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Town of LaSalle Economic Development Plan

Mellor Murray Consulting in collaboration with Jupia Consultants and Curtis Planning
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Introduction

The Town of LaSalle is located in the southwest corner of Ontario directly south of the City of Windsor in Essex County. Its location has been a key factor in its economic and population growth, with significant influences from neighbouring jurisdictions including the heavily populated City of Windsor, regional municipalities with many similar attributes, proximity to the U.S. border, and the Detroit River waterfront along the Town's western border.

This is the Town of LaSalle's first economic development plan put in place to direct its efforts to attract and retain business and foster economic growth. The Town of just over 30,000 people has experienced strong population growth and now would like to focus on attracting more economic activity to support the growing population and diversify its tax base. By strengthening its economic development capacity, better leveraging regional economic development and related organizations and targeting its investment attraction efforts, LaSalle will be well positioned to attract new companies to the region and continue its solid population growth.



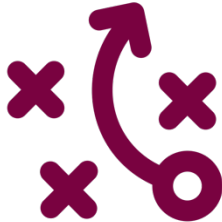
Figure 1: Map of LaSalle, Ontario





Creating the Economic Development Plan

The process of developing the Economic Development Plan included three phases: background research, consultation with key stakeholders and plan preparation.

		
Background Research	Consultation	Plan Preparation
Document Review Planning Review Economic & Statistical Analysis Initial Findings	Interviews Focus Group Online Survey Community Townhall Findings and Issues Report	Best Practice Review Priorities Workshop Strategic Plan Performance Measures & Implementation Plan

The following reports were produced as part of the process of developing the Economic Development Plan:

1. Initial Findings (June 2018)
2. Community Consultation Report (July 2018)
3. Findings and Issues Report (July 2018)
4. Economic Development Plan (this document)
5. Implementation Plan (this document)



Economic and Demographic Analysis

Demographic and Labour Market Highlights

With a population of more than 30,000, the Town of LaSalle is the third largest municipality in the Windsor-Essex Region and one of the fastest growing in southwestern Ontario. It is known for having well above average household income and a moderate cost of living. Its population is more educated and has a much higher concentration of professional workers compared to many of its peers. The community features a well above average share of people with post-secondary qualifications in education, professional services and health care.

According to MoneySense magazine, the Town of LaSalle is in the top 10 percent of the Best Places to Live in Canada and ranks eighth among Ontario's 150 cities and towns. The Town is in the top quartile for income, affordable housing, low crime, good weather and its strong arts and sports community. LaSalle also ranks fourth in Ontario as a best place to raise kids. The Town has among the lowest crime rates in the province.

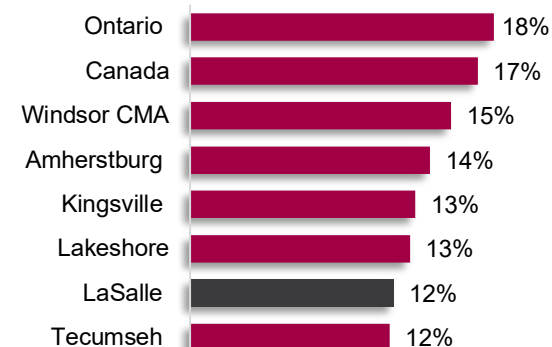
Average household income in the Town is 35 percent above the average across Canada. By comparison, the average household income across Ontario is only five percent higher than the average across the country. Statistics Canada reports that the average household in LaSalle allocates only 12 percent of income to shelter costs (mortgage payments, property taxes, etc.) – more than 30 percent below the provincial average (Figure 2).

The quality of life and reasonable cost of living are attracting people to the community. Between 2011 and 2016, Lakeshore was the only municipality in the Windsor CMA that experienced a faster population growth rate (Figure 3).

Aging workforce

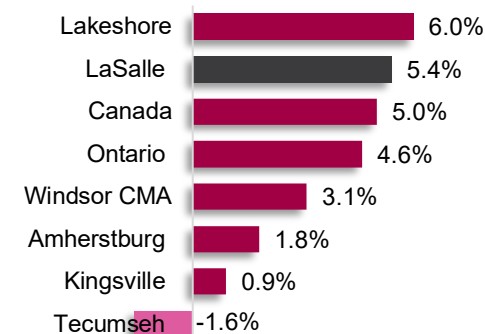
The aging workforce across the Windsor CMA is a potential barrier to future growth. Across the metropolitan area there are more than 36,000 people over the age of 55 who are active in the regional labour market. In LaSalle there are 3,400 in this age group; more than one in five workers. Based on current population and migration trends, the pipeline of new talent is not large enough to replace the retiring workers and provide the talent for expanding the workforce to accommodate new industries. A shortage of workers is a risk to the future economic growth of LaSalle and the entire Windsor CMA.

