

# West Lincoln

Your Future Naturally

## **Building Capacity, Building Connections**

Township of West Lincoln  
Economic Development Plan  
2020 Update

February 2020

## Introduction

As part of its corporate strategic planning exercise the Township of West Lincoln has identified the need for an update, or “refresh,” to its 2016 Economic Development Plan. While much of the research and recommendations in the 2016 report remain relevant and valuable, a brief update is required to adjust the Township of West Lincoln’s approach to reflect 2020 realities, including:

- A new municipal Council was elected and began their term at the beginning of 2018.
- Several new senior administrative leaders have joined the corporation within the past four years.
- A new ten-year Corporate Strategic Plan for the Township was approved in December 2019 and there is a need for tactical programs and investments that will operationalize and implement the Plan.
- Fiscal limitations within the Township as a result of strong community appetite for fiscal restraint and emerging operating pressures on municipal budgets require new partnerships and approaches that do not rely on increased municipal staff.
- There is a need for a short-term road map for economic development while broader discussions related to economic development strategies, structures, resources, roles and responsibilities are underway across Niagara.

This Economic Development Plan Update has regard for the following goals and objectives:

- Understand the needs of local businesses in the Township.
- Review needs against resources to identify opportunities for Township support.
- Leverage potential resources that might mitigate resource demands on the Township, such as regional and provincial funding and program support.
- Identify potential partnerships.

The Economic Development Plan Update has been developed with a three-year timeframe to align with the remainder of the Term of Council and build a bridge for economic development planning until such time that a full comprehensive plan can be established.

This Economic Development Plan Update is a brief check-in on the Township of West Lincoln’s economic development approach and is not intended as a standalone document. It is best reviewed in conjunction with the 2016 Township of West Lincoln

**Economic Development Strategy, the 2019 Corporate Strategic Plan, and the Township of West Lincoln Official Plan.**

## Methodology

The Economic Development Plan Update was undertaken according to the following work plan:

- Review the 2019 Corporate Strategic Plan, 2016 Economic Development Plan, available economic development data, and Census Profile (January 2 to 10, 2020).
- Review economic development plans and work in adjacent communities including the Niagara Region, Town of Lincoln, Town of Grimsby, City of Port Colborne, Haldimand County and City of Hamilton for potential partnerships and alignment opportunities (January 2 to 10, 2020).
- Conduct an internal focus group with relevant employees including the Director of Planning, Township Treasurer and Chief Administrative Officer to compile and synthesize existing and planned tactical initiatives. These initiatives include, but are not limited, identification of potential new employment lands within the urban boundary expansion, planned processes to streamline development approvals, residential development that supports economic revitalization, potential incentives and other related programs (January 16, 2020).
- Host an economic development session with local business leaders and provincial and regional economic development representatives (February 7, 2020).
- Conduct an online survey hosted on the Township's website at [www.westlincoln.ca](http://www.westlincoln.ca) (January 30 to February 12, 2020).
- Prepare analysis and report (February 2020).
- Presentation to the Township of West Lincoln Council (February 2020).

## Background

Two official documents of the Township of West Lincoln were the primary reference points during the development of this Economic Development Plan Update: the Township of West Lincoln Corporate Strategic Plan, approved in 2019; and, the Township of West Lincoln Economic Development Plan, completed in 2016. A brief summary of each of these documents and how they relate to this Update are outlined below.

### Respecting Our Roots, Realizing Our Future: Township of West Lincoln Corporate Strategic Plan 2019-2029 (2019)

The Corporate Strategic Plan presents a vision for West Lincoln as a safe, thriving, connected community that offers an exceptional way of life, facilitates opportunities for residents, and fosters a strong sense of community. The mission for the Township is to provide responsive service and quality planning, infrastructure, programs and services that meet the needs of the community.

