

Town of Essex Economic Development



2025 Year in Review

In 2025, the Town of Essex Economic Development Department delivered a range of initiatives and services that supported local business growth, expanded investment opportunities, strengthened tourism, and promoted the Town as a great place to live, work, and visit. Through proactive business retention efforts and collaborative partnerships, the team advanced strategic priorities that supported sustainable growth.

Business Retention and Expansion

Business retention and expansion in the Town of Essex focuses on helping local businesses thrive. By engaging directly with businesses and entrepreneurs, our team provides hands-on support and connects them with resources that promote long-term vitality. Through proactive and responsive business retention and expansion initiatives, the team helps ensure local business needs are clearly understood and effectively supported.

 **31,574**
Sq. ft. of renovated
commercial and industrial space

 **40** Businesses
assisted through
direct engagement

 **9** Ribbon-cutting and
ground-breaking
ceremonies

 **6** Business walks
completed, engaging over
140 businesses

 **300** Business
resources
distributed

 **2024 Downtown Vacancy**
4.8% | **5.1%**
Essex Centre | Harrow



39,410 Sq. ft. of new
commercial and
industrial space

Community Impact

Our team is committed to fostering a positive impact on the local community through various initiatives, partnerships, and tailored support. By working directly with businesses, nonprofits, and organizations, the team helps create opportunities for economic growth, strengthen community connections, and enhance the quality of life for residents.

 **\$595,395**
In secured funding through 20 grant
applications to support community initiatives

 **1** Downtown revitalization project
supported through a \$15,000 grant
from the Windsor-Essex Community
Foundation, in collaboration with the
Essex Centre BIA

 **14** Businesses attended a
workshop focused on strategies
to market their business

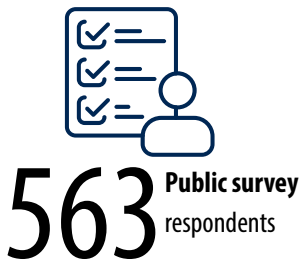
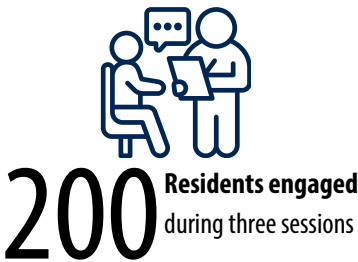
 **9** Community partnerships
strengthened through
collaborative initiatives and
regular engagement

Strategic Initiatives

2025 marked a year of significant progress in advancing strategic initiatives outlined in the 2023–2027 Strategic Action Plan. Key accomplishments included launching a Rural Transit Feasibility Study to identify transportation options for residents, exploring the implementation of a Municipal Accommodation Tax to support tourism initiatives, developing an Industrial Community Improvement Plan to stimulate industrial growth and investment attraction efforts, and implementing a Sponsorship and Naming Rights Policy to generate additional revenue streams for municipal programs and assets.

Rural Transit Feasibility Study

Launched to explore the feasibility of public transit within the Town and assess how improved public transit could enhance the quality of life for residents. The study examined the unique travel needs of the Town’s diverse communities and proposed a feasible solution to meet local travel demand.



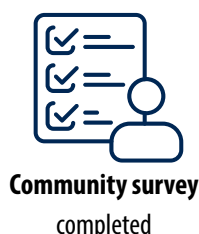
Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT)

Explored the feasibility of implementing a Municipal Accommodation Tax within the Town, assessing how potential revenue could support tourism initiatives, community events, and the enhancement of local amenities.



Industrial Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

Developed an Industrial Community Improvement Plan to stimulate private investment, expand employment opportunities, modernize the Town's industrial areas, and incentivize business retention and expansion.



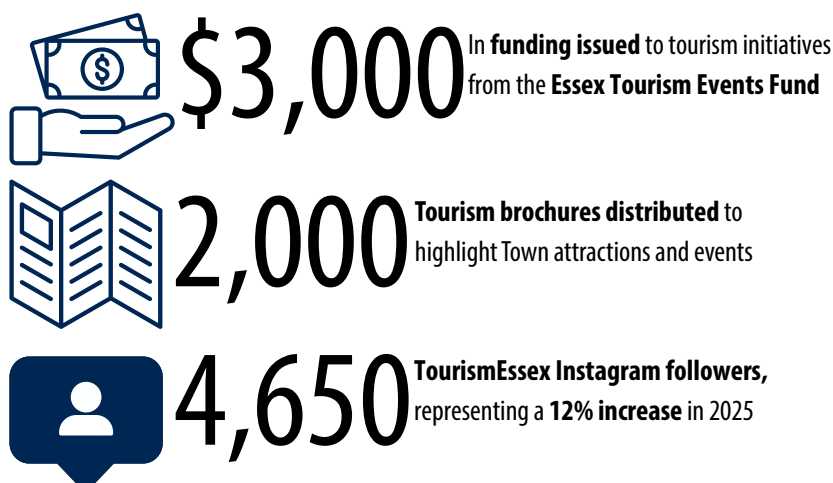
Sponsorship and Naming Rights Policy

Implemented a Sponsorship and Naming Rights Policy to generate additional revenue and support the maintenance and enhancement of Town assets, community initiatives, and events. The team continues to pursue partnerships with local organizations and businesses to establish mutually beneficial sponsorship and naming rights agreements.



Tourism

Our team is committed to advancing tourism and positioning Essex as a vibrant destination for visitors by promoting local assets and attractions, supporting events, and strengthening partnerships with businesses and organizations. These efforts help to elevate the community's tourism profile and enhance the overall visitor experience.



Explore Essex: Summer Tourism Marketing Campaign

To boost tourism in the region, the team collaborates with internal departments to deliver targeted marketing campaigns. In Summer 2025, the team launched a 12-week **Explore Essex** campaign showcasing local experiences.

595,000 129,355 10,000

Total impressions across Facebook,
Instagram, and Google

People reached through
Facebook and Instagram

Tourism Essex website visits from
digital advertisements

Future Initiatives

The team is planning several forward-looking initiatives aimed at strengthening economic growth, community engagement, and operational efficiency.



Sponsorship and Naming Rights

Issue a Request for Proposals to generate interest in Sponsorship and Naming Rights opportunities



Essex Centre Sports Fields

Issue a Request for Expressions of Interest to gather proposals from qualified private sector parties



Business Concierge Program

Implement a Concierge Service to support and guide eligible proponents through the development approval process



Roadmap to Ribbon Cutting

Develop and design a developers checklist to illustrate the various stages of the development process, from project initiation to completion



Housing Needs Assessment

Develop a Housing Assessment to better understand current and future housing needs. This report will guide the creation of a Housing Action Plan in 2027



Industrial Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

Implement CIP incentives to revitalize industrial lands and support long-term economic growth



Downtown Vacancy Report

Conduct a 2026 Downtown Vacancy Study in Essex Centre and Harrow to document commercial vacancies



Business Milestone Recognition Program

Launch a program to honour and recognize local business milestone anniversaries