations have agreed to participate on *the Committee*:

**Shelley Bacon, Owner, Northern Cables**

**Judi Baril, Community Representative**

**Carolyn Burpee, Owner, Shoppers Drug Mart (Prescott and Brockville locations)**

**Jag Chawla, Regional Representative, Owner, Apex Logistics Inc**

**Julie Marshall, Employment Services Coordinator, CSE Consulting**

**Chris O'Reilly, Owner/Manager, Your Independent Grocer**

**Dave Stephens, Owner, Netfox and Dynamic Liquidation**

Council Members:

**Brett Todd, Mayor**

**Ray Young, Council Member, Chair of the Economic Development Standing Committee**

The Corporation of the Town of Prescott will provide staff to manage, coordinate and support the creation and implementation of Prescott's BR+E Program. Staff will include:

- **Jacqueline Schoemaker Holmes, Business Expansion and Retention Coordinator**
- **Pierre Mercier, Chief Administrative Officer**

## **2.0 Goal Statement & Objectives**

The parties agree that the following goal and short-term and long-term objectives will guide the development of the BR+E Program and its implementation:

**Goal: To work with a broad-based team of local economic development and business leaders to support the Town of Prescott's BR+E Program to ensure successful implementation and completion of on-going projects and activities in the community that support the retention, growth and profitability of local businesses.**

### **Short-Term Objectives**

- Build relationships with local businesses
- Demonstrate and provide community support for local businesses

- Build capacity within the community and strengthen relationships between organizations
- Identify the positive and challenging attributes of the community as a place to do business
- Identify and address immediate concerns and issues of individual businesses through an assessment and referral process; Retain businesses and jobs where there is a risk of closure
- Collect business and market data to support economic development planning
- Establish and implement a strategic action plan to support existing businesses

### **Long-Term Objectives**

- Establish and implement strategic actions for local economic development
- Increase the competitiveness of local businesses
- Build a stronger viable local economy
- Job creation and new business development

### **3.0 Protocols/Processes**

Throughout the development and implementation of Prescott’s BR+E Program *the Committee* will develop agreed upon protocols/processes to ensure the success of the Program. As per this MOU, protocols/processes include:

- There will be four to five BR+E Committee meetings through the duration of the Program. BR+E Committee meetings will be scheduled by the BR+E Coordinator at approximately each quarter of the year. Members of all parties will be requested to attend these meetings and meeting dates will be scheduled to accommodate the majority of the member’s schedules;
- The Q4 meeting will be designated as BR+E Annual Review, Planning and Budgeting Meeting/Retreat;
- Members of *the Committee* and any other project partners (eg. higher levels of government providing funding and/or resources) will be acknowledged at public events and through any materials developed for the purposes of media advertising, signage, newsletters, reports, etc.;
- The BR+E Coordinator agrees to act as the primary contact for the public and media for all Prescott BR+E related matters, queries, etc. In the event that the BR+E Coordinator is not available, *the Committee* will assign a designate;

### **The Committee**

To ensure the success and provide for a collaborative and constructive process towards implementing the Prescott BR+E Program and associated work plans, *the Committee* agrees to provide both an advisory role and will be an active participant in the development and

implementation of Prescott's BR+E Program. As a result *the Committee* will use its best efforts to:

- Attend BR+E committee meetings, team meetings and orientation training;
- Carry out respective roles and responsibilities to develop, implement and carry through to completion BR+E projects and activities, as agreed upon and detailed in the BR+E work plan and for any future work plan updates as agreed upon by all parties;
- Coordinate/attend meetings, as required to assist in planning, implementation and monitoring of team project(s)/activities as detailed in the work plan and in any future work plan updates as agreed upon by all parties;
- Communicate regularly and provide updates and detail progress reports, as required, to the BR+E Coordinator on projects and team activities;
- Attend a BR+E review and planning retreat for *the Committee* to review the results/outcomes and provide input to help guide the development, planning and implementation of the BR+E action plans;
- Carry out other related duties as required and agreed upon

#### **4.0 TERM AND RENEWAL**

This MOU shall be reviewed and updated on an annual basis (every 12 months) from its date of execution, by all parties. Updates and possible improvements regarding the MOU will be discussed at the Annual BR+E Review and Planning Retreat. After this consultation period, and if all parties agree, the MOU may be renewed, as is or amended for another 12 months or as agreed to by all parties.

Should a member of either party decide that they can no longer fulfill their obligations related to this MOU, they may chose to designate another member from their organization or chose to opt out of this MOU entirely. Written notice of a designate or non-renewal may be provided by either party at any time to the BR+E Coordinator and *the Committee*.

