



TOWNSHIP OF
Southwold



Southwold Township Community Economic Development Plan

Mellor Murray Consulting
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June 2020

Southwold Township Community Development Plan

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Introduction

The Southwold Township Community Economic Development Plan was created in collaboration with the Southwold Economic Development Committee, Southwold Township and Elgin County. This plan is intended to coordinate the efforts of volunteers, business and community leaders, municipal staff and other stakeholders committed to building the local economy.

This plan was assembled in several stages. Phase One included a resident survey and market threshold analysis conducted in 2017. Southwold Council held an economic development workshop to provide direction for the plan in June 2019. In July 2019, residents, community leaders and business representatives participated in a community workshop to provide their insights on the priorities and opportunities for Southwold's economic development plan. The Southwold economic development committee provided input throughout the development of this plan. Their direction and insights have been incorporated throughout.





About Southwold Township

Southwold Township is a community of approximately 4,421¹ residents with urban centres in Shedden, Fingal and Talbotville. The Township is located in the centre of Elgin County with Lake Erie to the south. Southwold Township is adjacent to two large urban centres. St. Thomas (pop. 38,909²) is on the east and London (pop. 383,822³) is to the north.



Southwold is a predominantly rural community with a rich agricultural base. Highway 401 crosses the northern edge of the Township.

Community amenities include area fruit orchards, maple syrup bushes and on-farm markets, Southwold Prehistoric Earthworks, Shedden Keystone Complex, Fingal Wildlife Management Area and a summer camp and retreat centre.

¹ Statistics Canada 2016 Census

² Ibid

³ Ibid



Research

The economic and demographic analysis provided some key insights into Southwold Township.

- Southwold's median age is 44.7, slightly older than the provincial average
- Average household income is similar to the provincial average
- Typical annual shelter costs are \$15,700, much lower than Ontario's \$21,000
- Southwold's economy is highly connected with neighbouring municipalities. 90% of the 1,900 jobs are filled by residents from other municipalities. 90% of 1,600 employed Southwold residents commute outside the Township for work.

Market Threshold Analysis identifies gaps in the local economy by comparing the proportion of firms by sector and employment compared to the Ontario average. The Market Threshold Analysis identified opportunities in the retail, finance, insurance, real estate and professional and other services sectors.

Under-represented Sectors

 Retail <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gasoline Stations• Health and personal care• Grocery stores	 Finance, Insurance, Real Estate <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vehicle Insurance• General financial services• Health insurance• Life insurance	 Professionals & Other Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restaurants• Legal fees• Health care (eye care, dental health, personal care)• Other (funeral, hair grooming)
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Community Consultation

A survey of 347 Southwold Township residents conducted in 2017 provided insights into their shopping patterns and preferences. They described Southwold Township as friendly and inviting with a strong community base. They said Southwold was quiet, peaceful and a nice place to live. They also referenced the rural countryside and agricultural base.

They expressed a strong desire for additional opportunities for jobs, stores and recreation in Southwold Township. The respondents said they shopped most regularly in St. Thomas followed by London and then Shedden and Talbotville. The most popular response to the types of businesses needed in Southwold included coffee shops, convenience and gas stores, restaurants and grocery stores. Other popular answers included recreation and activities, pharmacies and drug stores and medical services.

The respondents reported that the most popular features in Southwold Township were:

- **Local activities:** recreation opportunities, shopping, rural agriculture and farming,
- **Specific destinations:** Picard's Nuts, Fingal Wildlife Management Centre, Wayside Inn, Whistlestop antique store, Talbotville Berry Farm, Keystone complex
- **Events:** Rhubarb festival, tractor pull and Shedden fair



Visioning Workshops

The second phase of Southwold's Economic Development Plan began in 2019 with consultation with the Southwold Township Council and a community workshop.

Southwold Council

Southwold Council established the following priorities:

- Ensuring the former Ford Assembly Plan lands have the services required to attract investment
- Creating greater awareness of Southwold Township with branding, logo design and signage,
- Combatting Green Lane Landfill image
- Small business support and education
- Embracing change, innovation and collaboration
- Connecting residents, businesses and stakeholders.