The Strategic Plan outlines 25 initiatives to be initiated and/or completed within a ten year timeframe under six themes:

1. **Strong Transportation Connections**
2. **Support for Business and Employment Opportunities for Residents**
3. **Strategic, Responsible Growth**
4. **Local Attractions**
5. **Community Health and Safety**
6. **Efficient, Fiscally Responsible Operations**

The following initiatives are listed under the theme 'Support for Business and Employment Opportunities for Residents':

- Streamline Township processes for building and development.
- Create a targeted, proactive approach to attracting new industry, leveraging the industrial park and other potential employment lands.
- Advocate for increased investment in rural broadband.
- Investigate installation of water and sewer services on employment lands to create "shovel ready" sites.
- Explore new incentives in the downtown to attract commercial activity.

While the second theme focuses directly on economic development, other areas address the needs of current and prospective business such as:

- Improving transportation connectivity through advocating for an escarpment crossing and investigating a Highway 20 bypass.

- Completing an asset management plan for roads, bridges, facilities and all infrastructure with targets to guide maintenance, repair and replacement.
- Encouraging a variety of housing options that are supportive, appropriate, safe and affordable.
- Quality of life enhancements related to local health care and community amenities, programs and services.
- Improved branding and communication for West Lincoln.
- Streamlined customer service.

### Township of West Lincoln Economic Development Plan (2016)

West Lincoln's Economic Development sets an economic vision for the community:

- A thriving, diversified economy with a balanced supply of workers and jobs.
- A Township that proactively supports business and attracts investment in cooperation with the business community and its economic development partners.
- Residents and businesses that are engaged and connected to their community.

The economic mission for the Township focuses on building a collaborative economic development program that addresses key challenges and opportunities by developing a diversified economy through strategic action, collaboration and community engagement.

There are six goals under the Economic Development Plan:

1. **Proactive Economic Development Program** - Allocate the human and financial resources to implement the economic development plan.
2. **Balanced and Resilient Economic Base** - Establish programs and activities to encourage business retention, expansion and attraction in a range of industry sectors and business sizes.
3. **Sufficient Infrastructure to Support Business Needs** - Develop and manage the infrastructure required to attract and retain a broad range of investment.
4. **Growing an Engaged Community** - Lead community development initiatives that create a supportive environment for resident and business attraction and retention efforts.
5. **A Shared Vision of West Lincoln** - Increase the awareness and positive perception of West Lincoln as a quality place to live and work.
6. **Collaboration with Economic Development Partners and Stakeholders** - Leverage community resources and regional programs to enhance economic development efforts.

This Update provides a check-in on the goals and activities within the Plan and sets forth a realistic and achievable set of initiatives over a three-year time horizon to continue the progress that has been made to date.

## West Lincoln Community

The Township of West Lincoln is a rural community within the Niagara Region between Hamilton and St. Catharines. The community is characterized by a number of key attributes including prime agricultural lands, natural heritage areas, principle residential and business areas in Smithville and other scattered small settlement areas. These and other attributes provide an enjoyable rural and small town environment that the residents wish to maintain. At 387.72 square kilometres, West Lincoln is the largest municipality by land area in the Niagara region, with an abundant supply of available land.

According to the West Lincoln Census Subdivision Profile, as of 2016 West Lincoln's population is 14,500, a 4.8 per cent increase since the previous Census in 2011. The average age is 39.1 and the median age is 40.5. There are 4,970 households with an average size of 2.9. The median household after tax income was \$79,232 and the median individual after tax income was \$33,123.

According to Statistics Canada data, there are a total of 1,405 businesses in West Lincoln. Of these businesses, 490 do not have employees, 284 have fewer than five employees and 110 have between five and nine employees.

According to Economic Modeling Specialists Intl. (EMSI) data obtained with support from Niagara Region Economic Development, at June 2019 there were 5,155 jobs in West Lincoln. In terms of industries, manufacturing accounted for 1,027 jobs, construction accounted for 606 jobs, and retail trade accounted for 587 jobs. By occupation, trades, transport and equipment operators accounted for the largest proportion at 1,173 jobs, followed by sales and service at 992 jobs, and management occupations at 676 jobs.