Figure 2: Share of Average Household Income Allocated to Shelter Costs (Owned Dwellings)



Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census.

Figure 3: Population Growth Rate - 2011 to 2016



Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census.



Reliance on a highly integrated labour market

One of the most pronounced attributes of the LaSalle labour force is the high commuter rate. Almost everyone who lives in LaSalle works in another municipality (over 86 percent of workers who live in LaSalle commute out for work). This is the highest commuting rate of any municipality in Ontario but, as shown in Figure 4, other smaller municipalities in the Windsor CMA also have populations that commute for work each day. This commuting works both ways as 64 percent of people who work in LaSalle commute in every day from other neighbouring municipalities. The Windsor CMA has one of the most integrated labour markets of any metropolitan area in Canada.

Stable population with limited immigration

LaSalle has had relatively strong population growth in recent years. The Town has had a stable population base with relatively lower inward migration rates and limited outward migration. Despite being home to over nine percent of the Windsor metropolitan area (CMA) population, LaSalle only attracted 3.6 percent of all immigrants to the region between 2011 and 2016.

A lower level of entrepreneurship

The Town has one of the lower self-employment rates among the peer jurisdictions with only 8.2 percent of workers indicating they worked for themselves in 2016. In comparison, the provincial average for self-employment is 12 percent of workers. Across the Windsor CMA only 8.8 percent of people are self-employed.

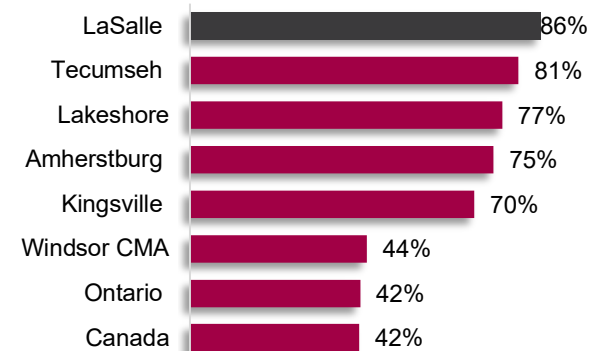
Industrial and Business Profile: Highlights

LaSalle has mostly developed as a residential area within the Windsor metropolitan area. While in recent years there has been increasing commercial activity, as discussed above, the vast majority of residents leave the community each day for work.

According to Statistics Canada, there are 604 private and public-sector firms (business locations) in the Town of LaSalle with at least some employment. Most of these organizations are very small, with 78 percent employing under 10 workers and 91 percent employing less than 20 people. Only seven firms/organizations in the Town employ more than 100 workers.

Figure 5 compares the LaSalle industrial profile to the national economy. It compares the number of firms per 10,000 population in the Town to Canada overall with the national level set at 1.00. For all major industry groups, LaSalle has fewer firms when compared to the country overall. The largest gaps are in accommodation, food services, and other personal services.

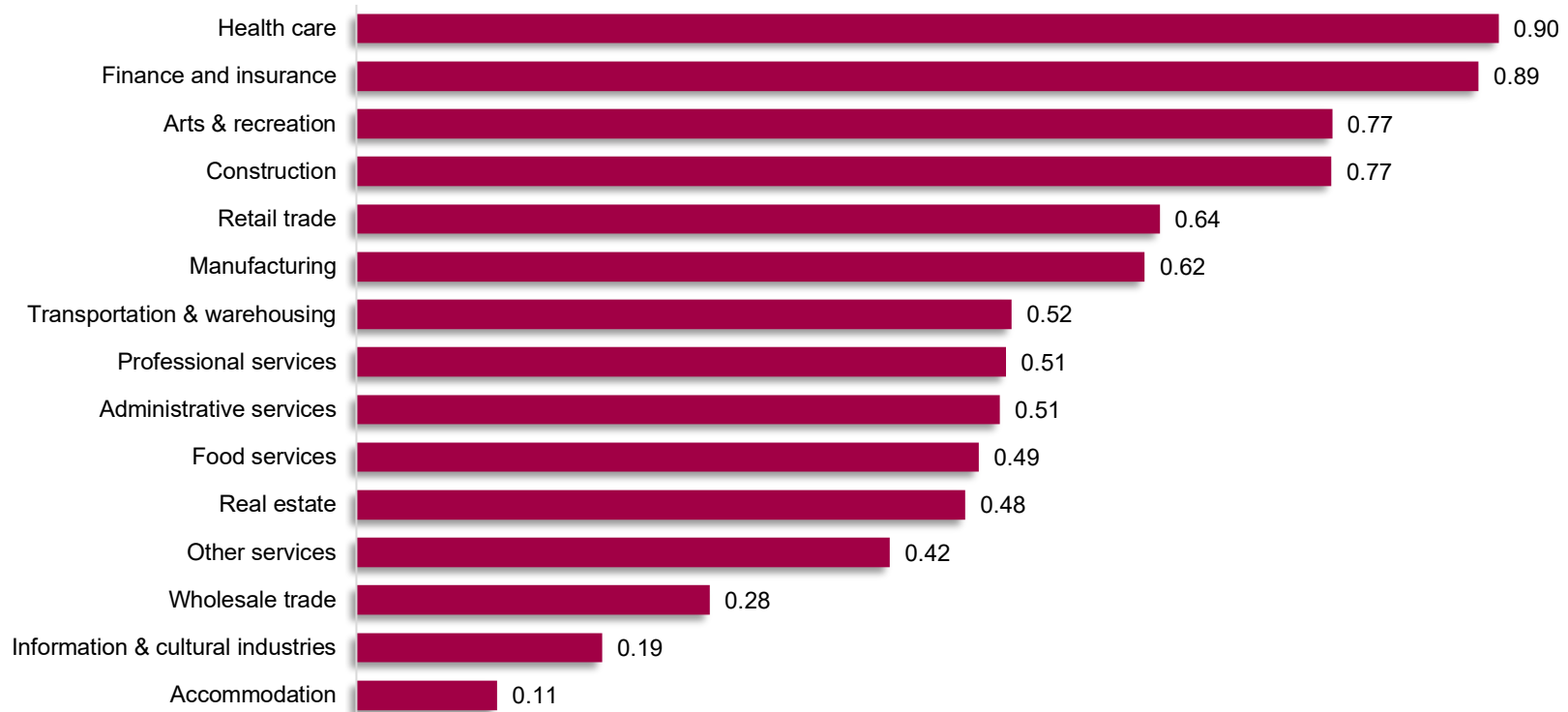
*Figure 4: Share of the Working Population Commuting to Another Municipality for Work **