Their vision for Southwold's future include a growing population with new residential development and small businesses with a reduced number of vacant properties, particularly in Fingal and Shedden. They expressed a desire for enhanced infrastructure in the Township's industrial parks, highspeed internet, cycling trails and public transit connections.

Southwold Council wants to collaborate with Elgin County on economic development efforts. Their key economic development priorities are: exploring transit options for residents and establishing an updated brand and logo for Southwold Township.



Community Workshop

The Economic Development committee hosted a workshop for 15 local residents, businesses, community groups, regional and municipal government representatives in July 2019. The workshop highlights are summarized below:

Economic Opportunities:

- existing industrial land (especially the former Ford lands).
- Proximity to London and St. Thomas
- Residential growth
- Southwold's lower tax rates
- Eco-agri-tourism

Barriers to Realizing Southwold's Economic Potential:

- Limited financial resources
- Infrastructure: lack of natural gas, high-speed internet and local service amenities
- Community Vision: competing cultures/growth management

Key Economic Development Initiatives:

- Marketing and branding plan
- Support for new and existing businesses
- Red tap reduction, supporting new ideas
- Development of industrial lands
- Capitalizing on on-farm services
- Supporting business diversity



Community Workshop July 10, 2019



Vision and Mission

The vision and mission are the underpinnings of the community economic development plan. The mission is a statement of what the organization does and why. The vision describes the future the organization is working towards.

Southwold Township Council established the following Vision and Mission as part of its Corporate Strategic Plan in 2018.

Southwold Township Mission:

Providing a healthy, safe community to all residents, businesses and visitors by providing services in an economical manner to further growth and prosperity.

Southwold Township Vision:

- A thriving, community-oriented municipality that continues to grow and prosper by enabling and pursuing residential, agricultural and commercial growth opportunities through expansion of key municipal services.
- The sense of community will be strengthened by promoting a wide variety of consumer-friendly services, such as health, culture, connectivity, parks and recreation.
- Council and staff will serve the ratepayers of the community with a caring attitude focused on customer service.



The Southwold Township Community Economic Development Plan


Southwold Township's Community Economic Development Plan is the culmination of the economic and demographic analysis and community consultation. It builds upon the Southwold Township Strategic Plan and provides focus for the economic development efforts. The vision statement was established by the Southwold Township Economic Development Committee in 2018. It describes the economic future this plan is intended to create for Southwold Township.

Southwold Township Economic Development Vision (2018)

Southwold Township is a thriving centre of economic opportunity for business and residents and a welcoming destination for visitors.

Goals and Objectives

Goals are the general intentions and ambitions that the community wants to achieve. Objectives are the precise actions or measurable steps to move closer to the goal. The following goals and objectives will provide the foundation for the economic development strategic actions detailed in the remainder of this report.

		Goal	Objective
	1	Community Engagement	Leverage resident and business volunteer efforts to implement Southwold's economic development plan.
	2	Investment Readiness	Provide the required elements to facilitate investment.
	3	Branding/ Communication	Establish professional branding, marketing tools and messages to share Southwold's value proposition for residents and businesses.
	4	Business Development	Bring increased commercial and community activity to the settlement areas in Fingal and Shedden. Attract and support a diversified business base. Expand Southwold's Tourism product offering.
	5	Enhanced Infrastructure	Support business and residential infrastructure needs.



Strategic Actions

Strategic actions provide the detailed series of individual tasks required to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the Southwold Township Community Economic Development Strategic Plan.

	Goal 1	Community Engagement
	Strategic Objective	Leverage resident and business volunteer efforts to implement Southwold's economic development plan

The Community Economic Development Strategic Plan recognizes the critical role of the community in developing and implementing the economic development strategic plan. The Keystone Complex building is an example of what can be achieved in Southwold Township when residents, local business and government work together on a shared vision.

Like the Keystone Complex, the success of this plan is dependent on the ongoing engagement of local community leaders and businesses in partnership with local and regional government. The Economic Development Committee can continue to provide this leadership. Currently the committee membership is low. Additional members are needed to share the load and the responsibility of implementing the plan.

This plan provides a long list of actions that can contribute to the economic vitality of Southwold Township. It will be important to begin with some small, achievable goals to engage and motivate others. In the first year of implementation, the committee should establish two to three priority projects to establish the process and ways that they will work together, learning from their initial successes and challenges. These small steps will help to prepare the community for the larger, more complex initiatives in future years.