## Municipal Neighbours

Since the Township of West Lincoln does not have dedicated economic resources of its own, community partnerships are a key opportunity to advance economic development objectives. In particular, adjacent municipalities with similar conditions and goals offer opportunities to learn, and potentially partner, where interests align. Niagara Region currently assists the Township with economic development through a resource that is shared with other Niagara municipalities without dedicated internal economic development functions. Based on input received during the development of the Township's Corporate Strategic Plan and this Update, as well as the recommendations of the 2016 Economic Development Plan, additional potential opportunities for alignment with these neighbours are suggested below.

### Niagara Region

Niagara Region's 5-Year Economic Development Strategy cites 3 key sectors: manufacturing, agribusiness and tourism. There are seven key themes, all of which align with the Township's Strategic Plan: economic development, employment lands, marketing Niagara Region, streamlining planning processes, increasing Niagara's competitiveness, workforce, and advocacy.

It should be noted that Niagara Region intends to revisit its economic development strategy in the near future. As a local area municipality in the region, the Township can leverage this opportunity to advocate for the economic interests of West Lincoln by ensuring Township representatives on Regional Council, all Members of Council and senior team members are trained in economic development and aligned when it comes to advocating for the most high impact supports and initiatives in the community.

### Town of Lincoln

The Town of Lincoln's Economic Development Strategy, "Pathways to Prosperity," focus on six key areas: promote an "open for business" message; business retention and expansion; innovation and entrepreneurship; attract new investment; talent and workforce development; and, marketing.

The Town of Lincoln is a larger community, adjacent to West Lincoln, and this recently approved strategy offers insights where West Lincoln could learn, monitor and, if interests align, potentially partner. Some actions that are consistent with West Lincoln's goals include:

- Innovative approaches to encouraging entrepreneurship and small business networking such as the establishment of SPARK Lincoln in 2018, a networking and co-working hub offering entrepreneurial support services.
- Building capacity to attract new business and investment through actions like a new economic development website, community profile, searchable land inventory and marketing materials.
- Supporting existing businesses through initiatives like a calling program and improved connectivity with funding programs.
- Promoting linkages across the agricultural sector, research, and governments.
- Encouraging the development of an agri-food incubator.
- Developing a tourism strategy and strategies to encourage new and expanded accommodations.

### City of Welland

The City of Welland is currently developing a new Economic Development Strategy with an anticipated completion in early 2020. The previous Strategy was dated 2013.

### Town of Grimsby

While the Town of Grimsby does not yet have a formal in-house economic development function, the recently approved municipal Council strategic priorities support business attraction, growth and expansion and identify the need to review the structure and resources devoted to economic development and support programs and information for entrepreneurs and small business.

### City of Port Colborne

Port Colborne's Economic Development Strategic Plan is focused on overcoming challenges associated with a declining and aging population. While West Lincoln does not share these challenges, there is a strong emphasis on support for independent small business and entrepreneurs. The City is also committed to creating a culture of customer service.

### Haldimand County

Haldimand County's Economic Development Strategy was completed in 2017 and focuses on building a unified county with a unique economic development identity and strong community partnerships. Many of the actions emphasize capacity building and investment readiness that might be of interest in West Lincoln, including:

- Building a community profile.
- Implementing economic development training for municipal officials.
- Undertaking an employment lands strategy.
- Advocacy for a Small Business Enterprise Centre.
- Engaging in a rebranding exercise.
- Developing a youth engagement and retention program.

