



Town of Minto | 2025

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION REPORT



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Introduction

The Town of Minto and the Minto Chamber of Commerce partnered together in 2007 to conduct our first formal Business Retention + Expansion (BR+E) project. Since that time, several other formal projects have taken place. In 2024, the Town of Minto undertook updates to the Corporate Strategic Plan, Economic & Community Development Plan (ECDP) and the Cultural Plan (CP). BR+E was identified as a main pillar of the ECDP and resulted in the impetus to conduct another formal BR+E survey in 2025.

What is BR+E and Why is it Important?

The BR+E tool is supported by the Province of Ontario through the Ministry of Rural Affairs. It was created as an economic development tool to build relationships between local government and business owners, as well as to collect data on what business owners believe to be the current business environment. By understanding the data, we can keep current businesses happy and healthy, encouraging them to stay, grow, and become more competitive. BR+E also allows us to identify any red flags within existing local business climates and be proactive in addressing these issues. It also helps us to identify priorities and develop concrete action plans and solutions.

Timeline

The 2025 BR+E project kicked off in June with the Town of Minto Economic Development and Planning Committee (EDPC) reviewing the project and identifying key questions to ask. During the months of July and August, Economic Development staff conducted 1:1 interviews, and several businesses participated directly in the survey online, resulting in a total of 82 completed surveys across sectors, exceeding the target of 75 to be statistically significant. In September and October, the EDPC reviewed the data and prepared action plans to address priorities. The results were presented at a Business Breakfast at the end of November.





BR+E Leadership Team

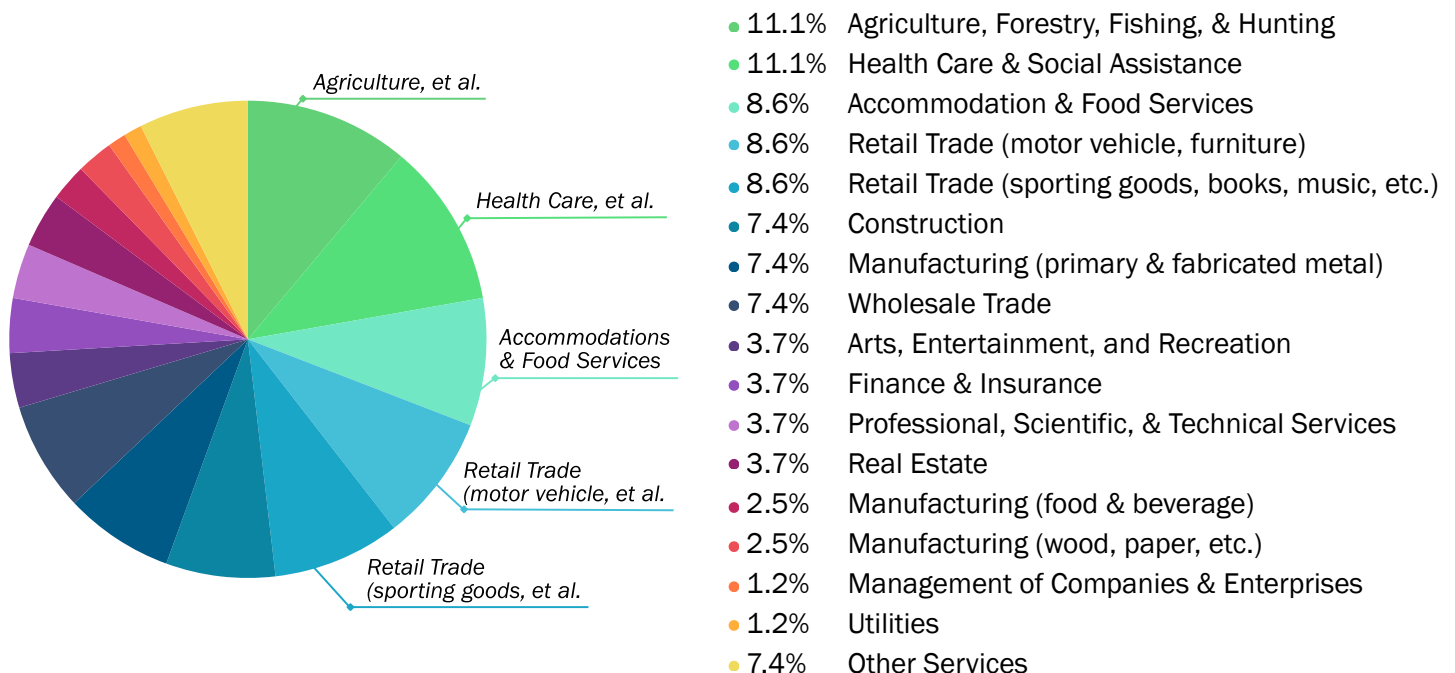
Amy Heinmiller	Realtor, EXP Realty
Belinda Wick-Graham	Director of Economic & Community Development, Town of Minto
Brian Currie	Owner, Acheson Pharmasave
Cameron Green	Vice President, Customer Acquisition, Wightman
Charlene Hofbauer	Executive Director, Waterloo, Wellington, Dufferin Workforce Planning Board
Christina Mann	Manager of Economic Development, County of Wellington
Crystal Ellis	Rural Business Advisor, Ministry of Rural Affairs
Erin Raftis	Marketing & Community Development Coordinator, Town of Minto
Geoff Gunson	Councillor, Town of Minto
George Bridge	Resident
Glen Hall	Owner, OSIM Interactive
Gordon Duff	Treasurer, Town of Minto
Jamie Doherty	Business Community Counsellor, Saugeen Economic Development Corporation
Judy Dirksen	Councillor, Town of Minto
Katherine Noble	Administrator, Wellington Federation of Agriculture
Kristel Maines	Executive Director, Business Centre Guelph Wellington
Mary Lou Colwell	Resident
Mike Hallam	Vice President, TG Minto
Raisa Abraham	Business Development Coordinator, Minto Chamber of Commerce & Launchit Business Exploration Centre
Shirley Borges	Executive Director, Minto-Mapleton Family Health Team

SUMMARY OF OVERALL RESULTS

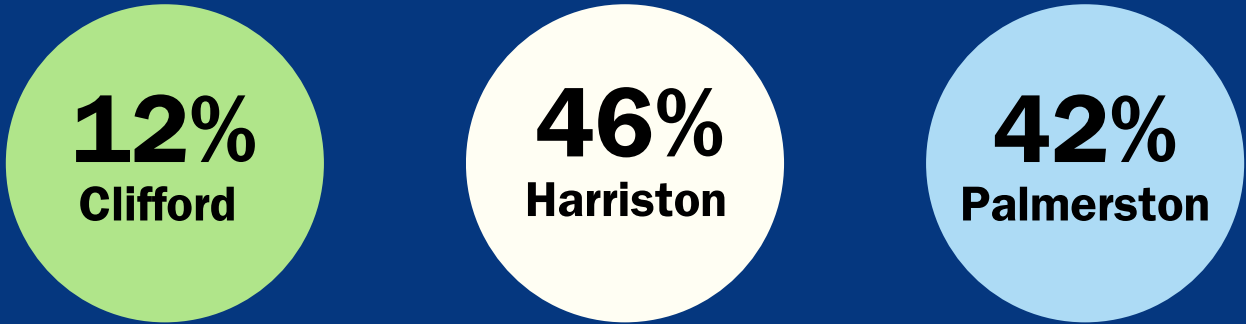
The 2025 Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) survey shows that Minto's business community is strong, resilient, and optimistic about the future. Most businesses are locally owned, long-established, and small in size, contributing to a stable and supportive local economy. Overall sentiment is very positive, with 84% rating Minto as a good or excellent place to do business, citing strong municipal leadership, community spirit, and quality of life. Key challenges include workforce shortages, housing constraints, development costs, and online competition, while opportunities lie in population growth, business diversification, and local market expansion. Nearly half of all businesses plan to grow, but face barriers related to staffing, property availability, and financing. Workforce attraction and housing availability are the most urgent needs. Businesses value ongoing programs such as Think Minto First and seek continued support through marketing, networking, and training. Manufacturing remains stable with some innovation and export potential, while downtown and retail businesses rely on events and tourism and seek a greater variety of businesses, amenities, and revitalization efforts. Overall, Minto's businesses are confident in the community's direction and see significant potential for growth through collaboration, housing development, and workforce solutions.