Connecting with the existing business members will be a critical first step. The committee should adopt a modified Business Retention and Expansion program using a combination of County and municipal staff, elected officials, economic development committee members and community volunteers to visit the businesses in Southwold.



These visits will serve a number of purposes:

- Creating an updated inventory of all local businesses and services
- Troubleshooting any local issues businesses are facing
- Review of all barriers to current business activity and growth
- Identification of any opportunities to support and grow their businesses
- Facilitate data driven decision making by Council
- Connect local businesses with local resources when and if they need assistance.

Volunteers should be encouraged to mobilize and support local community events such as clean up days in Fingal, Shedden and Talbotville, a community picnic, a night market, and a special seasonal community event for fall harvest or Christmas. These events are intended to reinforce residents' and local businesses' connections to the community while creating an environment that supports further economic activity and investment. Where possible, these events and other community activities should be held in the Main Street areas of Fingal and Shedden in order to animate the area.

The community can start to address the vacant storefronts in Shedden by establishing a pop-up business or shared office space in one of the vacant buildings at Shedden's four corners. This shared or temporary space would provide much needed room to grow for an early-stage business and mutual support and combined services such as internet and office services for a collection of independent business owners.

Southwold Township should build on its strengths as a friendly, neighbourly community by establishing a welcome committee for new residents and businesses. The committee would ensure residents and businesses are familiar with the local businesses, business communities and rich community activities and help them to become active engaged members of their new home.

The community should work with the Elgin Business Resource Centre and the Small Business Enterprise Centre to ensure that small business networking events and business seminars are held in the Township to further connect local businesses while supporting their profitability and growth.

The library is a hub of community activity. The community should ensure that the library has a collection of small business resources (as recommended by the Elgin Business Resource Centre and Small Business Enterprise Centre). The




community should also consider hosting small business seminars and networking events at the library to further reinforce the library's role as a source of small business supports.

Community Engagement Actions:

1. Recruit additional economic development committee members
2. Establish 2 to 3 priority economic development projects per year
3. Develop a Southwold business retention and expansion program
4. Establish a volunteer event committee to host clean up days, a community picnic and/or night market
5. Establish a committee to host a special event
6. Create a welcome committee for new residents and businesses info on local businesses
7. Encourage the hosting of community events in Shedden's four corners.
8. Host Small business networking events
9. Ensure the library has small business resources and workshops
10. Open one of the vacant buildings in Shedden's four corners for pop-up businesses or shared offices.



	Goal 2	Investment Readiness
	Strategic Objective	Provide the required elements to facilitate investment

Investment readiness refers to the community's tools and capacity to address, receive and support business investment. Communities that are investment-ready have the appropriate combination of physical land and buildings, community data, planning policies and procedures, economic development expertise and marketing tools to support business retention, expansion and attraction.

Southwold Township should start by compiling the typical economic development community profile data and ensure it is available on the Southwold Township website and is shared with Elgin County Economic Development.

The community can highlight the key features for business in a one page 'lure brochure' as a tool to initiate discussion with existing and prospective businesses. The brochure will also support the County's investment attraction efforts. A digital version of the brochure is appropriate in most instances.

The Township should be proactive in assembling as much data as possible on the former Ford property. This information should include the property status including when it would be available for purchase and redevelopment, the environmental status and the servicing on-site. The former Ford property information package should also include information on Elgin County's brownfield incentive programs and other relevant programs that could help offset the environmental remediation and infrastructure investment costs on the property.

The Township should also have a database of available industrial and commercial land and buildings in Southwold Township. The inventory should include information on the owner and sales agent, asking price, property specification, servicing, permitted uses and accompanying maps. This information should be available online if possible.

Finally, the community should identify business ambassadors for the community with a proven track record in the community who are prepared to share their experience doing business in Southwold Township. These ambassadors can




provide testimonials for inclusion in the lure brochure and meet with prospective investors if required to address their individual questions.

Investment Readiness Actions

1. Compile economic development data to share on the Southwold website and with Elgin County's Economic Development Department
2. Create a small one-page lure brochure with links to the Southwold and Elgin County economic development website
3. Compile data on the former Ford lands including status, environmental conditions, servicing, brownfield programs and potential funding programs
4. Prepare a database of commercial and industrial land and buildings in Southwold
5. Use local business ambassadors to help make the case for investment.