### City of Hamilton

With a population of nearly 580,000, and relatively significant resources devoted to economic development, Hamilton is a neighbour where opportunities to learn and align might be available, particularly as it relates to the western portion of the Township. According to 2016 Census data from Statistics Canada, Hamilton is also the top destination for commuters who live in West Lincoln.<sup>1</sup>

The City of Hamilton is devoting resources and municipal servicing to the Airport Employment Growth District next to John C. Munroe Airport, an international airport that is only a 25 minute drive from West Lincoln. Related to agriculture, Hamilton also intends to implement its Food and Farming Action Plan and has cited a food terminal for food producers to distribute their goods as a long-term action.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Statistics Canada - 2016 Census. Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016325

## Public Consultation

In addition to leveraging public feedback obtained during the development of the Township of West Lincoln Corporate Strategic Plan and 2016 Economic Development Plan, the Economic Development Plan Update leveraged two community engagement tools: an economic development session with local business leaders, regional economic development representatives, and participation from provincial ministries and associations; and, an online survey through the Township website. A summary of feedback is included below.

### Economic Development Session

On February 7, 2020 the Township of West Lincoln hosted an Economic Development Session with municipal staff, local business leaders and regional and provincial economic development representatives. Fifteen participants attended the session.

Participants discussed business needs and potential partnerships, resources and supports in a number of local sectors including agriculture and agri-business; manufacturing; tourism; small and at-home businesses; and, businesses in the commercial cores. A summary of feedback from the session is included under Appendix 1. Some key discussion points included:

- The Township can facilitate economic development by continuing to pursue improvements to its regulatory framework and approval processes. Streamlined processes are important to prospective businesses and developers because delays and lack of coordination are expensive and detrimental to growth.
- Agriculture and agribusiness continue to be a significant sector in West Lincoln. The Township can help support this through branding and educating new residents about the community's agricultural tradition.
- A potential food processing hub is emerging in West Lincoln, leveraging the community's agricultural products.
- Labour shortages are a key concern across sectors. For many businesses, employees cannot afford to live in West Lincoln and finding workers is difficult.
- Potential employees without access to a vehicle will experience difficulty working in West Lincoln due to the current lack of transit options.
- The Township can help protect agricultural land by growing through densification.
- The Township needs to accelerate its plans for servicing employment lands in order to make the community more competitive in attracting new business.

- Rural broadband is important for small businesses, entrepreneurs and farms that depend on technology.
- The Township can leverage and facilitate partnerships with nearby post-secondary institutions to access leading edge research and prospective talent. For example, culinary programs and tourism programs can help to define West Lincoln’s tourism product.
- The Township can think differently to apply new and innovative approaches to business development. For example, creating a business park for establishments that do not require municipal services would help to promote growth while ensuring appropriate use of sites.

### Online Survey

The Township of West Lincoln launched an online survey on January 30 and the survey closed on February 12. It was advertised on the Township website, social media channels, through business leaders and in partnership with the West Lincoln Chamber of Commerce. A total of 67 responses were received. Survey questions are attached under Appendix 2.

Through the survey, respondents identified a number of gaps between what they view as important factors for economic development and how the Township fares in each of these areas. As demonstrated in Figure 1, respondents cited availability of high speed internet, availability of services and utilities, streamlined government processes and transportation connections as factors that are “very important” in starting or growing a business. However, respondents ranked West Lincoln’s performance for high speed internet and transportation connections as “poor,” and the community’s availability of services and utilities and streamlined government processes as “fair.”

**Figure 1: Factors Important to Starting and Growing a Business and Perceived West Lincoln Performance**

Factors	Importance for Business		West Lincoln Performance	
	Highest answer	Second highest	Highest answer	Second highest
Availability of high speed internet	Very important 43 (75%)	Fairly important 9 (16%)	Poor 19 (33%)	Good 17 (30%)
Availability of services & utilities	Very important 34 (60%)	Important 15 (26%)	Fair 24 (43%)	Good 12 (21%)
Streamlined government processes	Very important 28 (49%)	Fairly important 13 (23%)	Fair 21 (37%)	Poor 14 (25%)
Location	Fairly important 20 (35%)	Very important 17 (30%)	Good 21 (38%)	Fair 20 (36%)
Transportation-connections	Very important 26 (45%)	Important 18 (30%)	Poor 34 (59%)	Fair 17 (29%)