*Excluding those who work from home.
Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census.



Figure 5: Intensity of Firms by Sector Relative to the National Economy (Canada = 1.00)








The number of firms per 10,000 population in LaSalle compared to the national economy with the Canadian level set at 1.00.

Source: Statistics Canada. December 2017 Canadian Business Patterns.



Areas for potential business attraction

A key objective of this Economic Development Plan is the attraction of more business to LaSalle to ensure more local services are available to residents and to diversify the Town's property tax mix. Several sectors emerge as having significant potential for attraction to serve the local population:

	Restaurants	Despite having well above average disposable income, there are nearly 40 percent fewer establishments in LaSalle, adjusted for population size. The potential market size for this sector is above \$42 million per year. There are 12 full service restaurants when the market size suggests there should be more than 20. There are 14 limited service restaurants when the market size indicates there should be 22 or more. The data suggests that restaurants in the City of Windsor and possibly Tecumseh are taking much of the market share.
	Accommodation	This sector involves a more complicated investment dynamic but the reality is LaSalle is home to only one small accommodation facility (business with employees) out of the 44 across the Windsor metropolitan area. (Regionally there has been a number of large investments in Windsor in 2017/18. An additional investment in accommodation was announced for the nearby Town of Amherstburg in 2018.)
	Professional Services	Relative to population size, LaSalle has 71 percent fewer legal services firms, no architectural firms, no graphic design firms, and very few IT and computer services firms. Overall, there are 50 percent fewer professional services firms in LaSalle compared to the country overall.
	Personal services and health care	The data indicates that many residents leave LaSalle to access personal services and health care. According to Statistics Canada, there are no live theatres, museums, or amusement facilities. There are fewer hair grooming service providers, vehicle maintenance providers as well as a variety of specialized health care services including chiropractors, optometrists, mental health practitioners and home health care providers.
	Home-based workers	Only 3.7 percent of the workforce living in LaSalle works from home. This is only half the Ontario and national level for home-based work and considerably below other communities in the neighbourhood including Lakeshore and Kingsville. LaSalle is well positioned to attract people who work from home and service regional, provincial and even national clients.

Business case documents for restaurants, professional services and home décor and related retail and services businesses have been prepared in conjunction with the development of this Economic Development Plan. They clearly articulate the business case for these industries to grow in



the Town. A more detailed demographic and economic profile can be found in the Findings and Issues Report prepared to support the development of the plan.

Planning Considerations

The County of Essex Official Plan,¹ the current Town of LaSalle Official Plan² as amended, and the new LaSalle Official Plan³ provide the policy framework to support LaSalle's economic development vision. The new Official Plan, approved by the County of Essex October 3, 2018, will support LaSalle's gradual transition from a predominantly residential suburb to a complete community. An increasingly broad range of residential development will be complemented by growth in a broad range of industrial, office, retail and service uses. Areas of growth will include the Bouffard and Howard districts, the LaSalle Town Centre, the Waterfront District, and the new Mixed-Use Corridor. The Town will also have an enhanced ability to support development and redevelopment in key areas through the development and implementation of Community Improvement Plans and the use of associated financial incentives.