	Goal 3	Branding/ Marketing
	Strategic Objective	Establish professional branding, marketing tools and messages to share Southwold's value proposition for residents and businesses

Southwold Township's current logo is dated and doesn't reflect the changing economy and future opportunities for investment. The Township should invest in a new logo and branding package to reinforce its progressive vision. The community has many strengths and opportunities that should be highlighted in the economic development data and promotional material. The branding should include key messages targeting new and existing residents and prospective and existing businesses.

Southwold Township's website should be expanded to include more information on the economic development opportunities in the community. The Community Profile data (outlined in goal 2) should be compiled and prominently displayed on the Township website and shared with Elgin County Economic Development and the local business community.

Commercial opportunities are tied to the residential growth anticipated in Southwold Township (especially Talbotville). The website should include information to support resident attraction and integration. Both the industrial/commercial and residential webpages should provide links to the broader data available on the Elgin County website.

The website should include a directory of all Southwold businesses including home-based and small businesses. This directory can be the foundation for a shop local program that encourages residents and local businesses to support Southwold based businesses. The website is also an appropriate platform to profile successful Southwold Township businesses. The community can further support the local business base by celebrating a local business leader of the year.



Branding/ Marketing Actions

1. Update Southwold's branding to reflect the changing economy and future opportunities
2. Establish consistent, key messages targeting prospective and existing residents, and prospective and existing businesses
3. Build on the strengths and opportunities in the community (safe, affordable, family, friendly, open spaces, proximity to larger centres, available property)
4. Compile Southwold's community profile data (demographics, business profile, servicing, resources)
5. Update the Southwold Township website to include resident and business attraction info with links to Elgin County
6. Establish an inventory of Southwold businesses (include home-based and small businesses)
7. Develop a shop local program featuring home-based and small businesses
8. Profile success stories on the Southwold website
9. Celebrate a local business leader of the year.



	Goal 4	Business Development
	Strategic Objective	Bring increased commercial and community activity to Fingal and Shedden. Attract and support a diversified business base. Expand Southwold's tourism product offering

Community stakeholders expressed a desire for increased commercial and community activity in Fingal and Shedden. A downtown development task force consisting of the businesses and property owners in the downtown should meet and identify the desired fixed asset improvements required to make the downtowns more attractive. These elements may include repairs to the existing sidewalk and roads, investment in planters and street furniture and updated signage.

Community volunteers should be encouraged to plan and host special events such as a farmers' market, night market, food truck event and entertainment in the downtowns. (previously referenced in Goal 1)

Establishing a Business Retention and Expansion program (also referenced in Goal 1) will provide an opportunity for local business to provide insights on their experiences doing business in Southwold Township. The visits will help inform Southwold on the issues local businesses are facing. It also provides an opportunity to share information with the businesses on funding programs and other business supports to retain and expand these businesses.

The four corners in Shedden is a well-trafficked intersection. The Township should work to establish the junction as a centre of community activity and pride. The Township should consider providing one of the empty storefronts for short-term rental to Southwold businesses over the business Christmas season in November and December. Local community groups such as the Scouts, Guides or 4H should be encouraged to set up a Christmas tree, cider/hot chocolate and gift-wrapping service at the four corners in the weekends leading up to Christmas. The four corners would also be an excellent location to stage a food truck type event.

The Township should build on the growing popularity of cycling, Elgin County's cycling initiatives and the relatively less populated roadways (compared to the GTA) to encourage the four corners as a cycling rest or rally spot, complete with designated parking, picnic tables, a repair centre, bike rack and signage showing cycling routes of various distances or themes.



The market threshold analysis data completed in Phase One of this project should be updated to provide current market potential. This data can identify specific businesses to target to establish operations in Southwold Township. An initial target group may include businesses located elsewhere in the region who may be open to establishing a satellite operation.

Southwold Township can support the sale or lease of available properties in Southwold Township by profiling available land and buildings in the community. These efforts could include providing detailed property information on the Southwold Township website (including the realtor contact information). The local high school and elementary schools could be engaged to develop window décor for vacant commercial space to beautify the location and add visual interest while also providing the owner/realtor contact information. The Southwold library (located in Shedden) should investigate the potential for extending WiFi access to the downtown area to support local residents and businesses needing access and providing another source of traffic in the community.

