



Municipality of
Dutton Dunwich



MUNICIPALITY OF DUTTON DUNWICH

Community Economic Development Plan
Community Consultation Discussion Paper



mellor murray
CONSULTING

November 2020



Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
Consultation Initiatives.....	4
Dutton Dunwich Economic Development Committee	5
2. Stakeholder Interviews	5
3. Community Survey.....	7
4. Community Workshop	15
5. Appendix	17

Our thanks to the businesses and residents of Dutton Dunwich that contributed to the development of this report. Note: This discussion paper is part of the background research for the Dutton Dunwich Community Development plan. The intent of this working paper is to support the analysis and recommendations to be developed in a subsequent phase of the Community Development Plan. This information should not be considered recommendations and the public input has not been altered even in instances where some comments may not accurately reflect municipal policies and practices.



Table of Figures

Figure 1 Community Economic Development Planning Process.....	4
Figure 2 How often do you shop at the following locations?	7
Figure 3: How often do you visit Dutton Dunwich’s businesses rather than travelling elsewhere?	8
Figure 6: In which sectors should the municipality focus its economic development efforts?	10
Figure 7: Businesses in Dutton Dunwich have the products and services I want.....	10
Figure 8: Businesses in Dutton Dunwich are open when I want to shop	10
Figure 9: I try to shop in Dutton Dunwich whenever I can.....	11
Figure 10: I am content with Dutton Dunwich’s recreation facilities and programs.....	11
Figure 11: I am content with Dutton Dunwich’s entertainment and cultural options	11
Figure 12: I am content with Dutton Dunwich’s current infrastructure.....	11
Figure 13: What forms of media do you rely on for information on local events?	13

Table of Tables

Table 1: What improvements do you feel should be made to the businesses in Dutton Dunwich?	9
Table 2: What additional businesses would encourage you to shop locally?	9
Table 3:What are the unique features our community has that will attract visitors?	12
Table 4: What do you like/dislike about Dutton Dunwich’s communities?	12
Table 5: List any community events you have attended in the past year.....	13
Table 6: What are Dutton Dunwich’s tourism events/experiences?	14
Table 7: Which community assets do you like best?.....	14



1. Introduction

The Municipality of Dutton Dunwich and the Dutton Dunwich economic development committee have embarked on the development of a Community Economic Development Plan. Through this process the committee, with the support of local residents, businesses, Municipal Council and other community stakeholders will establish a vision and a plan to further the economic opportunities in Dutton Dunwich.

The creation of Dutton Dunwich’s Community Economic Development Plan includes three phases; research and analysis, community consultation and plan development.

The process of developing the Community Development Plan includes the following reports:

1. Economic and Demographic Analysis (April 2020)
2. Consultation Summary (this document)
3. Community Economic Development Plan
4. Community Development Handbook

Figure 1 Community Economic Development Planning Process



Consultation Initiatives

Engaging community stakeholders is a fundamental component of the planning process. The following consultation was included to inform the development of the plan.

- Meetings with the Dutton Dunwich Economic Development Committee
- Public Survey
- Stakeholder Interviews (10 interviews)
- Public Meeting (Scheduled for September 22, 2020)

The community engagement process was designed to collect feedback from residents, businesses, elected officials and other stakeholder groups. The consultation plan was designed in collaboration with the Economic Development Committee, Municipality of Dutton Dunwich and County of Elgin.



Dutton Dunwich Economic Development Committee

The volunteer Dutton Dunwich Economic Development Committee consisting of local citizens and businesses, provided guidance for the establishment of the plan. The members of the Economic Development Committee are:

Councillor Patricia Corneil Economic Development Committee Chair

Jane Veraart

Mike Brady

Daniel McKillop

David McCallum

Brian Downie

Katie Sue Van Den Dries

Brian Girard

Kelsey McConnell

Ashley Ross

Alan Smith Elgin County Economic Development

Heather Bouw, Municipality of Dutton Dunwich

2. Stakeholder Interviews

A total of 10 interviews were conducted July 28 and August 12, 2020 with business and community leaders and other organizations that contribute to Dutton Dunwich's economic development.

These interviews were conducted with the agreement that comments would not be specifically identifiable to any one person in order to encourage candid input. A summary of the themes emerging from these discussions follows.

Community

The strong community orientation was identified as a positive factor for Dutton Dunwich. The interviewees agreed that local residents are very supportive of local businesses. They also valued the personal customer service that was available due to the community's small size and the connections within the community.

The interviewees all agreed that the new residential development in Dutton is a great opportunity for the community. Dutton offers everything new residents need including schools, gas station, grocery store, bank, credit union, recreational opportunities. (pool, playground, community centre).