Availability of employment lands	Important 22 (39%)	Very important 17 (30%)	Fair 18 (32%)	Unsure 16 (28%)
Housing availability & affordability	Important 20 (35%)	Very important 17 (30%)	Poor 21 (37%)	Fair 19 (33%)
Skilled workforce	Fairly important 20 (35%)	Important 17 (30%)	Fair 28 (50%)	Unsure 12 (21%)
Lifestyle	Important 24 (42%)	Fairly important 12 (21%)	Good 21 (38%)	Fair 20 (36%)

The top three West Lincoln business advantages cited by respondents were location, growth opportunities and lifestyle. The most commonly cited constraints were government processes and lack of transportation.

Many respondents indicated that high speed internet solutions and networking events are supports that are required within West Lincoln.

## Recommended Directions – 2020 to 2023

Based on the six economic development goals stated in the 2016 Economic Development Plan, and building on the research and consultation undertaken as part of the work plan, the following provides a summary of the current state and suggested short-term recommendations with actions that are feasible within the next three years and do not necessarily require additional in-house resources.

A Proactive Economic Development Program – Allocate the human and financial resources to implement the economic development plan.

The 2016 Economic Development Action Plan recommends the allocation of financial and human resources, investing in economic development to a level that is consistent with comparable communities (\$102,000 in 2016 dollars) and putting an economic development manager in place. Many of the actions in the Plan are premised on having these resources in place, however due to competing priorities these measures were not put in place and continue to be absent from the municipal structure.

Given the Township's commitment to remaining a lean organization, it is unlikely this level of resourcing will be available in the near future. As such, it is recommended that the Township focus on alternative approaches and partnerships to achieving economic development goals, many of which are reinforced in the existing Plan.

### Short-term recommendations:

- Provide economic development training for elected officials and municipal staff.
- Build alignment with Regional Council representatives and equip them to deliver a compelling, consistent case for West Lincoln's needs as Niagara Region reviews its economic development approaches
- Continue to monitor opportunities for provincial and federal funding.

A Balanced and Resilient Economic Base – Establish programs and activities to encourage business retention, expansion and attraction in a range of industry sectors and business sizes.

Since the completion of the Economic Development Plan in 2016 the Township has recognized the importance of the downtown core and made investments in streetscaping and beautification. The Township has also developed plans for the adaptive reuse of school sites and, in speaking with local employers, understands the need for a variety of housing options to promote affordability.

In the near future, the Township intends to pursue an Economic Development Master Plan that will help the Township target sectors and develop strategies to grow West Lincoln's Industrial Park.

In the absence of the dedicated economic development staff necessary to conduct corporate calling and business retention and attraction programs, there are other less resource intensive actions the Township can take to stay in touch with the needs of business to inform policies and programs, such as informal visits to local employers.

#### Short-term Recommendations:

- Participate in periodic informal visits to local employers, requesting tours from a representative sample of businesses each year.
- Support businesses in the commercial cores through urban design, revitalization and intensification.
- Pursue the development of a business park for businesses, such as landscaping and contracting, that do not require municipal services.
- Investigate the feasibility of Township supports for entrepreneurs and small or at-home businesses through the creation of a co-working and business support space in municipal facilities or the creation of an at-home business network.
- Pursue opportunities to work with post-secondary tourism programs to define and market West Lincoln's tourism product.

Sufficient Infrastructure to Support Business Needs – Develop and manage the infrastructure required to attract and retain a broad range of investment.

The Township's Corporate Strategic Plan sets forth a number of actions to build greater transportation connectivity and asset management planning to guide infrastructure maintenance and redevelopment. From developing an asset management plan, advocating for an Escarpment Crossing and investigating a Highway 20 bypass, the Township understands the critical role of infrastructure to local businesses.