The Township should also ensure it is leveraging all County economic and tourism efforts. For example, Elgin County and the Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation (SWOTC) are supporting the development of Alternative Accommodation such as Airbnb and VRBO operations to encourage tourism activity in the region.

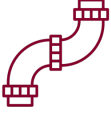
Business Development Actions

1. Establish a downtown development taskforce to:
 - Identify required improvements, e.g. Sidewalks, roads, planters, signage, street furniture
 - Host special events to increase traffic
 - Organize farmers' markets, night markets, food truck events and/or entertainment
2. Establish regular business visits (BR&E) trouble-shoot, provide info on funding, business supports



3. Bring additional activity to Shedden's four corners:
 - Short-term rental for November/December
 - Scouts/4H to sell Christmas trees, cider, gift wrapping service
 - Food trucks
 - Establish a cycling rest or rally spot with parking, picnic tables, repair centre, bike rack, maps
4. Share market threshold analysis data
5. Target existing businesses located elsewhere to open a branch in Southwold
6. Profile available properties on Southwold and Elgin County websites
 - Prepare sales sheets for available properties (for website and realtors)
 - Develop window décor (with high school, elementary school students), provide contact info
 - Wi-Fi in library to extend to downtown
7. Host a workshop for alternative accommodation with Elgin County and SWOTC



	Goal 5	Enhanced Infrastructure
	Strategic Objective	Support business and residential infrastructure needs

Southwold Township must ensure that it has the infrastructure to ensure existing businesses can prosper and grow and to make sure the community can compete for investment with other jurisdictions.

The community has recognized the opportunity for greater economic activity resulting from recent residential growth. Continued residential growth is also dependent on the provision of the appropriate water, waste water, power and broadband servicing.

Communities are recognizing that broadband access is becoming just as important to business development and attraction as other hard infrastructure elements. Broadband access is important across industries including Southwold's agriculture sector, target industries such as retail, finance, real estate and professional services, tourism related businesses and home-based businesses.

Southwold Township should explore opportunities to expand inexpensive and reliable broadband services throughout the Township with providers who are targeting rural communities such as Packetworks. The Township should continue to support the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) Initiatives to access government funding and support for a regional broadband network across the Western Ontario Wardens Caucus region.

The Economic Development committee, Township and County staff should establish and agree upon priority areas for infrastructure enhancements. With these priority areas established, they should prepare for future budgets and funding programs by developing the business case and preliminary estimates for the required infrastructure investments. The business community should be encouraged to provide specific information on the impact these infrastructure enhancements would have on their businesses. Once completed, the business case and investment requirements can be shared with the local MPP and MPs so they are able to advocate for Southwold Township as the opportunity arises.



Southwold Township should also explore opportunities and examples of other rural communities that have engaged in private public partnerships to support infrastructure investment.