The increased number of residents provide a growing market for population-dependent retail and service businesses. The individuals all noted Dutton Dunwich's transition to a bedroom community with a large share of the population leaving the community for work.

They stressed the importance of making the new residents feel welcome to integrate them into the community. The new residents should be encouraged to shop locally and invited to participate in community events. There were some reports that newcomers did not always feel welcomed by long-standing residents.



Internet connectivity

COVID-19 and a resulting interest in people leaving urban centres for smaller town living has created greater opportunities for residents of Dutton Dunwich who work from home. Internet services will be required to support more home-based businesses. The respondents noted that Dutton has excellent internet speed and reliability. Residents living outside of Dutton have a very different experience however and affordable and reliable internet service was identified as a challenge for home-based businesses and existing farming operations.

Locating in Dutton Dunwich

The majority of the interviewees represented small independent businesses that were established by residents of Dutton Dunwich. The lifestyle and small-town living offered in Dutton Dunwich were frequently referenced as the reason for establishing in the community. They identified an opportunity to provide additional services to entrepreneurs and small businesses to help them get established and grow in the community.

They reported that the industrially zoned land in Dutton is owned by several individuals and would require an investment by the owners to bring services and an internal roadway onto the property. The interviewees provided very different accounts of their experience addressing regulatory matters. Some were very satisfied with the assistance provided. Others expressed great dissatisfaction, particularly with the time for approvals and staff's openness to find alternative solutions to addressing regulatory requirements.