#### **5.0 CONFIDENTIALITY**

All parties agree to keep any information received in the course of their duties related to BR+E visitations and surveys confidential. All parties agree that the information collected from the businesses is to be treated as confidential and is not to be disclosed to others except in the context of the work for which it was collected and as agreed upon by the business.

#### **6.0 DISCLAIMER**

*This document is a Memorandum of Understanding and is not intended to create binding or legal obligations on any party or The Corporation of the Town of Prescott.*

#### **7.0 STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

In order to achieve the goals and objectives of Prescott's BR+E Program, the signatories to this MOU on the following page, consent and agree to its contents herein, and the following statement of commitment:

- This MOU will serve as the basis for *the Committee* to work cooperatively to advise, develop, implement and carry-out Prescott’s BR+E work plan;
- This MOU clarifies the respective roles, responsibilities, processes and protocols of *the Committee*;
- This MOU, will serve as a basis for *the Committee* to make best efforts to adhere to its terms established and will execute accordingly.

**Contact Information**

**Corporation of the Town of Prescott**

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**Partner name:**

**Position:**

**Address:**

**Telephone:**

**E-mail:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
 (Partner signature)  
 (Partner name, organization, position)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date:  
 (Partner signature)  
 (Partner name, organization, position)



# FUNDING FUNDAMENTALS FOR BUSINESS OWNERS

This interactive workshop offers a one of a kind opportunity to learn from **Grenville Community Futures** and **CSE Consulting** about how to access the funds you need for:

**SUBSIDIZING TRAINING PLACEMENT AND GRANTS  
EXPANSION PLANS  
PRODUCT INNOVATION  
AND MUCH MORE**

**Tuesday May 16th from 10:30am to 12pm at Town Hall**

\*Lunch to follow\*



TO REGISTER CONTACT JACKIE ■ JSCHOEMAKERHOLMES@PRESCOTT.CA ■ 613-925-2812, EXT. 6221

**APPENDIX F: TOWN OF PRESCOTT BR+E FINAL ACTION & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**Key – Timelines**

Short Term = within 6 months

Medium Term = 6 months to 18 months

Long Term = 18 months to 2 years

Strategic Theme	Recommendations	Lead Role/Supporting Role	Progress Measures	Timing
<p><b>Overall BR+E Goal: Create An Economic Development Strategic Plan Based on Result of the Town of Prescott’s Business Retention and Expansion Process 2016 - 2017</b></p>	<p><i>To work with a representative team of stakeholders to examine the Town of Prescott’s business environment through a sector-based overview approach in order to provide the data and insight needed to develop an economic development strategic plan that will move Prescott business forward for the next 10 years.</i></p>	<p>EDO in collaboration with the CAO and Council</p>	<p>- Completed Economic Development Strategic Plan that is evidence-based and will act as a strategic vision for business and community development in Prescott for the next 10 years</p>	<p>Medium Term (for Economic Development Strategic Plan document) to Ongoing (to be revised every three years)</p>
<p><b>Support Businesses/Strategic Action on Economic Development</b></p>	<p>Downtown Revitalization via the Community Improvement Program (CIP) and guided by OMAFRA Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Town of Prescott’s Downtown Revitalization will be led by the Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs’ (OMAFRA) four guiding principles:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Economic Development</b></li> <li>2. <b>Leadership and Management</b></li> <li>3. <b>Marketing and Promotion</b></li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<p>EDO in consultation with OMAFRA, the Business Improvement Area (BIA), Grenville Futures Development Corporation, CSE Consulting and other invested stakeholders</p>	<p>- OMAFRA’s Downtown Revitalization Principles met: Merchants assisted in targeting new customer/market segments and new businesses opportunities identified that could complement the downtown mix; Downtown stakeholders engaged in the enhancement and improvement of all aspects of the downtown’s operation; The identity and positive image of</p>	<p>Long Term</p>

	<p><b>4. Physical Improvements</b></p>		<p>the downtown is communicated and activities enhance the downtown; Facades are restored, streetscaping is done, Downtown is a safe, walkable area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses retained, expanded, and attracted</li> <li>- More funding available and more fulfilled applications</li> </ul>	
	<p>Economic Development Office at Town Hall</p>	<p>Hiring of a dedicated Economic Development Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Point person for business relations who is responsible for economic development in Prescott</li> <li>- Synergy between economic development activities and tourism and recreation departments at Town Hall</li> </ul>	<p>Completed</p>
	<p>A Town Hall Downtown Presence/Business Resource Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possible Storefront</li> <li>- Co-share Space with a “hot-desk” for all stakeholders to use to engage the public – one to two days a week</li> <li>- Resources and information; accessibility and direct service provision to the community</li> <li>- Training/networking space</li> </ul>	<p>Town of Prescott; BIA; South Grenville Chamber of Commerce; Grenville Community Futures Corporation; Prescott Women in Business; Leeds and Grenville Small Business Enterprise Centre; CSE Consulting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased Town accessibility and public visitation for information and resources offered (tracked statistically)</li> </ul>	<p>Medium Term</p>
	<p>EDO Business Visits/Personal Contacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economic Development Officer</li> </ul>	<p>EDO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ECO as a presence and immediate resource for all</li> </ul>	<p>Short Term</p>