Community Consultation

The Town of LaSalle used a variety of events and engagement activities to ensure broad participation and a range of opportunities for residents and stakeholders to contribute their insights to the Economic Development Plan. In total, over 500 people participated in the development of the Economic Development Plan through the various consultation activities.

Consultation Activities

Activity	Date(s)
Staff Workshop	June 20, 2018
Council Workshop	June 20, 2018
Community Town Hall	June 20, 2018
Business and Community Leader Workshop	June 21, 2018
Key Stakeholder Interviews	June 20 to July 16, 2018
Community Survey	June 11 to July 2, 2018
Social Media	June 22 to July 2, 2018
Council Priorities Workshop	September 4, 2018

¹ Approved April 28, 2014.

² Originally approved May 18, 1998.

³ Adopted by Town Council on May 22, 2018 and approved by Essex County October 3, 2018.



Figure 6: Stakeholder Workshop



The following key themes were consistent throughout the community consultation.

Economic Development Connections and Resources

There was widespread agreement among the various consultation participants that the time had come for a staff person responsible for LaSalle's economic development activities. Respondents saw the potential for enhancing the connections between the Town, members of the business community, business to business, regional organizations and connecting residents with the local business community. Many consultation participants supported more focused efforts on attracting and responding to investment opportunities and engaging in regional economic development efforts including providing incentives and targeted marketing efforts.

Geography

LaSalle's location provides opportunities and challenges. The consultation participants noted LaSalle's proximity to regional partners, transportation links and international markets and construction of the Gordie Howe International Bridge provide exceptional access to sales and employment opportunities. Its location also exposes the Town to significant competition for new investment, retail and service businesses. Many consultation participants were happy to continue to work, shop and access services elsewhere in an effort to maintain LaSalle's small-town feel.



Quality of Life and Residential Growth

LaSalle's exceptional quality of life is a defining character of the community. Consultation participants are proud of the investments the Town has made in its trails, recreation facilities and in its high development standards. The quality of life offered for residents has made LaSalle a preferred destination for residential development. Consultation participants recognized that population growth is the dominant factor for LaSalle's strong local economy. They expressed concern that future residential growth and the local economy could be impacted by a diminishing supply of shovel-ready residential land. Some residents noted the growing traffic along Malden Road.

Waterfront Development

There was wide agreement with consultation participants on the potential for further development of LaSalle's waterfront with additional public space, and commercial development including restaurants, shops and water amenities. The waterfront was also recognized for its tourism product development potential.

Commercial Opportunities

Several gaps in the retail and commercial offerings were identified for targeted investment attraction including a higher-end restaurant, health services and a boutique hotel. The lack of commercial development adjacent to the Vollmer Centre and along the community trails were both noted as opportunities.

Expanding wayfinding signage was identified as an opportunity to connect residents, workers and visitors in LaSalle and the greater Windsor-Essex region. Others noted an opportunity to the connections between the new LaSalle transit network and regional transit. Many spoke of the opportunities for greater connection with the University of Windsor and St. Clair College.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis attempts to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) that may impact a community. The analysis is based on internal and external factors that can positively or negatively impact a community's ability to realize its economic development objectives and assists in the evaluation of its development potential.

Strengths: Characteristics of the community that give it a potential advantage over other communities.

Weaknesses: Characteristics that place the community at a potential disadvantage to other communities.



Opportunities: External factors that the community could exploit to its advantage.

Threats: External factors that could cause trouble for the community's long-term development potential.



The SWOT analysis looks at the Town of LaSalle's economic development strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats based upon the document review, environmental scan, stakeholder consultations, economic and demographic analysis and the business profile undertaken to



support the strategic planning process. The analysis helps begin the process of narrowing the focus for the Town's economic development plan by identifying those areas of particular importance where specific action may be required.

 Strengths	 Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Benefitting from the 'bedroom community' effect. Strong population growth.• Relatively 'young' population (over 25 percent under 20).• Stable population base (not many move out).• Highly educated population.• Low unemployment rate.• Very high commuting rate – employment opportunities for residents across the region.• Highest median personal income in Ontario.• Low share in poverty.• Low crime.• Affordable/attainable housing costs relative to other areas in Ontario.• The Windsor CMA economy is strong and growing.• The CMA has particular strengths (automotive).• Easy access to senior leadership at the Town.• Quick and efficient approval process (Town).• Growing and more affluent residential base.• Expanding walking/cycling, parks, recreational facilities.• Proximity to the U.S. border.• Proximity to major highways.• Official Plan positions LaSalle for future growth and use of incentives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A lack of shovel-ready land for new residential and non-residential development.• Increasing vehicle traffic, particularly on Malden Road.• Incorrect perception that LaSalle has higher taxes than other regional municipalities.• Rising housing costs.• Wayfinding – the Town has a signage problem.• Limited public transit – hard to recruit staff from the wider area.• Stormwater drainage challenges in the Bouffard and Howard Planning Districts – barrier to new construction.• A tightening labour market – particularly for services industries.• An aging workforce – number of 55+ has doubled in 10 years.• The lack of a formal business association.• Relatively low rate of self-employment.• Economic development capacity at Town Hall – lacking a specific staff person dedicated to economic development.• Limited economic development collaboration with surrounding communities, county and regional economic development agency.• Limited tourism product.