When asked about the potential to attract new industry here, they suggested Dutton Dunwich would be an excellent opportunity for a business of under 50 employees.

Tourism

Several interviewees spoke about Dutton Dunwich's potential as a tourism spot. They noted several tourist destinations in and near the Municipality including Pearce Provincial Park, the Backus Page Museum, Duttona Beach, Port Glasgow and the community parks and recreation. They noted that although there are no conventional tourist accommodations there are some Airbnb offerings in the area. One individual spoke of the need for additional wayfinding to let visitors coming off highway 401 of the many places to visit in the Municipality.

COVID-19

All the individuals reported that their business was impacted in some way by COVID-19. The extent of the impact was uneven. Some experienced minor inconveniences with staff working from home. Others were shut down completely with little to no activity for an extended period of time. Some retail operations even experienced increased sales.



3. Community Survey

The community survey was conducted during a volatile period. Dutton Dunwich residents received a printed copy of the survey in the midst of a State of Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

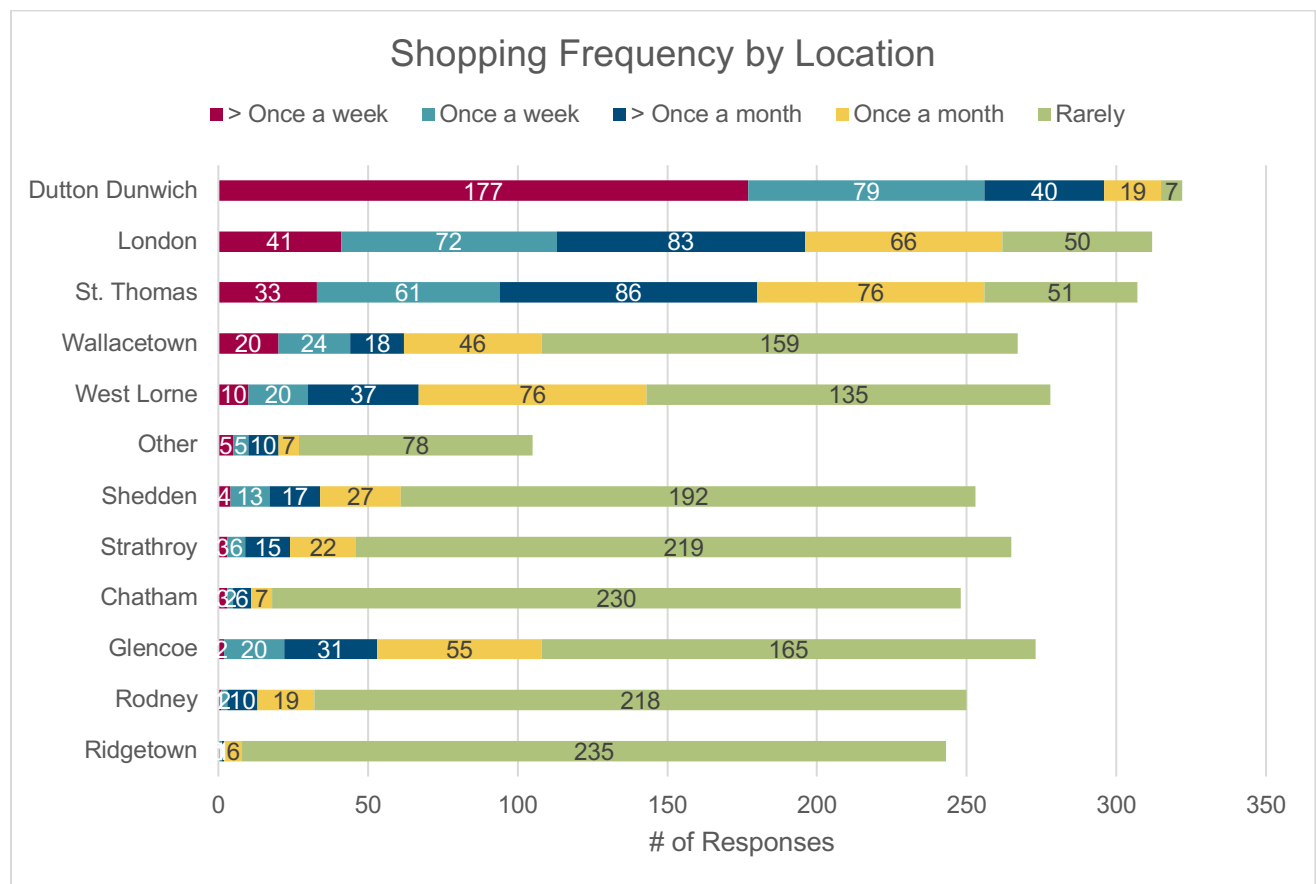
Municipal offices, along with most retail operations and collection points for the survey, were closed for an extended period of time. As a result of these closures, the survey collection period was extended into May. There were 157 online and 171 printed surveys completed between March and May 2020. The survey results are summarized below.