Enhanced Infrastructure Actions

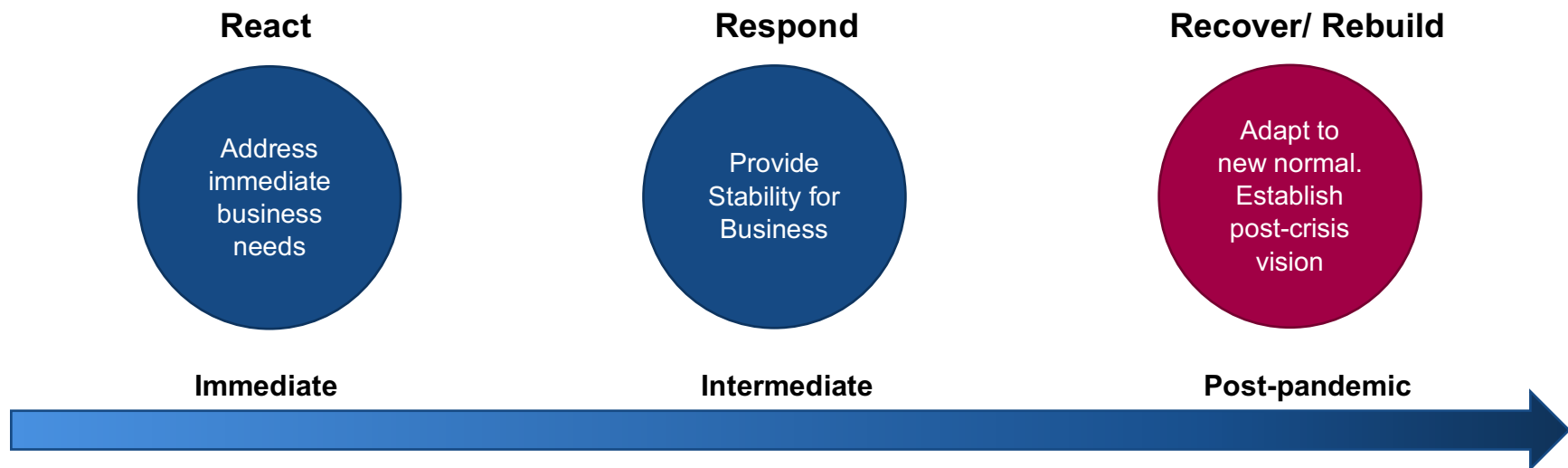
1. Work with broadband providers to expand offering in Southwold
2. Support the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) initiatives
3. Develop an infrastructure investment strategy:
 - Identify priority areas for infrastructure enhancements
 - Prepare preliminary estimates and funding application info to be incorporated into future funding programs
 - Assemble business testimonials on the potential for Southwold with infrastructure enhancements
 - Share infrastructure requirement information with local MPP, MPs
4. Research private/public partnership examples for future infrastructure investment



COVID-19 and Economic Development

This Community Economic Development Plan was developed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan provides the vision of the economic future in Southwold Township and steps to achieve that vision. They are based on fundamental economic development principles, investment readiness, community needs and desires.

The pandemic has resulted in a health and economic crisis. The State of Emergency declared in Ontario (March 17, 2020) effectively shut down all non-essential businesses in the province. At the time of writing this report, governments and businesses are addressing the immediate needs for business during the COVID crisis and are beginning to consider the intermediate-term plans to return business stability as restrictions begins to ease.



The recommended actions in this strategy will help Southwold Township recover and rebuild the local economy as the pandemic crisis dissipates. The actions are identified as short-term (overlapping with the pandemic recovery or within one year post-pandemic), medium-term (two to three years post) and long term (four years plus). Some recommendations for community events may have to be postponed, others may need to be modified to reflect changing norms for events.



The economic recovery efforts for Southwold Township should align with the three phase model of react, respond and recover as follows:

React

This phase focuses on assisting businesses to remain viable until they can generate revenue again. The Southwold Economic Development Committee should work with Elgin County and other local economic development partners to advise local businesses on the various government programs designed to provide funding support. The committee may also want to follow the examples of other communities in Ontario who are establishing shop local programs, gift card sales, Go Fund Me campaigns and digital and Ecommerce programs to address the loss of revenue.

This is a good time to update Southwold's business directory, establishing benchmark data to track changes to the local economy as a result of the pandemic. The Southwold Economic Development Committee will want to remain engaged with the Elgin-St. Thomas Economic Resiliency and Recovery Task Force, to stay informed on pandemic responses and programs. It will be important to support regional data collection including business surveys to ensure Southwold's needs are included in the survey results.

Respond

This phase identifies and addresses what businesses need to restart operations. The Economic Development Committee should work with Elgin County Economic Development, other economic development partners and other levels of government to provide businesses with information on how to keep their staff and customers safe. Businesses will need access to information on new operating protocols. They may need assistance in accessing PPE equipment. They may also benefit from consultation with business advisors on strategies to adopt their business models as consumer behaviour and safe practices evolve.

Recover

In the longer-term, the economic development committee should monitor any changes and identify any emerging gaps in the local market. The pandemic may also create some opportunities for the local economy. For example, resident attraction efforts may be bolstered by the growth of work from home options and greater interest in moving out of the density in the GTA.