BUSINESS INFORMATION

A total of 82 businesses took part in the 2025 BR+E survey. They represent a broad range of businesses reflecting multiple sectors from communities across Minto.

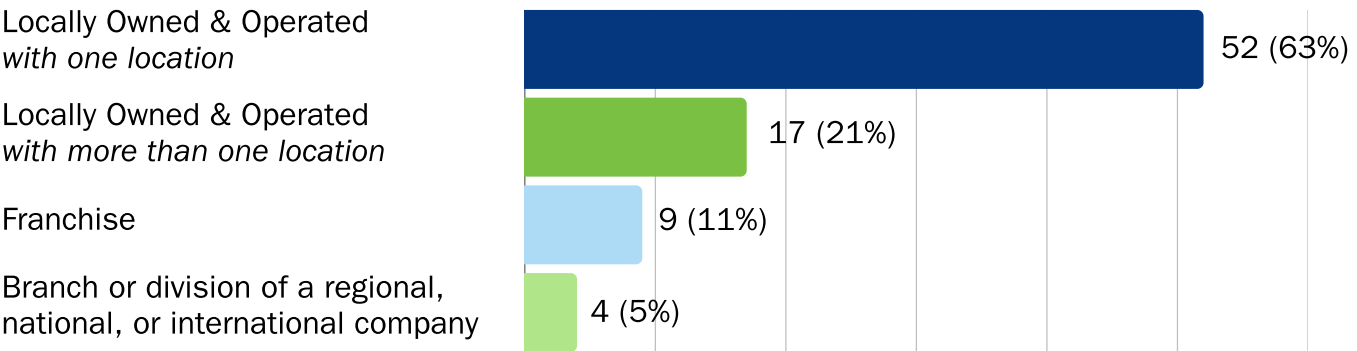


LOCATIONS OF PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES:



Note: Rural Businesses were categorized based on their addresses.

OWNERSHIP & OPERATIONS

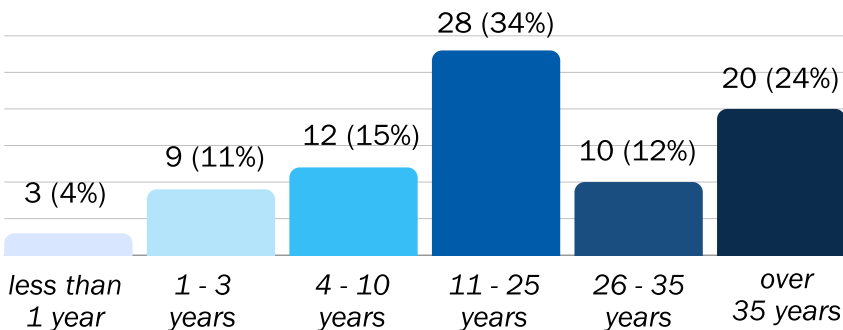


96%
of businesses have at least **one owner** involved in **day-to-day operations**.

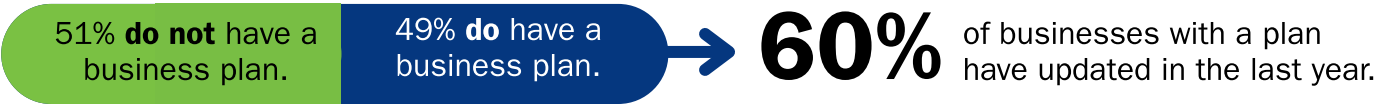
71% of businesses have been **in Minto** for **over 10+ years**.
62% of the **current owners** have been in operation for **over 10+ years**.

74%
of businesses have at least **one owner** who is a **resident of the community**.

Years of Operation in Minto



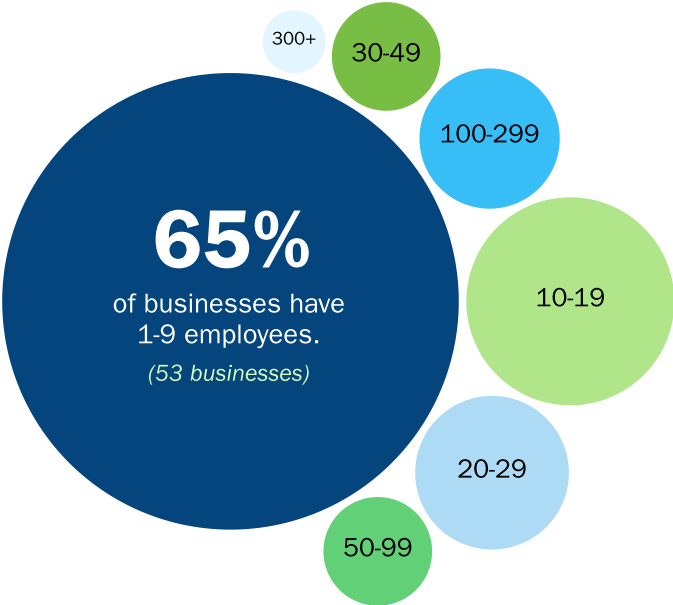
BUSINESS PLANNING



EMPLOYEES

The majority of Minto's businesses are small, with **less than 10 employees**.

- 65% 1-9 employees
- 13% 10-19 employees
- 7% 20-29 employees
- 4% 30-49 employees
- 4% 50-99 employees
- 6% 100-299 employees
- 1% 300+ employees



MARKETS

37 participants state that their primary market is **local**.

33 participants state that their primary market is **regional**.

8 are **national**.

4 are **international**.

85% of businesses service local/regional markets, with limited national and international reach.

EQUITY GROUPS

Most business owners **do not** identify as part of an equity-seeking group.



Breakdown of business owners who **do** identify as part of an equity-seeking group(s).

- 50% Women (14)
- 11% LGBTQ2+ (3)
- 11% Persons with Disabilities (3)
- 11% Visible Minorities (3)
- 7% Newcomers to Canada (2)
- 4% French Language Community (1)
- 4% Indigenous Peoples (1)
- 4% Youth (15-29 years old) (1)

BUSINESS INFORMATION

The business climate in Minto is largely positive, with 84% of businesses rating the community as a good or excellent place to operate. Respondents praised strong municipal support, community engagement, and a welcoming environment.

However, some challenges persist - notably high development fees, labour shortages, online competition, and limited housing. While satisfaction levels are strong for fire, recreation, and economic development services, businesses expressed lower satisfaction with housing availability, cell phone service, and the cost of doing business.

Overall, businesses are optimistic about Minto's direction but emphasize the need for continued municipal responsiveness, improved infrastructure, and workforce and housing solutions to sustain growth.