Most respondents were longtime residents who had lived in Dutton Dunwich for 10 or more years. Half of the respondents lived in households with two residents. Just over half of the respondents were from Dutton with another 23% from the rural area. The largest share (41%) of the respondents were between age 45 to 64 with another 33% age 65 and over.

Shopping Patterns

Just over half of the respondents indicated that they shopped in Dutton Dunwich more than once a week. London and St. Thomas were the most popular locations after Dutton Dunwich but the shopping frequency was much lower for any location but Dutton Dunwich.

Figure 2 How often do you shop at the following locations?

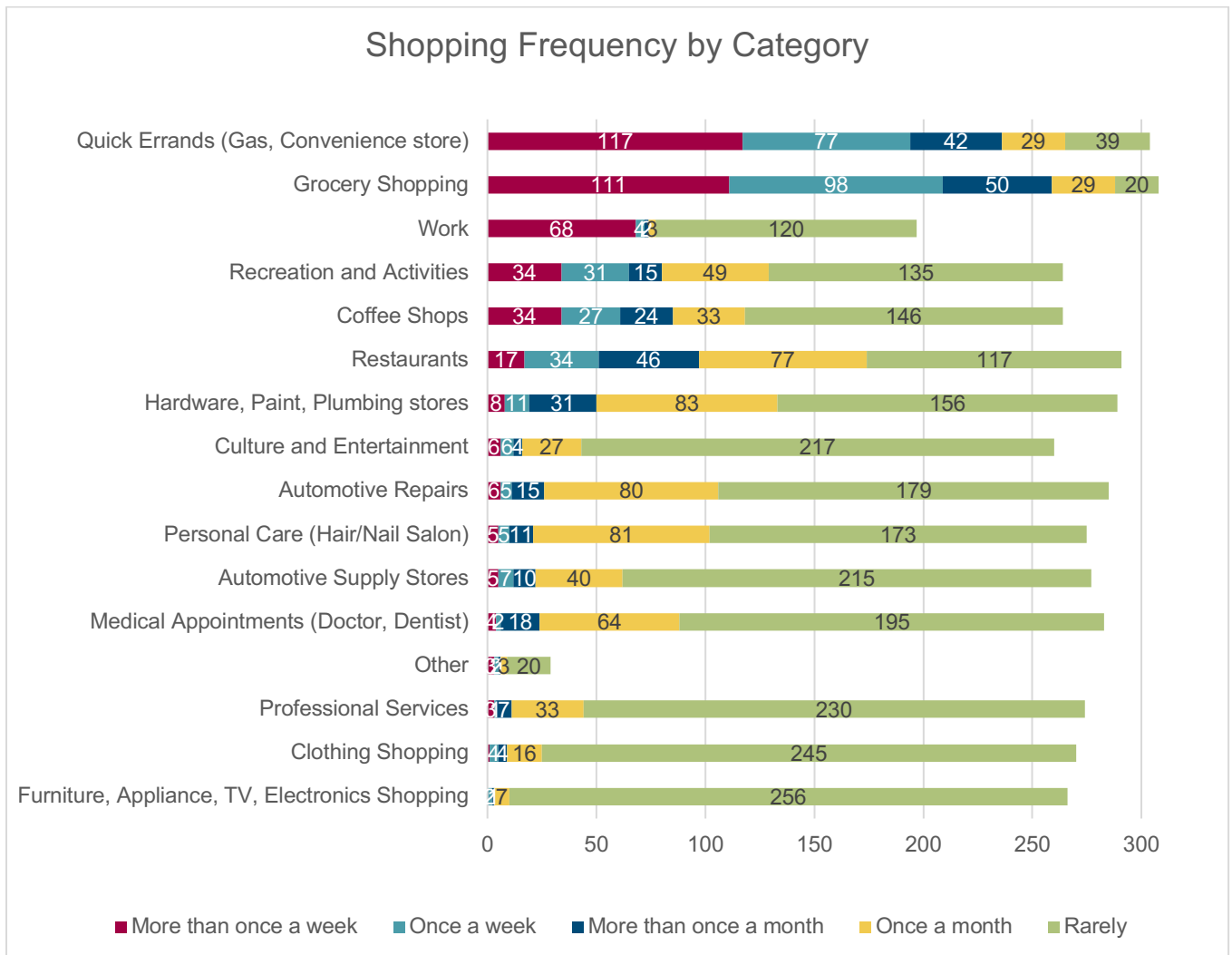


N=327



The respondents reported that Dutton Dunwich was their most common destination for shopping for quick errands and groceries. Almost half of the respondents reported they frequented Dutton Dunwich restaurants, hardware and plumbing stores once a month or more. Another one third visited Dutton Dunwich auto repair and personal care businesses once a month or more. At the lower end of the scale, almost all respondents indicated they rarely visited Dutton Dunwich businesses for furniture, appliances, TV and electronics, clothing, professional services and entertainment. Additional detail, the primary destination for a wide range of goods and services is included in the appendix.

Figure 3: How often do you visit Dutton Dunwich’s businesses rather than travelling elsewhere for the following?



N=311

The respondents were then asked to identify areas for improvement for the existing Dutton Dunwich businesses. The most common suggestions included changes to the hours (either longer or more consistent), improvements to the building exteriors and greater variety of products. Several respondents specifically mentioned improvements for the grocery store and hardware store. Other



suggestions included reducing prices, providing more parking and improving roadways, sidewalks and access to stores.

Table 1: What improvements do you feel should be made to the businesses that already exist in Dutton Dunwich?

Theme	Mentions	Theme	Mentions
Hours	33	Parking	10
Building façades	23	Prices	10
Product variety	22	Promotion	8
Grocery store	21	Road/ sidewalk improvements/ access	7
Restaurants	21	Different stores	6
Hardware	19	Signage	3

N= 172

The respondents were asked to suggest additional businesses that would encourage them to shop locally. The most popular response was a dollar store or junior department store. The respondents also suggested a clothing store and a licensed restaurant or bar. Several respondents wanted an expanded or additional grocery store. Tim Hortons was specifically referenced by a number of respondents. A handful of respondents wanted specialty food including M&M meats or a bakery. Additional suggestions included a farmers’ market, expanded or additional hardware store, plant nursery, gift shop, pharmacy, shoe store, computer or electronics and shoe store.

Table 2: What additional businesses would you like to see added that would encourage you to shop locally?