Implementation Plan

Goal 1	Community Engagement		
Objective	Leverage resident and business volunteer efforts to implement Southwold's economic development plan		
Actions		Time Frame	Priority
1. Recruit additional economic development committee members		Immediate	High
2. Establish 2 to 3 priority economic development projects per year		Short	Medium
3. Develop a Southwold business retention and expansion program		Immediate	High
4. Establish a volunteer event committee to host clean up days, a community picnic and/or night market		Medium	Medium
5. Establish a committee to host a special event		Medium	Medium
6. Create a welcome committee for new residents and businesses info on local businesses		Long	Nice to do
7. Encourage the hosting of community events in the four corners area		Medium	Medium
8. Host small business networking events		Medium	Medium
9. Ensure the library has small business resources and workshops		Short	High
10. Open one of the vacant buildings in Shedden's four corners for pop-up business or shared offices		Long	Medium



Goal 2	Investment Readiness		
Strategic Objective	Provide the required elements to facilitate investment		
Actions		Time Frame	Priority
1. Compile economic development data to share on the Southwold website and with Elgin County's Economic Development Department		Medium	High
2. Create a small one-page lure brochure with links to the Southwold and Elgin County economic development website		Medium	High
3. Compile data on the former Ford lands including status, environmental conditions, servicing, brownfield programs and potential funding programs		Medium	High
4. Prepare a database of commercial and industrial land and buildings in Southwold		Medium	High
5. Use local business ambassadors to help make the case for investment.		Long	Medium



Goal 3	Branding/Marketing		
Strategic Objective	Establish professional branding, marketing tools and messages to share Southwold's value proposition for residents and businesses		
Actions		Time Frame	Priority
1. Update Southwold's branding to reflect the changing economy and future opportunities		Medium	High
2. Establish consistent, key messages targeting prospective and existing residents, and prospective and existing businesses		Medium	High
3. Build on the strengths and opportunities in the community (safe, affordable, family, friendly, open spaces, proximity to larger centres, available property)		Long	Medium
4. Compile Southwold's community profile data (demographics, business profile, servicing, resources)		Short	High
5. Update the Southwold Township website to include resident and business attraction info with links to Elgin County		Short	High
6. Establish an inventory of Southwold businesses (include home-based and small businesses)		Immediate	High
7. Develop a shop local program featuring home-based and small businesses		Long	Medium
8. Profile success stories on the Southwold website		Long	Medium
9. Celebrate a local business leader of the year.		Long	Nice to do



Goal 4	Business Development		
Strategic Objective	Bring increased commercial and community activity to Fingal and Shedden. Attract and support a diversified business base. Expand Southwold's tourism product offering.		
Action	Time Frame	Priority	
1. Establish a downtown development taskforce to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify required improvements, e.g. Sidewalks, roads, planters, signage, street furniture Host special events to increase traffic Organize farmers' markets, night markets, food truck events and/or entertainment 	Medium	Medium	
2. Establish regular business visits (BR&E) trouble-shoot, provide info on funding, business supports	Short	High	
3. Bring additional activity to Shedden's four corners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term rental for November/December Scouts/4H to sell Christmas trees, cider, gift wrapping service Food trucks Establish a cycling rest or rally spot with parking, picnic tables, repair centre, bike rack, maps 	Medium	Medium	
4. Update and share market threshold analysis data	Long	Medium	
5. Target existing businesses located elsewhere to open a branch in Southwold	Long	Nice to do	
6. Profile available properties on Southwold and Elgin County websites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare sales sheets for available properties (for website and realtors) Develop window décor (with high school, elementary school students), provide contact info Wi-Fi in library to extend to downtown 	Long	Medium	
7. Host a workshop for alternative accommodation with Elgin County and SWOTC	Medium	Medium	



Goal 5	Enhanced Infrastructure		
Strategic Objective	Support business and residential infrastructure needs		
Action	Time Frame	Priority	
1. Work with broadband providers to expand offering in Southwold	Medium	High	
2. Support the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) initiatives	Ongoing	Medium	
3. Develop an infrastructure investment strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify priority areas for infrastructure enhancements• Prepare preliminary estimates and funding application info to be incorporated into future funding programs• Assemble business testimonials on the potential for Southwold with infrastructure enhancements• Share infrastructure requirement information with local MPP, MPs	Medium	High	
4. Research private/public partnership examples for future infrastructure investment	Long	Medium	