OVERALL IMPRESSION



84%

of business owners
rated Minto as a
GOOD or EXCELLENT
place to do business.

22%

noted a **POSITIVE**
change in attitude
over the past three
years.

10%

noted a **NEGATIVE**
change in attitude.

68%

noted **NO CHANGE**
change in attitude.

Positive Comments
are related to:

- Growth
- Grants
- Community Development

Negative Comments
are related to:

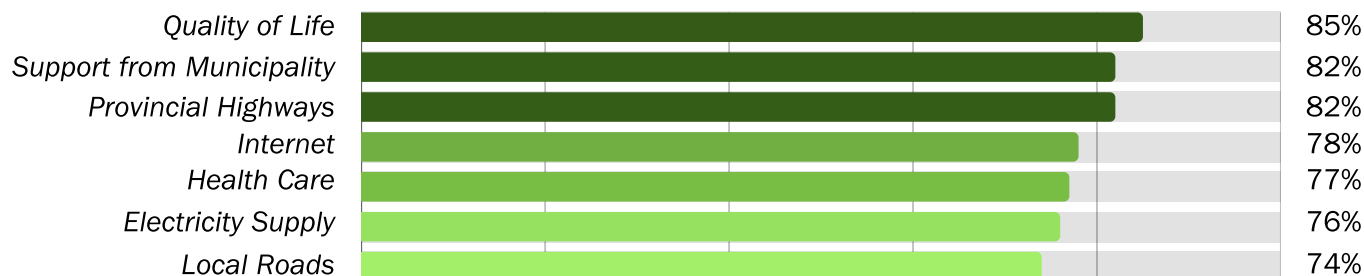
- Online competition
- Development costs
- Lack of local support



SERVICES

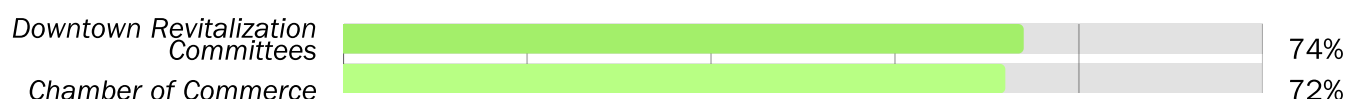
GENERAL FACTORS OF DOING BUSINESS IN MINTO

% RATED GOOD
OR EXCELLENT



COMMUNITY SERVICES IN MINTO

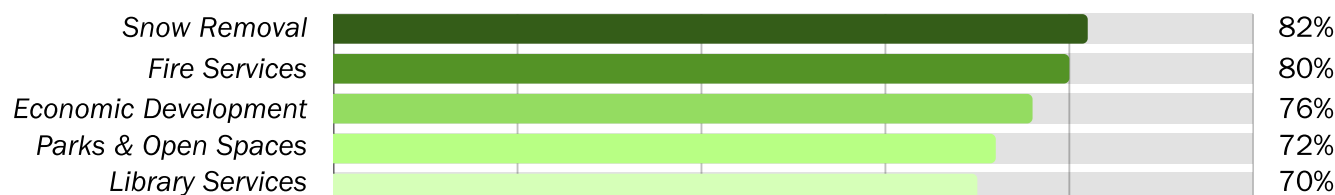
% RATED GOOD
OR EXCELLENT



*Note: Many business owners reported “no contact” to many community services.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES IN MINTO

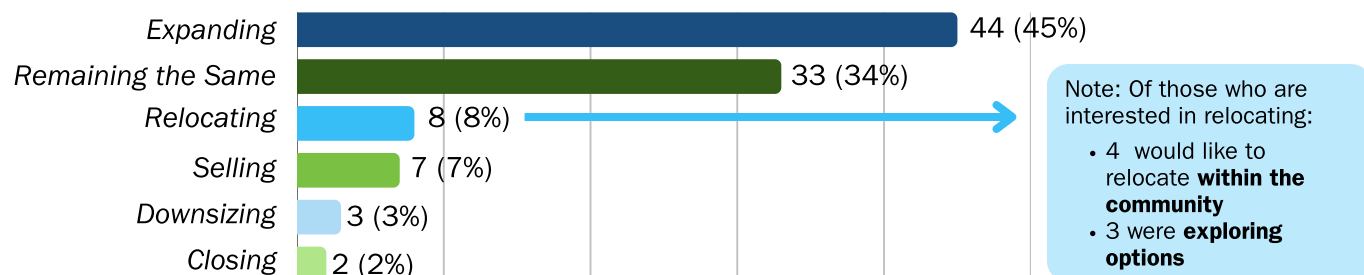
% RATED GOOD
OR EXCELLENT



FUTURE PLANS

Most Minto businesses are optimistic about growth, with nearly half planning to expand operations in the coming years. Expansion is driven by population growth, rising demand for services, and new market opportunities. Key barriers include workforce shortages, limited available properties, red tape, and financing challenges. Few businesses have formal succession plans, though many expressed interest in support for transition or sale planning.

Overall, the business community shows strong confidence in Minto’s future, provided that growth constraints, especially workforce and property availability, are addressed.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Minto’s business development outlook is positive and forward-looking. Most industries are stable or expanding, particularly in agriculture, health products, and construction. The majority of businesses expect sales growth, driven by new products, stronger marketing, and community population increases.

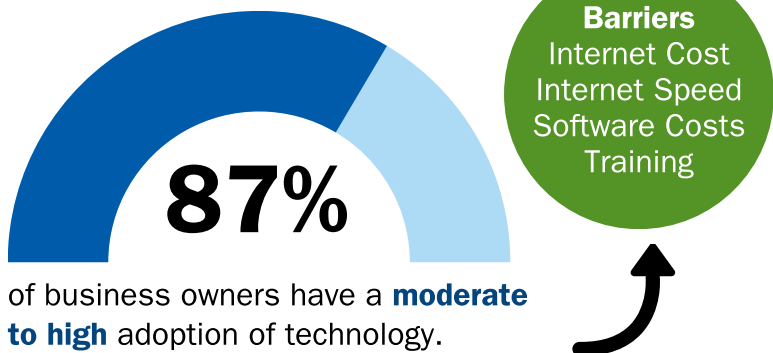
However, some anticipate slower sales due to inflation, online competition, housing shortages, and local construction disruptions. Businesses show moderate technology adoption but face barriers like internet speed, training, and software costs. There’s also a strong interest in collaboration through joint marketing, networking, and newcomer attraction.

Overall, businesses are optimistic about Minto’s growth potential but highlight the need for continued innovation support, workforce development, and infrastructure improvements to sustain momentum.

OUTLOOK

79% of business owners stated their industry is **stable or growing**.

TECHNOLOGY



54% of businesses reported **no barriers** to the use of technology.

Key Barriers reported:
16% Knowledge & Training
12% Internet Speed

COOPERATION

Businesses have a strong interest in



FACILITIES

71% of businesses own their own facilities.

**Note: Renters have several years remaining in their leases and do not anticipate issues renewing.*

SALES

55% of businesses fall between **\$250,000 - \$5 million annually**.

46% expect sales to **GROW**

8.5% expect sales to **DECLINE**

**Note: The remainder of businesses expect to remain the same.*

Reasons for Projected Growth in Sales

• Business Growth & Expansion

Many businesses are expanding facilities, products, or services.

New locations, product lines (e.g., furniture, food, custom goods), and diversification are expected to bring more revenue.