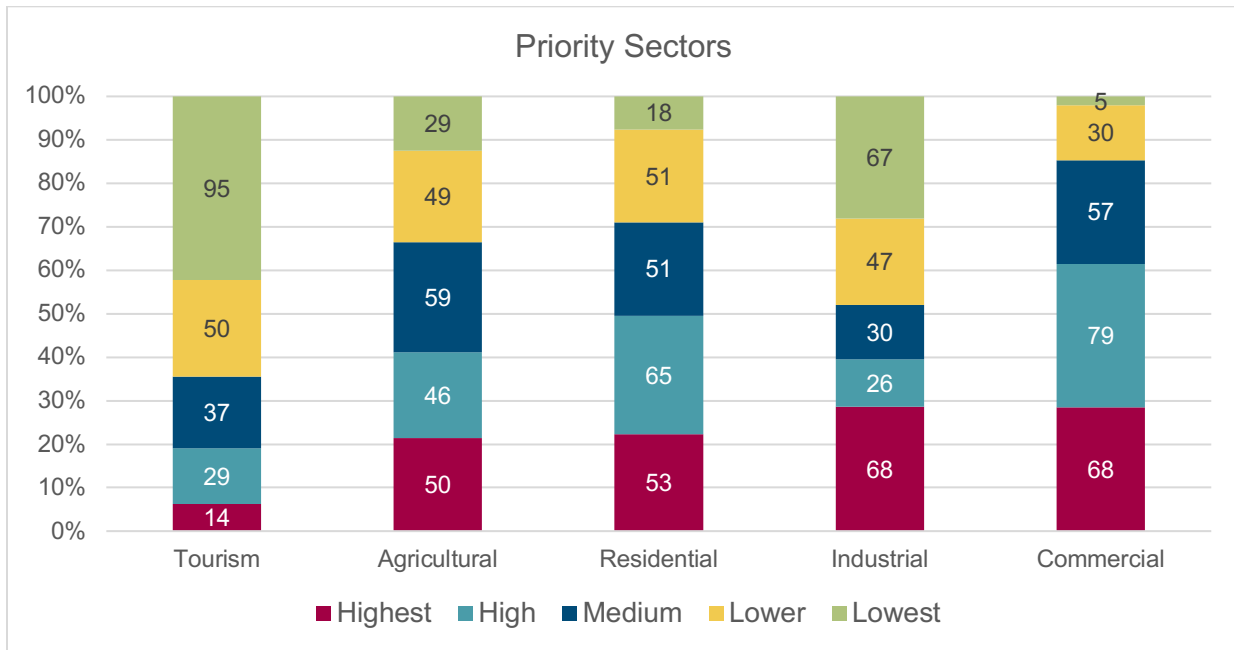
Theme	Mentions	Theme	Mentions
Dollar/junior dept. store	49	Nursery	9
Clothing	44	Gift shop	8
Licensed restaurant/bar	38	Pharmacy health	8
Grocery	29	Shoes	8
Tim Hortons coffee	28	Computer/electronics	6
Specialty food	17	Furniture	6
Farmer's Market	10	Sports	5
Hardware	10		

N=172

The respondents were asked to prioritize the economic development efforts by sector. An equal number of respondents rated industrial development and commercial development as the highest priority sectors. However, when the ranking of highest or high priority was considered, commercial development was the dominant sector followed by residential development and agriculture. Tourism was rated as the lowest priority.



Figure 4: In which sectors should the municipality focus its economic development efforts in order to grow the economy of Dutton Dunwich?

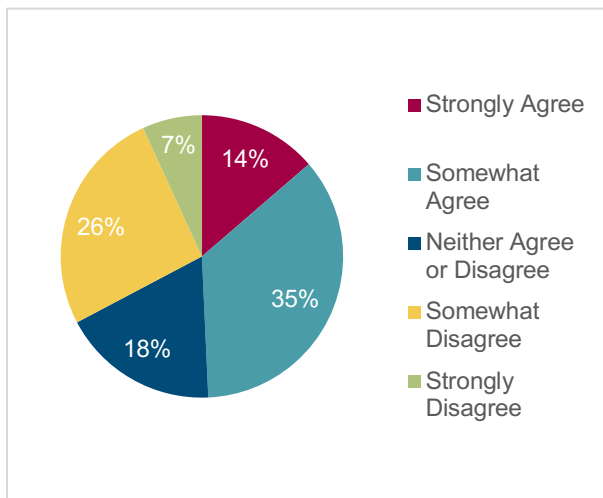


N=260

Shopping hours

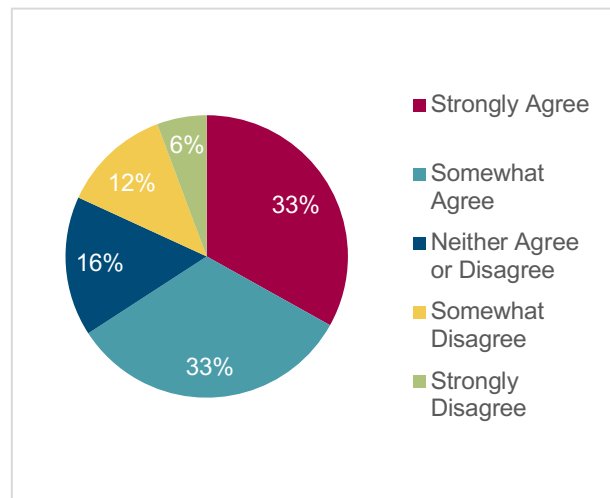
Half of the respondents somewhat agree or strongly agree that the businesses in Dutton Dunwich have the products and services that they want. Despite the recommendations for improvement (expansion) to store hours reported earlier in the survey, 66% of respondents either strongly or somewhat agree that the businesses in Dutton Dunwich are open when they want to shop.