Further to the recommendations of the 2016 Plan, to increase West Lincoln's business competitiveness the Township intends to investigate installation of water and sewer services on employment lands within the next five years to create "shovel ready" sites. The Township is also working with Niagara Region to advocate for rural broadband as part of the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) project.



#### Short-term Recommendations:

- Accelerate the investigation of water and sewer services on employment lands.
- Pursue the actions in the Township of West Lincoln Corporate Strategic Plan associated with transportation connections and asset management.
- Continue to advocate for improvements to rural broadband in West Lincoln.
- Continue to participate in discussions with Niagara Region regarding potential transit solutions that would assist employees in travelling to local businesses.

A Growing and Engaged Community - Lead community development initiatives that create a supportive environment for resident and business attraction and retention efforts.

The Township of West Lincoln plays only a small role in the community's economic prosperity, yet residents look to the Township for leadership and information.

Through the development of the Corporate Strategic Plan and the Economic Development Plan Update, the Township is beginning to build a local economic development network. As part of the online survey, the majority of respondents indicated they were interested in being part of future conversations related to economic development and provided contact information and consent for the Township to reach out. Business leaders and economic development officials who participated in the business consultation in fall 2019 and the economic development session in February 2020 indicated their interest in being part of future conversations as well. The contacts and connections of Township elected officials could be leveraged to grow this network even further.

#### Short-term Recommendations:

- Communicate news and updates to individuals who provided their contact information to stay engaged with economic development efforts and Township events.
- With economic development partners and stakeholders, host an annual Economic Development Forum with objectives of promoting learning among local businesses and providing the Township with a current picture of local business needs.

A Shared Vision of West Lincoln - Increase the awareness and positive perception of West Lincoln as a quality place to live and work.

Following the municipal election of 2018, the current Township Council and senior administrators, with feedback from employees and the community, have worked together to define a collective vision for West Lincoln.

The Township is in the process of launching a new municipal website with more opportunities for promoting and marketing West Lincoln as a great place to live and work. The Township also intends to initiate improved branding within the next three years.

As the Township grows and new resources become available, the Township may expand the economic development presence on the website to include detailed community information, information on land availability, and proactive marketing aimed toward target sectors.

#### Short-term Recommendations:

- As the Township redevelops its corporate website, revise the economic development webpage to focus on West Lincoln as a great place to work and highlight West Lincoln's agricultural roots.
- Consider opportunities through internships or summer employment to assign a resource to develop a community profile for West Lincoln.
- Provide information regarding available employment lands and identify new employment lands as part of the Master Community Plan for Smithville.
- Explore community feedback associated with branding West Lincoln as a food processing hub, building alignment and benefits for local agricultural producers and manufacturing companies.
- Pursue the Master Plan to target sectors and expand the local Industrial Park.

Collaboration with Economic Development Partners and Stakeholders - Leverage community resources and regional programs to enhance economic development efforts.

There are a variety of economic development actors in West Niagara and Hamilton and close collaboration and information sharing is necessary to ensure that efforts are not duplicated and are moving toward shared goals. From neighbouring municipalities to post-secondary institutions, Niagara Region, provincial and federal agencies, chambers of commerce, tourism agencies, provincial associations, Community Futures agencies, and the Niagara Workforce Planning Board, there are

many opportunities to learn and partner to advance the economic development goals of West Lincoln.