	<p>will visit each business, and/or make a personal contact via phone or email, with every Prescott business at least once quarterly</p>		<p>businesses in all sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More referral, contacts, support, and contacts shared by EDO with local business (stats)</li> </ul>	
	<p>Advertise &amp; Celebrate Local Business/Service Clubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utilize social media to advertise local businesses</li> <li>- Grand openings and a welcome wagon including package and visit</li> <li>- Create a Business of the Week Campaign</li> <li>- Distribute a Town of Prescott Business E-Newsletter</li> <li>- Host an annual Economic Development Summit</li> <li>- Feature Local Service Clubs in the Prescott Journal/monthly in the newsletter</li> </ul>	EDO and Local Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased promotion of local business; Successful buy-in to Business of the Week Campaign</li> <li>- Number of subscribers to Town Business E-Newsletter</li> <li>- Attendees to the annual Economic Development Summit</li> <li>- More visibility for businesses and service clubs and more public awareness of what exists in Prescott</li> </ul>	Short to Medium Term
	<p>Increase Marketing of Prescott as a Year-Round Tourism Destination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consult with the Tourism and Recreation Coordinator to see how the Economic Development Officer can assist where synergies exist</li> <li>- Assist in a supportive capacity on externally-driven events</li> </ul>	CAO and Tourism and Recreation Coordinator with support from the EDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recreation Master Plan that integrates economic development and tourism and recreation initiatives in Town (to be completed externally and carried out by the Economic Development Office)</li> </ul>	Medium Term
<b>Stronger Local Economy</b>	<p>Rebrand Prescott</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create synergy with the efforts already underway to transition Prescott's image (e.g. via the Recreation Master Plan)</li> <li>- Implement the brand as a function of the Economic Development Office</li> </ul>	CAO and Tourism and Recreation Coordinator with support from the EDO, Operations and Infrastructure and Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The development of a cohesive brand for Prescott that integrates key assets as identified by the community</li> <li>- Comprehensive list of building owners</li> </ul>	Medium to Long Term



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outreach to begin as soon as list is generated including questionnaire about available properties, future plans, improvements/up grades</li> </ul>	
	<p>Inventory All Available Properties &amp; Landlord Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a vacant land/commercial building inventory</li> <li>- Forms the basis for an investment attraction product</li> <li>- Priority is generating a list of building owners and then making connections to increase stake and participation of owners in the Town's economic future</li> </ul>	EDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comprehensive list of all available commercial and industrial properties completed</li> </ul>	Short Term
<b>Build Capacity and Relationships</b>	<p>Build Networks Between Existing Businesses and Business Owners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create opportunities to provide networking and professional development opportunities to local business owners</li> </ul>	EDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participants in networking/training events (stats)</li> <li>- Direct requests for offerings – referral and resource distribution tracking</li> </ul>	Short Term
	<p>Portable Community Electronic Billboard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Centralized community and business events board</li> </ul>	EDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased public awareness of events throughout Town</li> </ul>	Short Term
<b>Increased Competitiveness/Job Creation</b>	<p>Partnerships with Local Business Development Agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Job grants that focus on incentivizing youth back to the community</li> <li>- Youth Internship Program</li> <li>- Win a Storefront Contest</li> <li>- Evaluate the feasibility of pop-ups</li> </ul>	EDO in collaboration with CSE Consulting; Grenville Community Futures; Thousand Islands Workforce Development Board; Leeds and Grenville Small Business Enterprise Centre; Prescott Women in Business; South Grenville Chamber of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grants/funding awarded (two underway with CSE Consulting regarding job development and building bridges between new graduates and local businesses)</li> <li>- Local businesses that come forward to</li> </ul>	Medium Term to Long Term

	<p>and seasonal leasing (include in questionnaire to landlords)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness of regional county-wide approaches to immigrant attraction/retention</li> </ul>	<p>Commerce; St. Lawrence - Rideau Immigration Partnership</p>	<p>compete for a storefront</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formally join the St. Lawrence - Rideau Immigration Partnership</li> </ul>	
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