Figure 5: Businesses in Dutton Dunwich have the products and services I want



N=285

Figure 6: Businesses in Dutton Dunwich are open when I want to shop

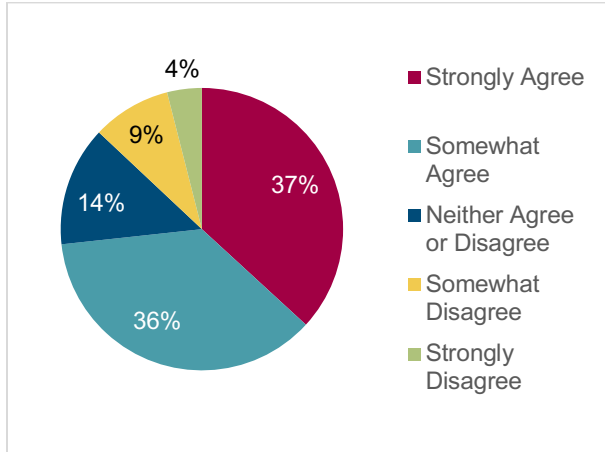


N=285



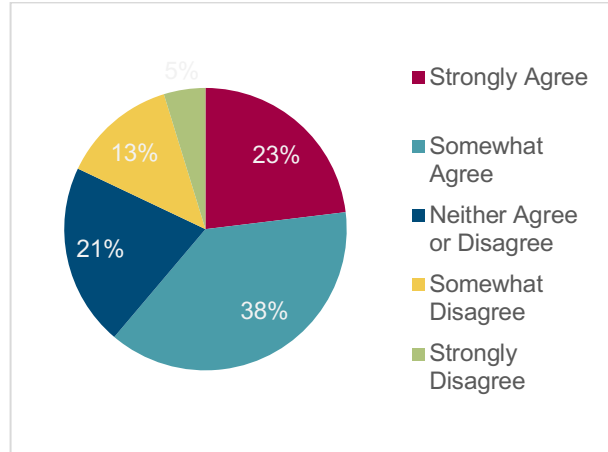
A full 73% of respondents indicated that they strongly or somewhat agree that they shop in Dutton Dunwich whenever they can. Another 61% of respondents strongly agree or somewhat agree that they are content with Dutton Dunwich’s recreation facilities and programs.

Figure 7: I try to shop in Dutton Dunwich whenever I can



N=285

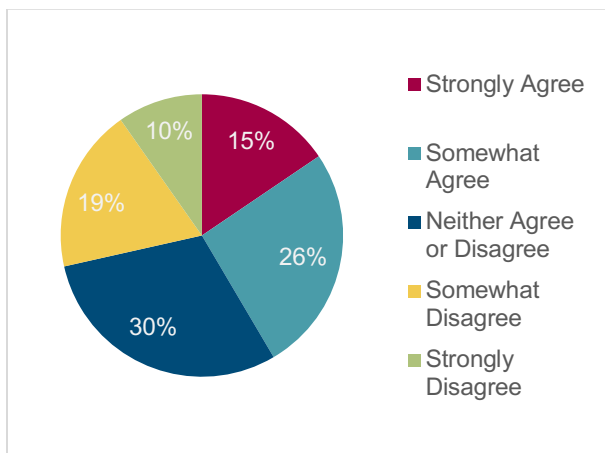
Figure 8: I am content with Dutton Dunwich’s recreation facilities and programs



N=285

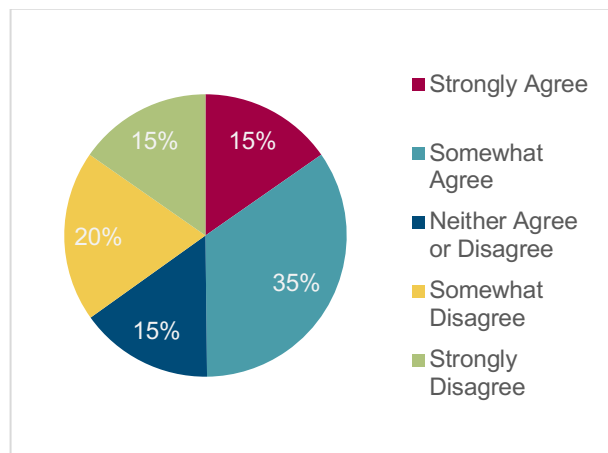
The respondents are mixed in their satisfaction with the entertainment and culture in Dutton Dunwich. One third of respondents said that they neither agree or disagree that they are content with the entertainment and cultural options in Dutton Dunwich; another 26% somewhat agree and 19% somewhat disagree. When it comes to infrastructure, half of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they are content with Dutton Dunwich’s current infrastructure such as roads, internet and water.