• Population & Community Growth

Anticipated increases in local population and community development will boost demand for goods and services.

• Customer Base & Reputation

Strong word-of-mouth, repeat customers, and social media traction are driving growth. Some businesses noted an active sales team and stronger customer trust.

• Market Trends & Demand

Rising demand for specific goods/services: breakfast/lunch spots, health products, agriculture services, housing, and rentals. Businesses believe they are well-positioned to capture these trends.

• Advertising & Marketing

Increased advertising, mentoring, and better promotion are expected to grow sales.

• External Factors

Inflation is boosting sales figures (even if profits remain flat). Partnerships with large customers are creating new sales opportunities.

Reasons for Projected Decline in Sales

• Economic Conditions

Inflation, high taxes, and rising costs of materials are making products/services less affordable for customers.

Economic uncertainty and slowdowns are reducing consumer spending

• Housing & Community Growth Limits

Lack of housing supply and stalled local growth are seen as limiting customer base expansion

• Industry-Specific Pressures

Commodity price drops (e.g., in agriculture).

Tariffs and trade uncertainty are impacting sales, especially with U.S. markets.

• Competition & Market Shifts

Increased competition in saturated markets (e.g., real estate, retail).

Customers shifting buying habits online (Amazon, larger centres).

• Labour Shortages & Capacity Issues

Businesses lacking enough skilled staff to meet demand, limiting their ability to grow. Seasonal businesses struggle with inconsistent staffing.

• Local Disruptions

Construction projects (e.g., downtown “Big Dig”) are expected to hurt foot traffic and disrupt sales.

• Technology

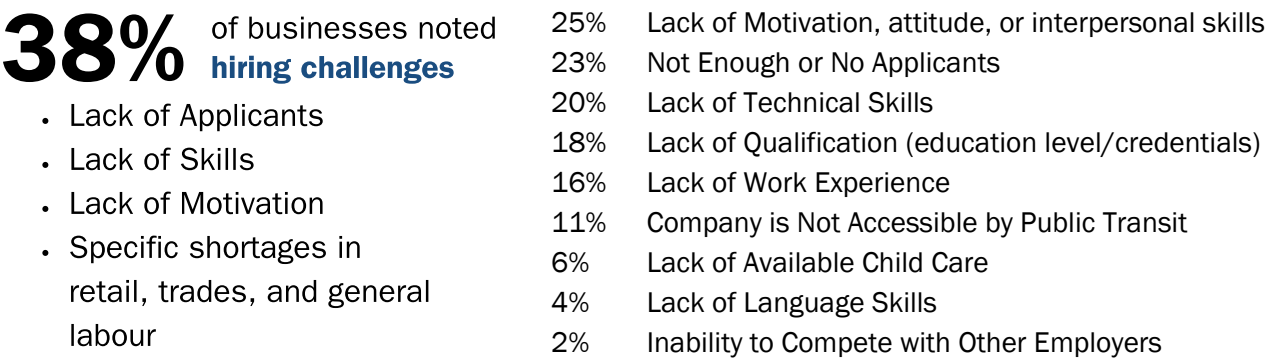
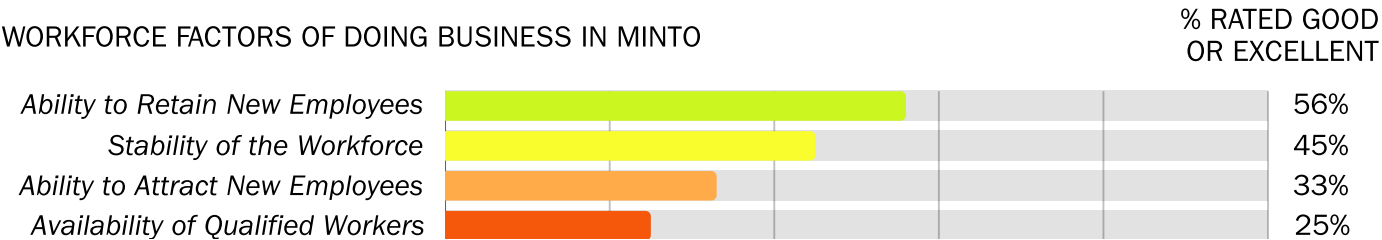
Moderate to high adoption but barriers include internet cost/speed, training and software costs.

WORKFORCE

Minto businesses face persistent workforce challenges, including a shortage of qualified and motivated workers—especially in trades, retail, and general labour. Hiring increases were tied to growth and funding opportunities, while declines stemmed from seasonal operations and difficulty finding staff.

Most recruitment relies on word-of-mouth and social media, with retention issues linked to limited housing, recreation options, and worker mobility. Businesses identified a strong need for training and support in areas such as financial management, customer service, mental health, and DEI.

Overall, workforce attraction and retention are viewed as critical priorities for sustaining business growth and community development in Minto.



RECRUITMENT

Top recruitment methods:



62% Word of Mouth



48% Online Postings



37% Social Media

RETENTION

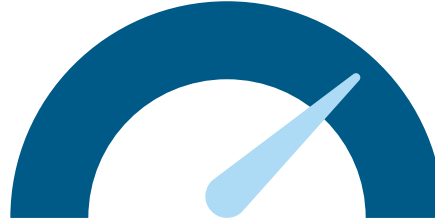
77% of businesses reported they **did not have** **have trouble retaining employees.**

Businesses struggling with retention stated issues were linked to **seasonality, housing, recreation, and job-hopping.**

TRAINING



67% of businesses use **External Training**



74% Businesses reported **No Barriers to Training**

Barriers
Cost &
Time to
Participate



CO-OP, INTERNSHIPS, & APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

37%

of businesses
participate in **Co-op,
Internships, &
Apprenticeship
Programs**

HUMAN RESOURCES & DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

54% of businesses reported
having a formal HR policy



27% of those businesses requested support
in including Diversity, Equity and
Inclusion policies in their HR policies.

18% of businesses surveyed currently participate
in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Strengths

- **Supportive Community & Local Government**

Many businesses emphasized strong support from the Town, Minto Chamber of Commerce, and Economic Development staff. This includes quick municipal responsiveness, helpful building and planning departments, and grant programs for businesses.

- **Location Advantages**

Proximity to farms, Toronto, the Tri-Cities, and ports like Hamilton and Sarnia are seen as major benefits. The community is centrally located and affordable compared to larger urban centres.

- **Small-Town Character**

Businesses value the sense of community, loyal customer base, safety, and welcoming environment. Word-of-mouth referrals, local pride, and strong networking among businesses reinforce this advantage.

- **Recreation & Quality of Life**

Parks, recreational facilities, and a clean, safe environment add to Minto's attractiveness.

Weaknesses

- **Housing Supply**

A recurring theme across responses was a lack of adequate housing, which limits both workforce attraction and community growth.

- **Upcoming Construction**

Some businesses are worried about the impact of large-scale projects (e.g., downtown revitalization or "Big Dig"), fearing temporary disruptions to customers and traffic.

- **Lack of Available Rental Space**

A frequent operational barrier is limited physical space for businesses to expand or locate, especially in downtown areas.

- **Weak Local Shopping Support**

There is concern about residents spending outside the community, including online and in larger neighbouring towns.

- **Location & Small Customer Base**

Some businesses flagged Minto's rural location as a limitation, noting a smaller local customer base compared to urban centres. While proximity to larger cities is seen as an advantage, the limited in-town population and market size constrain growth opportunities.