	<h2>Opportunities</h2>		<h2>Threats</h2>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New CAN/U.S. international bridge under construction adjacent to Town. • Underdeveloped waterfront area with public space core at Gil Maure Park. • Recognized as a popular location for residents, especially seniors. • Popular and highly attended community events. • Unique heritage story with tourism potential. • Two post-secondary institutions in region open to expanding collaboration with the Town. • Growing population attractive draw for retail, services and health care. • Demonstrated demand for additional restaurants. • Trails and Vollmer Complex popular with residents and visitors – underdeveloped commercial development. • Small and micro businesses underrepresented in local population – potential to grow this sector. • Strong regional growth sectors in Windsor CMA providing employment and spinoff opportunities for LaSalle. • Retail and service businesses underrepresented in the community. • Potential for sports tourism and fixed roof accommodation. • Opportunities to align with the regional (Windsor CMA) growth sectors (i.e. post-secondary education). • Positive momentum with the development of Malden Town Centre. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 1,000 acres of vacant shovel-ready industrial land elsewhere in Windsor-Essex – highly competitive regional real estate market. • Short-term availability of residential lots in competing communities (i.e. Lakeshore) discouraging developer investment in LaSalle. • Future growth opportunities in the Town's greenfield area are dependent on the construction of new storm drainage. • Growth itself could change the character and positive attributes of the Town. • Business costs in general seem to be rising. • The 'distance' from Toronto. • Competition with Windsor. People have established shopping and services patterns. • The very high commuting rate means greater reliance on regional economy and other factors. • Windsor CMA still highly reliant on manufacturing which is exposed to international competition. • A lack of immigrants to the Town when this is essentially the only source of population growth across Ontario. • Dependent on residential taxes with minimal non-residential development. • LaSalle lacks a distinct brand for its economic development marketing purposes.



Strategic Priorities

Based on a full review of LaSalle's demographic, economic, infrastructure and economic development capacity environment, there are three overarching themes the community needs to address to ensure it continues to grow and strengthen its commercial and industrial economic base. These three priority areas are: Capacity, Connection and Focus.

	Capacity	Strengthening economic development capacity with dedicated staff resources and budget, investment in infrastructure and targeted incentives.
	Connection	Building community and business networks as well as regional partnerships.
	Focus	Targeting high potential opportunities and sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development nodes – waterfront development, commercial districts• Investment attraction strategy• Leverage quality of life for residential attraction and development

Capacity

The Town of LaSalle has been very supportive of commercial development and has developed incentives to encourage various kinds of economic activity. Businesses interviewed during the development of this Economic Development Plan were impressed by the quality of support they received from the Town including from the CAO and Mayor. If the municipality develops its staff resources, it will be important to maintain senior staff and elected officials' involvement in development activity. Smaller communities such as LaSalle have the ability to do this and it can be very beneficial.

The Town wants to be more proactive in its efforts to attract industry and commercial activity. A more focused effort will require strengthening economic development capacity within Town Hall, strategic infrastructure investments and ensuring the appropriate incentives to attract new investment.



As outlined in the Best Practices Review, municipalities the size of LaSalle will typically invest between 0.4 and one percent of annual spending on economic development⁴ or between \$5 and \$20 per capita. A common benchmark is five to six economic development staff per 100,000 population. For LaSalle, this ratio would represent approximately two full time equivalent positions dedicated to economic development.

In order to strengthen its economic development capacity, the Town will need dedicated staff and a budget as well as continued senior staff engagement and focus.

Return on Investment: Economic Development

Increased spending on economic development should be viewed as an investment that will over time lead to increased economic activity and municipal tax revenue and therefore a return on that investment (ROI). Unlike most municipal costs that are tied to specific services for residents, economic development spending is meant to grow the tax base that supports other investments in high quality public services and public infrastructure.

Taking advantage of available provincial and regional economic development funding and private sector support is part of the return on investment calculation. There are multiple provincial government funding programs that could be used to support economic development in LaSalle. As an example, the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) has several programs that provide funding to support sector development, economic development-related infrastructure and entrepreneurship. If the Town is able to work with the business community to establish a business improvement area (BIA), it will provide additional private sector funding to strengthen the community's economic development potential.