Figure 9: I am content with Dutton Dunwich’s entertainment and cultural options



N=285

Figure 10: I am content with Dutton Dunwich’s current infrastructure



N=285



The respondents were asked to identify the unique features that would appeal to visitors to Dutton Dunwich. The most commonly identified features were the pool and park, the stores in the community, small-town features and charm, and restaurants. Other common answers included the Backus Page House, the close proximity to Highway 401, the friendly nature of the community and the many activities and events in the community.

Table 3: What are the unique features our community has that will attract visitors to stop, sort and visit?

Theme	Mentions	Theme	Mentions
Pool/park	20	Hiking trails	6
Shopping	18	Artisans/ gallery	5
Small town	18	Lake	5
Restaurants	17	John E. Pearce Provincial Park	4
Backus Page House	14	Museums/ historical sites	3
Close to 401	13	Theatre	3
Friendly	12	Craft Stores	2
Activities/ Events	11	Gas station	2
Fall fair	8		

N=154

The friendly, small town nature was also identified as a key element that residents like about their community, along with recreation and the mix of stores. The elements they dislike about the community include taxes (specifically the rate of taxes compared to larger areas with more services), the internet access in Iona and the rural areas of the Municipality and the appearance of some stores in the downtowns.

Table 4: What do you like/dislike about Dutton Dunwich’s communities?

Theme	Like/ Dislike	# of mentions	Theme	Like/ Dislike	# of mentions
Friendly		53	Stores		10
Small town		36	Grocery		6
Taxes		16	Safe		6
Internet		12	Events		5
Appearance		11	Roads		5
Recreation		10	Trails		4

N=194



The respondents were asked to list the community events and facilities they had attended in the past year. The most commonly mentioned event was the Wallacetown Fair with 168 mentions or 71% of all respondents. The Santa Claus parade was also popular with just under half of all respondents attending in the last year. Other commonly mentioned events or facilities were the Shop Local program, the community pool, the fish fry, various recreation programs, Canada Day celebrations, Celebrate the Season and Family Day programming.

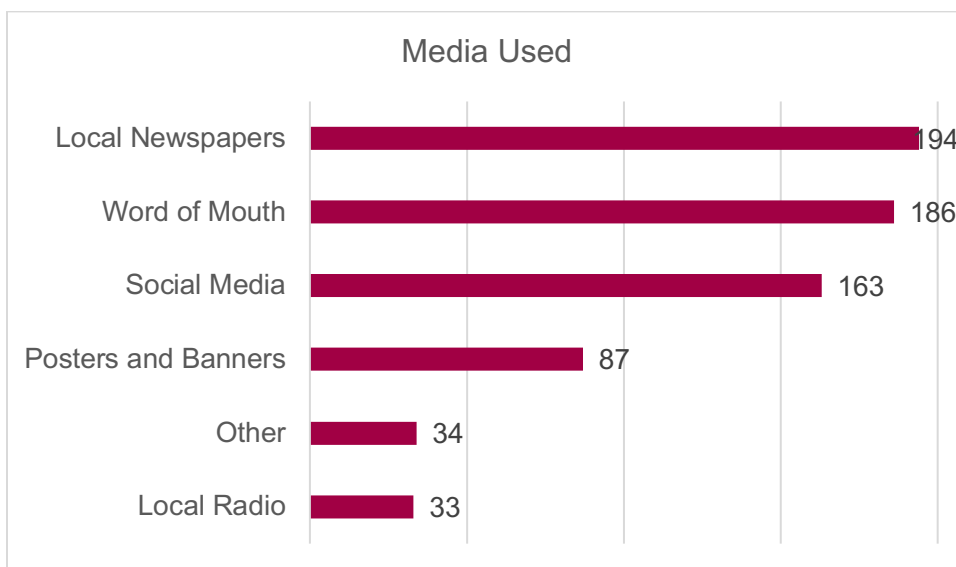
Table 5: List any community events you have attended in the past year.

Theme	Mentions	Theme	Mentions
Wallacetown Fair	168	Breakfast	19
Santa Claus Parade	105	Trivia Night	19
Shop Local	64	WEDs	17
Community Pool	50	Bingo	11
Lions Fish Fry	39	Silent Auction	9
Recreation Programs	34	Night in Scotland	6
Canada Day	33	Backus Page Event	5
Celebrate the Season	32	Beef dinner	5
Family Day	25	Garage Sales/ Flea Market	4
Sports Events	20	Remembrance Day	3

N=235

The respondents indicated they were most likely to get information on local events and promotions from local newspapers, word of mouth and social media. Posters and banners, local radio and other media were less popular sources of information.