Most Significant Changes Businesses Seek in the Next Five Years



Housing & Population Growth

- Increase attainable and affordable housing (including apartments and rentals).
- Many stressed that population growth is essential to expand the customer base and workforce.



Business Climate & Support

- Reduce red tape, taxes, and start-up costs to make it easier to open or expand a business.
- Calls for more collaboration, originality, and mentorship among business owners instead of competition by imitation.
- Requests for continued municipal support of small and medium-sized businesses.



Infrastructure & Transit

- Better transportation options, including transit to larger centres and improved rural roads.
- Upgrades to reliable internet, electricity, and infrastructure to support business operations.



Community & Social Needs

- More recreation, childcare, and youth programs to support families.
- Education around shopping local, DEI, and community inclusion.



Downtown Revitalization

- Fill empty storefronts, clean up downtown cores, and increase variety/quality of stores.
- Create vibrant downtowns with events, food, options, and improved parking/signage
- Suggestions included a vacancy tax on absentee landlords and incentives for new retail.



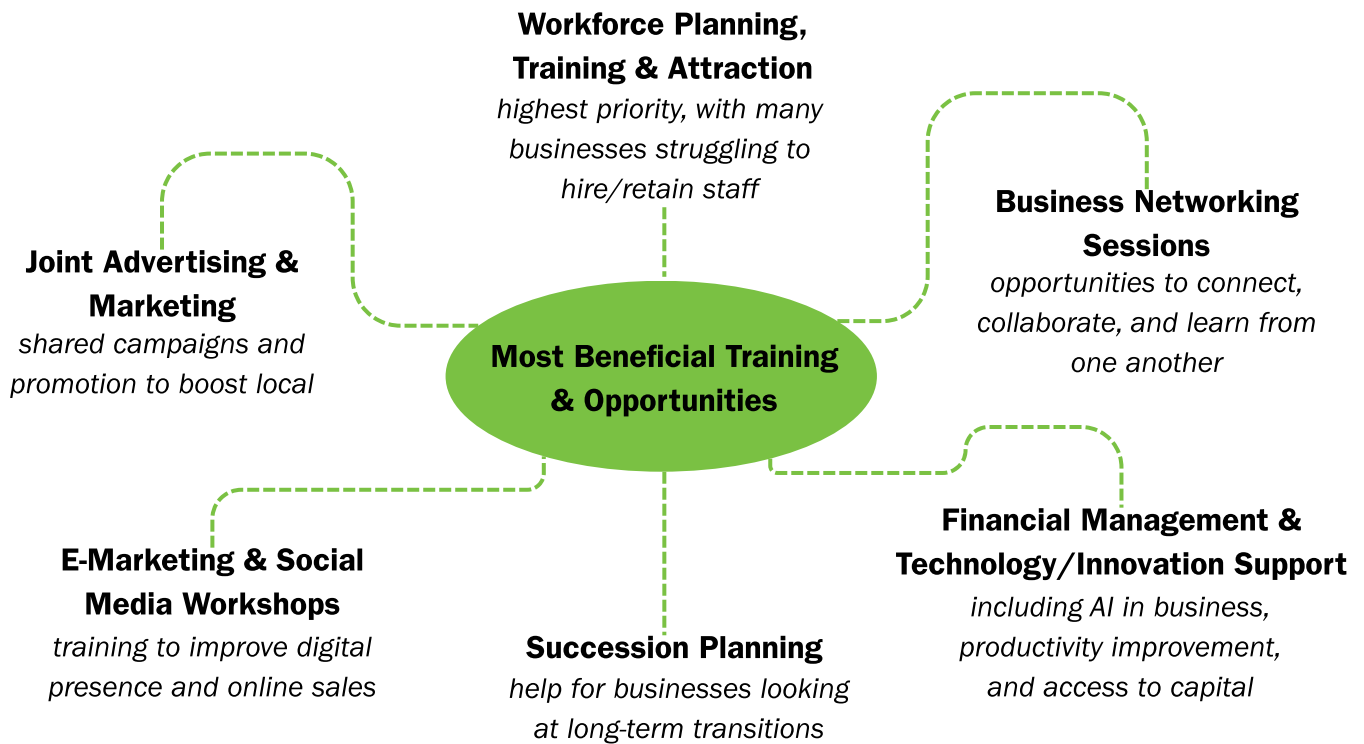
Retail & Service Mix

- Attract big box or larger retailers (e.g., to keep shoppers from going out of Town).
- Increase the diversity of retail and services like groceries, hardware, clothing, and medical specialists.



Tourism & Destination Development

- Strong desire to make Minto more of a destination stop for tourists and seasonal traffic.
- Ideas included marketing campaigns, niche tourism (e.g., fishing), and more traveler-friendly businesses.



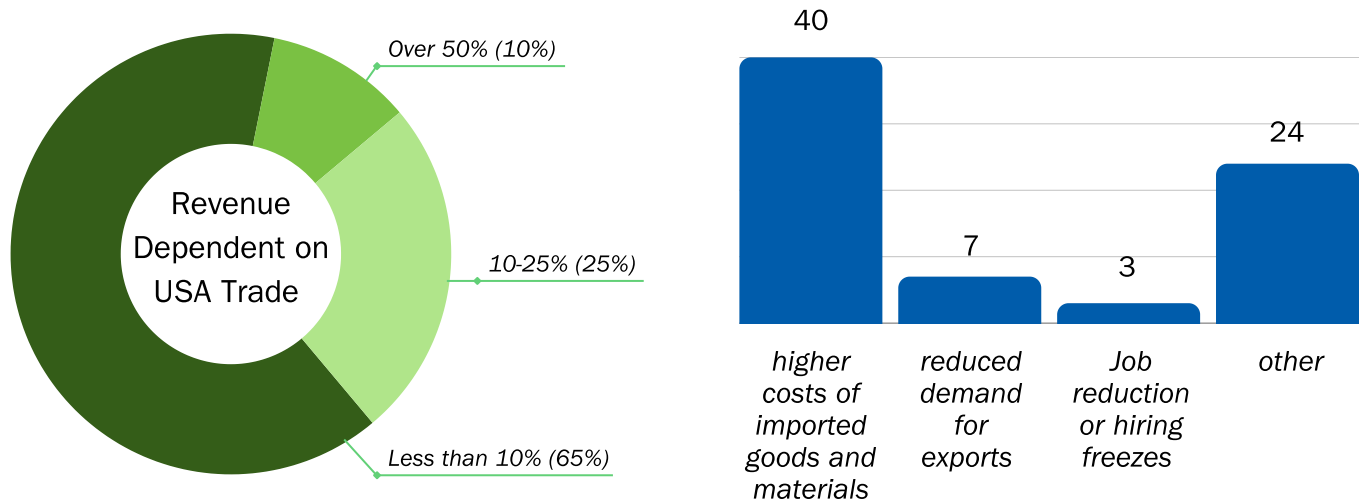
How can the Town of Minto and Minto Chamber of Commerce Support Business

Many businesses said they were happy with efforts so far and encouraged the Town/Chamber to “keep doing what you’re doing” with programs like Think Minto First gift cards, advertising, and community events. Some suggestions to improve include:

- **Promotion & Marketing:** Strong requests for more advertising and promotion—both for individual businesses and for the community as a whole (e.g., shop local campaigns, bulk advertising, regional trade shows)
- **Networking & Education:** Suggestions to make Business After 5 more impactful (guest speakers, guided talks, learning opportunities) and to host indoor trade show.
- **Advocacy:** Calls for municipal advocacy on infrastructure improvements (e.g., highway access, transit, industrial land servicing) and government incentives (e.g., EV support, business start-up costs)
- **Practical Support:** Businesses asked the Town to send more business their way (e.g., include them in municipal tenders), and to continue supporting Christmas events and community promotions

TARIFFS

Most businesses reported low exposure to U.S. markets.