Connections

The Town of LaSalle benefits from being part of a larger metropolitan area and from its proximity to the United States. There are a number of regional agencies promoting economic development, tourism development, startup firms, business networks and workforce development in Windsor-Essex and southwestern Ontario. It is important to leverage these regional organizations and ensure LaSalle is maximizing the benefit of these groups.

The Town of LaSalle cannot expect the regional economic development-related organizations to dedicate an outsized amount of their time and effort to the interests of LaSalle. By definition, these organizations tend to focus on bigger picture issues and more 'regional' efforts. But, as an important municipality (close to 10 percent of the metropolitan area population) the Town should look to ensure it is benefiting from their efforts. It should be deliberate in its efforts to work with these organizations.

⁴ There are some communities investing well above one percent of annual spending



Partner Organization	Engagement (examples)
Windsor Essex Economic Development Corporation	Help with startup and entrepreneurship support. Provide regional data, statistics and market intelligence. Ensure LaSalle is part of the promotion of the region to national and international investors.
Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island	Support for tourism promotion and product development related initiatives.
University of Windsor	R&D opportunities in the Town, startup entrepreneurship support activities, student workforce.
St. Clair College	R&D opportunities in the Town, startup entrepreneurship support activities, student workforce.
Workforce Windsor-Essex	Labour market information (LMI), targeted training and workforce development initiatives.
Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce	Exposing business leaders across the region to LaSalle's growth plans and targeted sectors. Engaging on strategic initiatives.
Business Resource Centre of Essex County (BRC)	Encouraging LaSalle businesses to access BRC programs and services, tracking the number of LaSalle businesses supported by the BRC.
WEtech Alliance	Supporting startup tech firms in LaSalle.

LaSalle Business Improvement Area

It is important to engage the business community locally. Establishing a Business Improvement Area would provide LaSalle businesses with a platform to work collaboratively to create vibrant commercial nodes/districts. The Town needs to identify business leaders to act as champions to build support and local capacity for the establishment of local business improvement areas.



Focus

With limited human and financial resources, it is important to focus the Town's economic development efforts. This focus starts with a geographic focus, concentrating development activity in specific development nodes and investing in the infrastructure to support growth. These development nodes include Malden Town Centre, the Waterfront District, potentially the Outlet Mall area and, in the longer term, the region around the Vollmer Complex.

The Town needs to focus its investment attraction efforts on those sectors with the greatest potential for investment. Through the economic analysis and consultation, this plan has made recommendations on the industries with the potential for growth and the development of a targeted value proposition and marketing campaign to attract investment. This analysis included local services for which residents now have to leave the community to access and it can include specific opportunities leveraging assets in the community. As a start, three value proposition/business case documents have been prepared as part of this Economic Development Plan to support focused investment attraction for restaurants, professional services and home décor and related services and businesses to support the growing residential market.

LaSalle should also work to leverage its quality of life assets for continued residential development and to grow its tourism potential. The focus on quality of life includes investing in walking/cycling trails, better signage and community events leveraging the region's heritage and local culture.

Best Practices




A review of best practices provides an opportunity to learn from other communities that have demonstrated success in addressing similar prospects or challenges. The Town of LaSalle identified the following five areas for further study to help inform the establishment of its economic development goals, objectives and actions.

- Economic Development Capacity
- Commercial Attraction
- Leveraging Quality of Place
- Incentives
- Business Improvement Areas (BIAs)
- Waterfront Development



Economic Development Capacity

The following benchmarks represent funding and staffing norms for small and medium sized municipalities, excluding tourism based, on an evaluation of municipalities in Ontario and across Canada.

	Staff	3 to 10 per 100,000 Average 5-6 staff per 100,000
	Share of municipal budget	0.4% to 1% of total budget
	Spending per capital	\$5 to \$20 per capita

Of course, municipal spending on economic development varies from very little to substantial depending on the community. Examples in Ontario include:

- St. Thomas (pop. 38,909) has two economic development staff, two in tourism and two in the Small Business Enterprise Centre.
- Bradford West Gwillimbury (pop. 35,325) has two economic development staff (Manager and Coordinator).
- Stratford (pop. 31,465) has three staff: a CEO, Managing Director and Special Projects Coordinator.
- Orangeville (pop. 28,900) has two staff: a Director (planning and economic development) and Economic Development Coordinator.
- Centre Wellington (pop. 28,191) has an Economic Development Officer and a Tourism Coordinator.
- Leamington (pop. 27,595) has two staff: a Manager, Economic Development, Tourism & Special Events and a Culture and Tourism Developer (as well as a local BIA).
- Brockville (pop. 21,346) has two staff: a Director and Economic Development Coordinator (as well as a local BIA).
- Minden Hills, Haliburton County (pop. 6,088) has one staff person: an Economic Development, Destination and Marketing Officer.