#### Short-term Recommendations:

- Continue to pursue opportunities to streamline building and development processes to ensure the Township is seen as a good business partner for business.
- Develop strong networks in close collaboration with partners including, but not limited to, the West Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, Niagara Federation of Agriculture, industrial employers, developers, tourism agencies, wineries and other partner's with a role in West Lincoln's economic prosperity.
- Create a delegation of West Lincoln elected officials and senior administrators to visit the economic development contacts of adjacent municipalities to learn about current initiatives and identify opportunities to work together.
- With economic development partners and stakeholders, host an annual Economic Development Forum with objectives of promoting learning among local businesses and providing the Township with a current picture of local business needs.
- Initiate meetings with relevant faculty leaders and program directors from nearby post-secondary institutions with an emphasis on potential partnerships in agribusiness, tourism and manufacturing.

## Appendix 1

### Summary of Feedback from February 7, 2020 Economic Development Session

On February 7, 2020 the Township of West Lincoln hosted an economic development session with local business representatives, regional economic development representatives, and representatives from provincial ministries and associations. Fifteen participants attended the session. The below table summarizes feedback from these participants related to local needs, potential for Township support, funding sources and partnerships.

Topics that were strongly supported by participants during the session are indicated in bold font.

Sector	Needs	Potential Township/ regional/ provincial role	Potential partnerships	Potential funding sources
<b>Agriculture/ Agribusiness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural gas service</li> <li>• <b>Agriculture- friendly transportation</b></li> <li>• Maintaining and promoting West Lincoln’s identity as an agricultural community</li> <li>• Affordable internet for farms using technology</li> <li>• Local housing that employees can afford</li> <li>• Protect agricultural land – densification to limit sprawl</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Build a brand for West Lincoln centred on agriculture</b>, starting with the Township website</li> <li>• <b>Consideration for farm vehicles in traffic planning</b></li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Incentives for agribusiness</li> <li>• Educate new residents on the community’s agricultural values</li> <li>• Transportation and transit for employees from other communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farm organizations (CRRO, OFA)</li> <li>• Local boards (NFA, GFO, CEEDA)</li> <li>• Agscape for branding opportunities</li> <li>• Agricultural Society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enbridge gas expansion announced by federal government</li> <li>• Ontario Employment Help Centre</li> <li>• Ontario Job Creation Partnership</li> <li>• Federal Economic development opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Manpower- it is difficult to find employees in the community</b></li> <li>• Local housing that employees can afford</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Advocate for Escarpment Crossing with the Region</b></li> <li>• Define expectations for what the industrial park should look like</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create partnerships with post-secondary institutions that are aligned eg. Brock, Niagara College and Guelph</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal/provincial programs to assist with paying a living wage</li> <li>• Creating new opportunities to employ</li> </ul>

Sector	Needs	Potential Township/ regional/ provincial role	Potential partnerships	Potential funding sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Automation advances to create more needs for skilled labour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transportation and transit links for employees who don't drive</li> <li>Continue to invest in water pressure</li> <li>Create more opportunities for local businesses to learn from each other</li> <li>Branding- promote businesses collectively and create image of West Lincoln as a great place to live and work</li> <li>Market West Lincoln as a food processing hub</li> <li>Signage on the QEW to increase visibility for West Lincoln</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate partnerships with culinary programs</li> <li>Continue working with Niagara Region Transit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>refugees and immigrants</li> <li>Grants such as GF2, Smart Green CME</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Short term accommodations</b> like Bed and Breakfasts</li> <li>Welcome and wayfinding signage</li> <li>Expansion of wine route into West Lincoln</li> <li>Additional restaurants and entertainment establishments</li> <li>Cycling infrastructure</li> <li><b>Agricultural tourism opportunities</b></li> <li>An important first step is to define the tourism product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabling policies to allow wineries and breweries</li> <li>Proactive policies regarding B&amp;B and Airbnb</li> <li>Help to define West Lincoln's identity as a starting point</li> <li>Help facilitate a marketing plan in the near future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post-secondary programs in tourism with sound expertise to define the product (course based learning opportunities)</li> <li>Potential opportunity to work with the local Chamber for a tourist hub in the central historic train station</li> <li>Volunteer groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cycling tourism initiatives</li> <li>Provincial and federal tourism programs</li> <li>Local marketing agencies</li> <li>Tourism organizations eg. Tourism Partnership of Niagara, Twenty Valley Tourism, Hamilton Tourism</li> <li>Education institutions</li> </ul>