Other impacts mentioned by businesses included lost contracts, lower commodity prices, cashflow issues, client hesitation due to uncertainty, and loss of tourism from the U.S.

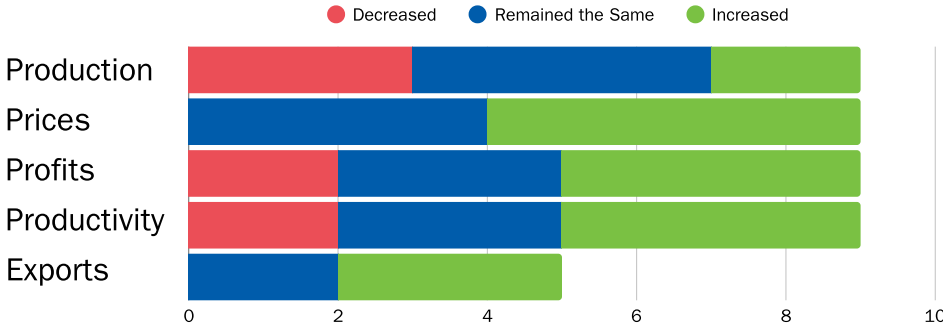
Manufacturing Sector Summary

Minto's manufacturing sector is stable and moderately innovative, though challenged by labour shortages, tariff impacts, and underutilized facilities. Most manufacturers have upgraded equipment recently and invested in R&D for new products and process improvements, though costs, regulations, and time-to-market remain barriers.

A small number of firms export—mainly to the U.S.—with others exploring new international markets but seeking more support and guidance. Tariffs have raised input costs and created uncertainty, but many businesses have adapted by sourcing Canadian materials and adjusting pricing.

Manufacturers highlighted the need for housing and childcare to attract workers, as well as better local amenities for employees and clients. Overall, the sector remains a key economic driver with opportunities for innovation, export growth, and workforce support to sustain competitiveness and growth.

Changes compared to 2 years ago:



New Product Development

Businesses who added a new product:

22% this year

44% in the past 1-3 years

11% in the past 3+ years

EXPORTING

33% of businesses currently export

↪ $\frac{1}{3}$ stated exports are **10% - 24%** of their sales

↪ $\frac{1}{3}$ stated exports are **25% - 49%** of their sales

↪ $\frac{1}{3}$ stated exports are **over 50%** of their sales

Countries exported to:

- USA
- Central/South America

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT



75%

businesses spend
3% - 6% on Research &
Development

Note: the remainder spend under 3%

Anticipated Process Improvements

- 67% Health & Safety Improvements
- 67% Productivity Improvements
- 44% Six Sigma & Quality
- 44% Waste Product Recovery
- 33% Energy Efficiency
- 33% Vendor/Supplier Network for Continuous Product Improvement
- 22% Administrative Support towards ISO Certification
- 11% Other

Retail Downtown Sector Summary

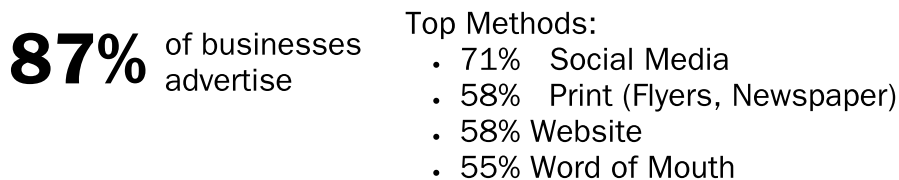
Minto's retail and downtown businesses rely heavily on local customers, foot traffic, and community events, which significantly boost sales. Most retailers serve a regional customer base, including visitors from surrounding towns, and see their busiest months from May through December.

Businesses expressed a strong desire for greater downtown diversity, calling for more restaurants, specialty shops, and personal services to attract residents and visitors year-round. The Think Minto First campaign and cooperative advertising are viewed positively, though businesses continue to seek improved signage, parking, and public washrooms to enhance accessibility.

Challenges include rising operating costs, empty storefronts, limited hours of operation, and competition from online shopping. Retailers strongly support revitalization efforts, including beautification, public art, and expanded community events, to create a more vibrant and welcoming downtown experience.

Overall, the downtown and retail sectors are energetic and community-focused, with clear opportunities to strengthen diversity, amenities, and marketing coordination to make Minto's downtown cores more dynamic and sustainable.