Figure 11: What forms of media do you rely on for information on local events?



N=280



The most commonly identified tourism events and experiences were the various community events, programs at the Backus Page House and the Wallacetown Fair.

Table 6: What are Dutton Dunwich’s tourism events/experiences?

Theme	Mentions
Community Events	55
Backus Page House	46
Wallacetown Fair	28
Trails	9
Car Show	8
John E. Pearce Provincial Park	5

N=139

The respondents identified a variety of community assets that they enjoyed. The parks, both municipal and the John Pearce Provincial Park, were identified as a favourite by more than half the respondents. Also popular are the pool and splash pad, the community centre, the walking and biking paths and sports facilities.

Table 7: Which community assets do you like best?

Theme	Mentions	Theme	Mentions
Parks	136	Ball diamond	8
Pool/ splash pad	61	Churches	6
Community centre	55	Backus Page House	5
Walking biking path	33	Restaurants	5
Sports facilities	20	Theatre	5
Library	12	Fairgrounds	4
Stores	10		

N=208



4. Community Workshop

The Economic Development Committee hosted a community workshop on October 20, 2020, to gather input from residents and economic development committee members. Approximately 28 people participated in the virtual workshop to hear about the Community Development Planning process and to provide their input.

The summary of the workshop results is presented below.

Economic Opportunities

The participants all identified residential growth as an area of opportunity. Dutton Dunwich offers affordable housing options for families and seniors who are attracted to the community's small-town feel, location and size. The growth in population will create additional opportunities to support local businesses, attract new investment and grow the number of entrepreneurs in the community.

The participants addressed the need for a junior department store in the Municipality, so residents did not need to leave the community to address basic needs. They noted opportunities to attract manufacturers to the community and to build on the region's strengths in agriculture.

They also thought that the high-speed internet service in Dutton was an advantage to support and attract businesses and residents.

Barriers

The workshop participants said the lack of awareness and the lack of promotion of Dutton Dunwich was a barrier to attracting additional residents and investment. They also noted there is significant competition for investment from larger centres.

Dutton Dunwich is a bedroom community for many residents and the commuters often do their shopping outside Dutton Dunwich.

Some participants noted that the business park is unfinished and that limits the Municipality's potential to attract new investment.

The participants reported that regulations and the current development approval process is a barrier for investment. Some participants felt that inadequate staff resources were limiting the Municipality's ability to move the economic development agenda forward. They called for more risk taking and less red tape.

Several participants spoke about the lack of amenities and services that would support resident attraction and retention including child care, health care providers, seniors housing, student employment opportunities, parking in the downtown and accessible businesses.

The participants noted that a lack of diversity in the population might be a barrier for some potential new residents. They also said there were conflicting opinions among residents on welcoming new residents and new investment.



Priorities

The participants thought the Community Economic Development Plan should begin with sharing a common vision of “what we want”.

They felt that providing a diverse selection of housing options for seniors and families and ensuring housing remains affordable is essential.

There was wide agreement among the participants that more promotion of the community was needed to grow the population, support local businesses and attract investment. They felt the promotion should address the benefits of living, shopping and doing business in Dutton Dunwich and should include profiles of local businesses.

They felt Dutton Dunwich needed to improve its social presence with local events that build community and encourage residents and businesses to work cooperatively. They also spoke about the relationship with the school and providing work opportunities for students.

The participants spoke of modernizing the core and providing additional amenities to support residents.

Future vision

When asked to describe their future desired vision, the participants were quick to reference population growth with a diverse population and more families. The population growth was tied to affordable housing that appeals to a diverse population and the related amenities for residents. They want Dutton Dunwich residents to feel greater pride in their community.

Participants pointed to a diverse economy supported by commercial operations, agriculture, tourism and manufacturing. They want the community to be self-sufficient, with the businesses and services residents need available locally. The larger tax base would also mean lower taxes for residents.

The participants envisioned Council providing leadership and working with the community to support the economic opportunity while providing sufficient staff to deliver on the plan.



5. Appendix

When asked to identify where they travel for the majority of goods and services by sector, Dutton Dunwich was the most common answer for quick errands, groceries, automotive repairs, medical appointments, coffee shops, personal care, professional services recreation and activities and work. London was the most common destination for auto supplies, hardware, paint and plumbing, restaurants and culture and entertainment.

Figure 12: How often do you visit Dutton Dunwich's businesses rather than travelling elsewhere for the following?