It is important to note that LaSalle invests in the Windsor Essex Economic Development Corporation (WEEDC) through a levy administered by the County of Essex. This investment is important, but it doesn't replace municipal level spending on local economic development priorities. The



WEEDC is focused on regional economic development such as attracting firms and investment to the area while LaSalle needs to be focused on economic development efforts specific to the municipality.

LaSalle is fortunate to have a suite of regional agencies promoting economic development, tourism development, startup firms, business networks and workforce development in Windsor-Essex and southern Ontario. Instead of building this capacity in the Town, it is important to leverage these regional organizations and insure LaSalle is maximizing the benefit of these groups.

A collaborative relationship with regional partners will allow LaSalle to support and benefit from regional economic development efforts while ensuring that the Town is poised to take advantage of local opportunities.

Further, it is important to point out there is significant economic development capacity in regional organizations that LaSalle can better leverage. Instead of building this capacity in the Town, it is important to leverage these regional organizations and insure LaSalle is maximizing the benefit of these groups. A collaborative relationship with regional partners will allow LaSalle to support and benefit from regional economic development efforts while ensuring that the Town is poised to take advantage of local opportunities. These partners include: Windsor Essex Economic Development Corporation (WEEDC), Business Resource Centre of Essex County (BRC), Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island, WEtech Alliance, Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Workforce Windsor-Essex, among others.



Local economic development functions are detailed below:

Function	Best Practice
Economic Development Plan	A formal economic development plan to guide municipal economic development activities and budget.
Community Marketing	<p>The regional economic development organization is typically responsible for the national and international marketing.</p> <p>Key elements of municipal economic marketing include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good quality promotional materials (print and digital).• Significant social media presence – relatively low cost, can be good visibility (ensure appropriate tagging, reach and share).• ‘Earned media’ in local, provincial and national media.• Highly targeted marketing efforts to attract specific industries, residents, tourists, etc.
Investment Attraction	<p>Formal investment attraction efforts rest with the regional economic development organization including profiles of the communities within the region with materials supplied by the local municipality.</p> <p>The typical municipal focus is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attracting local retail and services.• Ensuring the municipality is prepared for prospective investors.• Utilizing local business leaders as ambassadors.
BR&E	<p>BR&E programs provide a good understanding of the specific challenges and opportunities faced by the local community. BR&E efforts can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual surveys of business.• Corporate visitation programs.• Hosting networking events and seminars.• Specific incentives to encourage expansion among existing firms.• Newsletters on development and opportunities in the community.• Working groups on specific issues of concern or interest.• Attracting specific firms or people in support of the local business community.• Infrastructure development (broadband, etc.).• Online business directories.
Sector Development	At the municipal level these activities focus on sectors that are not addressed at other levels such as retail and services.



Function	Best Practice
Supporting Startup Companies	Organizations such as the Essex Community Futures Development Corporation, the WEtech Alliance and WEEDC all have programming to encourage new firm creation and support their growth. Municipalities support regional activities; celebrate new business startups; share information on opportunities and programs that impact small business growth and share local success stories.
Talent Development	Regional organizations are typically responsible for identifying workforce needs. As workforce shortages are becoming a barrier to growth, municipalities are working closer with Workforce Development agencies to ensure local needs are reflected in regional efforts and local businesses are accessing available services.
Immigrant Attraction	Municipalities typically focus on immigrant supportive policies, promotional materials reflecting immigrant needs and ensuring the Town is on the radar for immigrants looking to move into the region.
Industrial/Commercial Land Development	Land development is a primary function of municipalities. Municipalities ensure there is enough available land in strategically important locations to achieve their development objectives and support expedited development processes.
Town Centre Development	Many communities have a specific strategy to develop their downtown with incentives and programs to encourage development. The use of Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) and the use of incentives to attract business are both addressed later in this report.
Incentive Programs	The establishment and implementation of incentive programs is a primary function of municipalities. It is addressed in detail later in this report.
Advocacy	Municipalities are typically involved in advocacy with the various levels of government to address infrastructure development, zoning/planning, and economic development-related decisions.

Commercial Attraction

The main elements needed to attract commercial activity are:

- A vibrant town centre
- User friendly permitting
- Available capital and land
- Infrastructure and ongoing management and maintenance.

Best practice communities provide clearly defined targeted commercial activity and build a business case for that investment. Economic development focused municipalities provide concierge services to help prospective firms get all the information needed to make their decision, they focus on targeted promotion of opportunities, sectors and specific firms and provide a suite of incentives to encourage specific kinds of commercial development.



Leveraging Quality of Place

Quality of place can include a variety of positive attributes that tie people to the community including:

- **Heritage** (e.g. Brantford, site of the first-ever long-distance telephone call)
- **Historically significant places** (e.g. Dresden, site of the black settlement referenced in the novel “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”)
- **Geography** (e.g. Rondeau Provincial Park, one of only a few places in Ontario to see the prothonotary warbler)
- **Historical industries** (e.g. Windsor, where Hiram Walker Distillery was established)
- **Natural resources** (e.g. Leamington, tomato capital of Canada)
- **Famous people** (e.g. Orillia, home of Stephen Leacock)

Best practice communities leverage their quality of place and cultural/heritage to enhance the quality of life for residents and boost tourism.