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONS



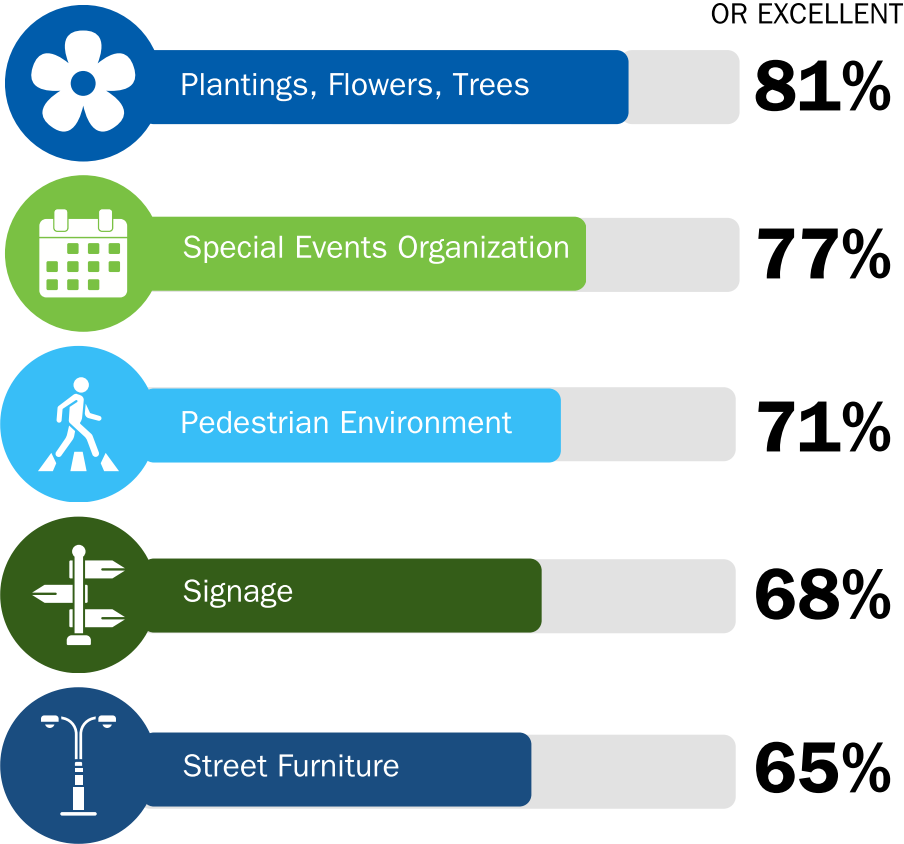
SUPPORTS & ASSISTANCE



CONDITION OF THE BUSINESS AREA



% RATED GOOD
OR EXCELLENT



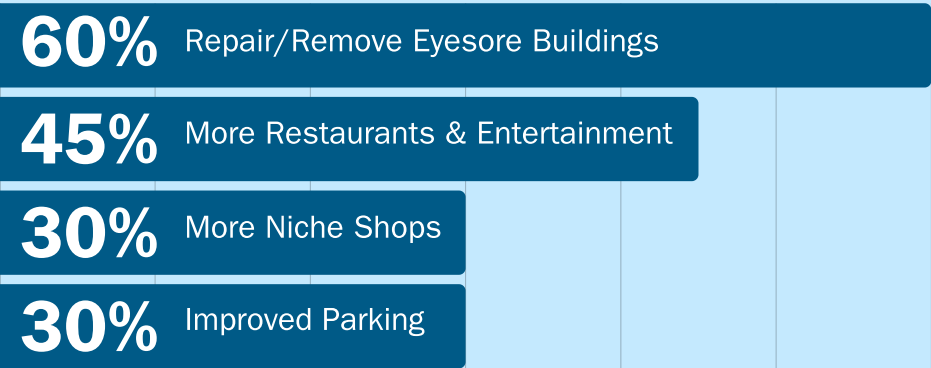
Strengths

- Public Safety Services
- Signage
- Window Displays
- Street Furniture
- Plantings, trees, flower boxes

Weaknesses

- Public Amenities (washrooms, fountains, parks)
- Highway Signage & Wayfinding
- Graffiti & Litter/Vandalism
- Parking (spots, signage, fees)
- Vagrancy/Homelessness

Top Suggestions for Improving the Business Area



Action Plan

Results of the BR&E Surveys were analyzed by the Leadership Team and compiled to create the following priorities and action items. Items from this plan are tied to the pillars in the Town of Minto Strategic Plan and include actions that are also identified in the Economic and Community Development Strategic Plan and the Cultural Plan.

LINKS TO TOWN
OF MINTO
STRAT PLAN
PILLARS

	Priority 1: Workforce / Resident Attraction, Retention & Training	3 & 4
	Priority 2: Housing	3 & 4
	Priority 3: Downtown Revitalization/Destination Development	3
	Priority 4: Support Entrepreneurship	3, 4, 5
	Priority 5: Investment Readiness & Land Development	3
	Priority 6: Encourage Business Expansion/Growth/Attraction	3

Economic and Community Development Plan Pillars



1. Business Retention Expansion & Investment Attraction (BREI)



3. Newcomers



5. Real Estate



2. Small Business/ Entrepreneurship



4. Marketing and Communications

Legend for Action Plan

**items with a yellow border are directly in the Ec. Dev. Strat Plan or Cultural Plan*

Timeframe

- **S** = Short (12-18 mths)
- **M** = Med (18-24 mths)
- **L** = Long (24+ mths)
- **O** = Ongoing

Partners

- **L** = Lead
- **P** = Partner
- **S** = Support

Cultural Plan Pillars



A. Cultural Investment



B. Organizational Capacity



C. Community Expectations & Investment



D. A Welcoming Community



E. Regional Sharing & Organizational Networking



F. Minto: A Cultural Destination



Priority 1: Workforce/Resident Attraction, Retention & Training

Action	Timeline	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support & advocate for services for ESL, childcare, transit (Ec. Dev. Strat 3.1) 	S-M	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda County of Wellington (Ride Well)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move to Minto Resident Tours (Ec. Dev. Strat 3.2) 	O	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities to participate in IRCC's Rural Community Immigration Pilot (Ec. Dev. Strat 3.8) 	S	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Move to Minto Resident Attraction Campaign 	S	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda + Erin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for new licensed childcare 	S	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda + Gregg
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce attraction campaign/Partner with employers (job opportunities, wages, lifestyle) 	M	Town of Minto (L) - ED Team County of Wellington
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workplace tours / open houses 	M	Workforce Planning Board (L) Town of Minto (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment workshops 	S	Workforce & Immigration Network + Workforce Planning Board (L) Town of Minto (P) County of Wellington (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore shared HR training – collaboration between Chambers of Commerce in training and resources that can be offered to businesses (i.e. Health & Safety etc.) 	S	Minto Chamber of Commerce (L) - Raisa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary position “Collaboration Coordinator” to connect businesses for collaboration opportunities (new types of jobs, part time to full time employment) 	L	Town of Minto (L)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase promotion of WIN (Workplace and Immigration Network) – interconnectedness to immigrant entrepreneur programs – feeds into diversifying restaurants. Analyze needs/salaries/barriers that employers may have themselves. 	S	Town of Minto (L) Raisa Minto Chamber of Commerce (P) County of Wellington (P) WIN (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to educate youth about employment opportunities available locally (i.e. career/job fairs) 	S	Career Education Council (L) Town of Minto - ED Team (P) Township of Mapleton (P) County of Wellington (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a social media audit of all Town accounts to ensure we are using them in the most effective ways to reach the proper target audiences 	S	Town of Minto (L) - Erin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an all-encompassing marketing plan + recommendations to tie all Town campaigns together 	S	Town of Minto (L) - Erin



Priority 2: Housing

Action	Timeline	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support real estate developers for new investment (Residential) (Ec. Dev. Strat 3.4, 5.1, 5.5) 	M	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda + Terry County of Wellington (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to connect employers to developers to partner on housing developments (Ec. Dev. Strat 4.8) 	S	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda + Terry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support CIP incentives for housing (Ec. Dev. Strat 5.1) 	O	Town of Minto (L) – CIP Implementation Committee County of Wellington (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for County-level DC deferrals for multi-res development 	O	Town of Minto (L) - Housing Task Force

• Move to Minto – “Live Where You Work” campaign	M	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda + Erin
• Leverage County \$1M to support innovative attainable housing solutions	S	Town of Minto (L) - Housing Task Force
• Continue to promote a broader range of housing in new developments & ADUs (Ec. Dev. Strat 5.9)	M	Town of Minto (L) - Housing Task Force
• Promote mixed-use development	O	Town of Minto (L) - Housing Task Force



Priority 3: Downtown Revitalization/Destination Development

Action	Timeline	Partners
• Continue to use Move to Minto Business Attraction Program (Ec. Dev. Strat 2.2)	O	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda Minto Chamber of Commerce (P)
• Gap analysis to identify gaps & opportunities – targeted recruitment (restaurants)	S - M	Town of Minto (L) – Belinda Minto Chamber of Commerce (P) - Raisa County of Wellington (S)
• Entrepreneur Tour/Tour the Town (Ec. Dev. Strat 3.2, 5.2)	O	Town of Minto (L) - ED Team Minto Chamber of Commerce (P)
• Explore vacancy reduction programs (i.e. vacancy tax) & alternative uses of buildings e.g. Vacant Building By-Law (Ec. Dev. Strat 5.6)	M	Town of Minto (L) – Belinda + Terry
• Enhance CIP programs (Ec. Dev. Strat 5.7)	S	Town of Minto (L) – CIP Implementation Committee County of Wellington (P)
• Focused effort to become a Cultural/Daytripping Destination (Cultural Plan F1)	S - M	Town of Minto (L) - Erin County of Wellington (P)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4-season indoor/outdoor events (Cultural Plan F2) 	S - M	Town of Minto (L) - Erin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of place initiatives (Cultural Plan F3) 	S - M	Town of Minto (L) - Erin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cycle-friendly destination – add bike racks (Cultural Plan F7) 	S - M	County of Wellington (L) Town of Minto (P) - Belinda
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve parking through shared-use agreements & better signage 	M	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda + Mike
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop family attraction packages (Meet Me in Minto) 	S - M	Town of Minto (L) - Erin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think Minto First co-op ads / passport trails/meet your neighbour campaign introducing community to business owners who live and invest here 	S - M	Town of Minto (L) - Erin Minto Chamber of Commerce (P) - Raisa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pop-up shops/restaurants 	M	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve signage to draw people into downtowns (billboards, what's ahead) 	S	Town of Minto (L) - Erin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Niche tourism – railway trails, agri-tourism, local arts 	S-M	Town of Minto (L) - Erin County of Wellington (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep investing in PitchIt, Business Competition 	O	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda Minto Chamber of Commerce (P) Saugeen Ec Development (P) Business Centre Guelph Wellington (P)