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Needs</b>	<b>Potential Township/ regional/ provincial role</b>	<b>Potential partnerships</b>	<b>Potential funding sources</b>
	in West Lincoln prior to marketing			
<b>Small and At-Home Businesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility in the approval process</li> <li>• Transit options to Hamilton</li> <li>• <b>Rural broadband</b></li> <li>• Increased connectivity through a local hub</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of information on tools, resources and supports</li> <li>• Attract rather than propel</li> <li>• Facilitate discussions</li> <li>• Co-working spaces in Township facilities</li> <li>• Look at innovative new options for a business park for establishments that don't require municipal services (eg. Landscaping and contractors)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWIFT participation for rural broadband</li> <li>• Community Futures (West Lincoln is part of the Grand Erie CFDC)</li> <li>• Regional Innovation Network</li> </ul>
<b>Businesses in the Commercial Cores</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching businesses to local customer needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Win this space" initiative</li> <li>• Residential intensification to bring more potential customers</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OMAFRA First Impressions Program</li> <li>• Ontario BIA Association including "Digital Main Street" initiative</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2

### Township of West Lincoln Economic Development Survey Questions

#### January 2020

#### Introduction

Welcome to the Township of West Lincoln Economic Development Survey.

While the Township plays only a small role in our community's economic prosperity, we know great things are possible when we work together.

Your feedback will help to refresh our economic development strategy and determine meaningful, short term actions to build capacity and connections in West Lincoln. This work will be reported to Township Council before spring 2020.

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**Please select the sentence that best describes you:**

- a. I own or operate a business in West Lincoln.
- b. I am considering starting a business in West Lincoln.
- c. I live and work in West Lincoln.
- d. I live in West Lincoln and do not work in the community.
- e. I work in West Lincoln and live in a different municipality.

**What type of business do you own or operate?**

- a. Agriculture
- b. Manufacturing
- c. Transportation and warehousing
- d. Professional services (including finance, insurance, real estate, technical services)
- e. Educational services
- f. Health care and social services
- g. Arts, culture, recreation and entertainment
- h. Accommodation and food services
- i. Other (please specify):

**Please describe the business you are considering starting in West Lincoln:**

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**When starting or growing a business in West Lincoln, how important are the following factors?**

*(very important - fairly important – important - slightly important - not important – unsure)*

- Transportation connections
- Availability of employment lands
- Availability of services and utilities
- Availability of high speed internet
- Skilled workforce
- Lifestyle
- Housing availability and affordability
- Location
- Streamlined government processes

**Compared to similarly sized Ontario communities, how does West Lincoln perform in the following areas:**

*(excellent – good – fair – poor - very poor – unsure)*

- Transportation connections
- Availability of employment lands
- Availability of services and utilities
- Availability of high speed internet
- Skilled workforce
- Lifestyle
- Housing availability and affordability
- Location
- Streamlined government processes

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**In your opinion, what are West Lincoln’s greatest advantages for business owners and operators?**

**In your opinion, what are the greatest constraints for businesses in West Lincoln?**

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**Which municipal or government supports are most important to business owners and operators in West Lincoln? Please check all that apply:**

- a. Small business information sessions
  - b. Networking events and opportunities
  - c. Business incubator/ co-working space
  - d. Serviced employment lands
  - e. Geographic information on available lands
  - f. Local business directory
  - g. Solutions for high speed internet
  - h. Streamlined approval processes
  - i. Community improvement incentive programs
  - j. Other (please specify):
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**Would you be interested in participating in future conversations about economic development in West Lincoln?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**Are you be interested in receiving news and updates from the Township of West Lincoln?**

- a. Yes
- b. No