Priority 4: Support Entrepreneurship

Action	Timeline	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Succession Program – BizLink, Training/Coaching (How to navigate succession of businesses to non-family, assist in business planning, and succession component and timeline. Toolkits (Ec. Dev. Strat 1.2, 3.3) 	M - L	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda Saugeen Ec Development (P) County of Wellington (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host Export Readiness Workshop Series 	S - M	County of Wellington (L) Town of Minto (P) Minto Chamber of Commerce (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support LaunchIt & Chamber of Commerce and Saugeen Connects to deliver programs & support (Ec. Dev. Strat Plan 2.1) 	O	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda County of Wellington (P) Saugeen Ec Development (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify & promote history of entrepreneurship & innovation (Ec. Dev. Strat 2.4, 4.9) 	S	Town of Minto (L) - Erin Minto Chamber of Commerce (P) - Raisa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking series - get more info on what people want (e.g. Speed Networking) 	S-M	Minto Chamber of Commerce (L) - Raisa Town of Minto (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote awareness of CIP grants (meet directly with business owners and assisting with grants) 	O	Town of Minto (L) - ED Team County of Wellington (P) Saugeen Ec Development (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh Buy Local Directory/Database – Think Minto First 	S - M	Town of Minto (L) - ED Team Minto Chamber of Commerce (P) County of Wellington (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEI training & education – welcoming community (Ec. Dev. Strat 3.5) 	S	Town of Minto (L) – Raisa County of Wellington (P) Workplace & Immigrant Network (P)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted mentorship – women, youth, seniors, newcomer-led 	S-M	Town of Minto (L) – Belinda Minto Chamber of Commerce (P) - Raisa Business Centre Guelph Wellington (P) Saugeen Connects (P) Workplace & Immigration Network (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail training series – customer service, digital marketing, visual merchandising, financial management 	S	Town of Minto (L) - Raisa Business Centre Guelph Wellington (P) Saugeen Economic Development (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Make Time in Minto” create a value proposition for people to use Launchit resources 	S-M	Town of Minto (L) - Raisa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an on-boarding kit for new businesses 	S	Town of Minto (L) - Raisa Minto Chamber of Commerce (P) Workplace & Immigration Network (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Construction Café Big Dig Training Series 	S	Town of Minto (L) – Belinda Minto Chamber of Commerce - Raisa (P) Business Centre Guelph Wellington (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement the Palmerston Big Dig Marketing/Promotion Campaign 	S - M	Town of Minto (L) - ED Team Minto Chamber of Commerce - Raisa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a Digital Advisor 1:1 support to Launchit offering similar to Business Coach 	S	Town of Minto (L) - Raisa



Priority 5: Investment Readiness & Land Development

Action	Timeline	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Track inquiries for new development requirements for input in employment lands planning (Ec. Dev. Strat 5.3)	O	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda + Building Dept. County of Wellington (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide feedback from existing businesses on infrastructure requirements (Ec. Dev. Strat 5.4)	O	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda + Development Team County of Wellington (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Inventory of available land/buildings	S-M	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda + Building Dept. County of Wellington (P)



Priority 6: Encourage Business Expansion/Growth/Attraction

Action	Timeline	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Formal annual BR+E - small sector surveys (Ec. Dev. Strat 1.1)	S-M	Town of Minto (L) - Belinda Minto Chamber of Commerce (P) County of Wellington (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promote networking, supply chain opportunities & success stories for the promotion of existing and future prospects (Ec. Dev. Strat 1.5)	O	Town of Minto (L) - Raisa County of Wellington (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Share Minto's value proposition & assets for investment attraction (Ec. Dev. Strat 1.6)	M	Town of Minto (L) - ED Team County of Wellington (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Keep website current – data, info, events, incentives (Ec. Dev. Strat 1.7)	O	Town of Minto (L) - Tami County of Wellington (P)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with Chamber of Commerce for Business Forum (Ec. Dev. Strat 1.8) 	L	Minto Chamber of Commerce (L) - Raisa Town of Minto (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support real estate development – commercial/industrial marketing for new investment (Ec. Dev. Strat 3.4, 5.1, 5.5) 	M	Town of Minto (L) – Belinda + Terry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investor tours (Ec. Dev. Strat 5.2) 	O	Town of Minto (L) – Belinda County of Wellington (P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to Collaborate with Workforce Planning Board on the Employer One Survey and identifying “best-practice” use of the data 	O	Workforce Planning Board (L) Town of Minto (P) - Belinda

Conclusion

The Town of Minto's 2025 Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) study confirms that local businesses are resilient, community-oriented, and optimistic about future growth, but also highlights key challenges in workforce, housing, and downtown vitality that must be addressed to sustain momentum.

Businesses overwhelmingly view Minto as a positive and supportive place to operate, with strong municipal leadership, collaborative partnerships, and high quality of life cited as core strengths. However, employers continue to face labour shortages, limited housing supply, rising costs, and the need for expanded retail and tourism options. The survey also identified growing interest in business expansion, diversification, and technology adoption, paired with a desire for continued municipal support in marketing, training, and investment readiness.

The accompanying Minto Means Business Action Plan responds directly to these findings with targeted initiatives that align with not only the Town's Strategic Plan but also with the Economic and Community Development Strategic Plan and the Cultural Plan. Key actions include:

- **Workforce and Resident Attraction:** expanding Move to Minto campaigns, supporting childcare and transit access, hosting job fairs, and collaborating with employers on recruitment and training programs.
- **Housing:** leveraging the \$1M attainable housing fund, supporting developer partnerships, promoting mixed-use and affordable housing, and advocating for County-level DC relief.
- **Downtown Revitalization and Destination Development:** enhancing Think Minto First marketing, improving signage and parking, filling vacant storefronts, expanding year-round events, and growing niche tourism opportunities.
- **Entrepreneurship and Business Support:** strengthening LaunchIt and Chamber programming, expanding succession planning, mentorship, and retail training, and encouraging collaboration across business sectors.
- **Investment Readiness:** streamlining planning approvals, maintaining updated land inventories, and servicing industrial parks to attract new development.
- **Ongoing BR+E and Growth Support:** conducting annual follow-ups, promoting Minto's business successes, and maintaining a proactive approach to retention and expansion.

Together, these coordinated actions will help build on Minto's strengths, address its challenges, and ensure long-term economic vitality. By fostering collaboration, improving housing and workforce capacity, and enhancing Minto's reputation as a welcoming, business-friendly community, the Town will continue to grow as a place "where your family belongs" and where businesses can thrive.

Contact Us

Economic Development Team

Belinda Wick-Graham
Director Economic & Community Development



518-338-2511 ext 241



belinda@town.minto.on.ca



www.town.minto.on.ca



5941 Highway 89, Harriston, ON