Incentives

Municipalities use a variety of tools to promote or incent investment including the following incentives:

- Community Improvement Plan related incentives including:
 - Façade Improvement Grants
 - Architecture/Renovation, Site Design, and Signage Grants
 - Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) Phase 1 and/or Phase 2 Grants
 - Property Tax Increment Grants (most common form is Brownfield TIGs)
- Non-Community Improvement Plan Related Incentives
 - Planning Fee Exemptions
 - Development Charge Exemptions
 - Economic Development Investment Funds

Municipal financial incentives work best when they build upon an identified market trend or opportunity and locations with demonstrated market interest. Development charge exemptions or reductions such as those offered by the Town of LaSalle can be a significant factor in influencing investment decisions when combined with other positive locational attributes and/or financial incentives.



Business Improvement Areas

Business Improvement Areas (BIA) are established by municipalities to oversee the improvement of a specified geographic area within a community.

Common examples of BIA activities include:

Beautification: Lighting, signage, street furniture, planters, banners, sidewalk treatments and seasonal décor.

Revitalization and Maintenance: Brownfield redevelopment, façade restoration, graffiti removal, enhanced street cleaning, garbage receptacles.

Marketing and Promotion: Shop local initiatives, marketing and promotion activities.

Business Recruitment: Ensure available space is occupied, work to achieve an optimum business and service mix.

Communication: Act as the voice for the business community, establish relationships with other community stakeholders, provide feedback for Council issues, convey community concerns to Council.

There are nine BIAs operating in the City of Windsor and five BIAs in the remainder of Essex County. The following table provides a summary of the BIAs in Essex County. LaSalle is the only municipality in Essex County that does not have either a BIA or Chamber.

Community/Name	Population	Members	Levy	Staff	Board Size	Chamber
LaSalle	30,180					No
Amherstburg	21,936					Yes
Essex Centre	20,427	200	unknown	1 PT	9	No
Kingsville	21,552	160	\$100,000	1 FT	12	No
Lakeshore/ Belle River on the Lake	36,611	145	\$116,850	1 PT	10	No
Leamington Uptown BIA	27,595	200	\$98,660	1 PT	11	Yes
Tecumseh	23,229	400	\$109,000	1 FT, 1 PT.	9	No



Waterfront Development

Best practices in waterfront development balance the needs of current and future residents and visitors, protect the environmental quality of the waterfront and preserve working waterfronts. Best practices in waterfront development adheres to the following tenants:

Location specific	Creating a distinctive waterfront that demonstrates local culture, history, assets and values.
Connected	Connecting waterfront destinations and adjacent neighbourhoods, reinforcing perpendicular streets and connections.
Public	Ensuring public access to the waterfront.
Multifunctional	Incorporating a variety of commercial and residential uses all day and all year long including seasonal activities.
Multimodal	Supporting a variety of transportation modes including walking, cycling, transit, cars and boats


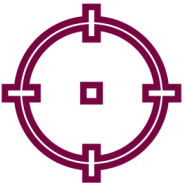


Vision and Mission

This Economic Development Plan envisions a future where the Town of LaSalle has a mix of housing, jobs, services and community infrastructure that meets the daily needs of its residents. In this future, the Town has established the financial and staff resources required to sustain a robust economic development program. It is effectively identifying and addressing business needs, identifying priority investment sectors and proactively working to attract that investment to the community.

Residents and businesses in LaSalle are benefitting from an increasing share of the regional economic activity. Economic growth is balanced with residents' desire to protect the character of their small community. A growing share of commercial taxes have shifted some of the tax burden away from residents.

Residents have a broader range of local retail and service options and employment opportunities in LaSalle. Planning processes meet or exceed the speed and certainty needs of the development community. The business community is actively engaged in networking, economic development and promotional programming to create a supportive environment for businesses.

	Vision
	Economic growth that builds on and supports LaSalle's exceptional quality of life.
	Mission
	To grow LaSalle's economy through deliberate action, building economic development capacity and forging regional and community connections.



Goals and Objectives

	Goal	Objective
1	A vibrant local economy, with an adequate shovel-ready land supply	Invest in the infrastructure, tools, resources, programs that provide the foundation for continued growth and economic development activity.
2	A vibrant waterfront district	Establish LaSalle's waterfront as a destination for recreation, higher density residential, mixed-uses, commercial and tourism activity.
3	A supportive planning environment	Strengthen and formalize the connection between economic development, land use, transportation and infrastructure planning to facilitate and encourage business investment.
4	Targeted investment attraction and support	Attract new services and other business investment, diversify tax revenues and increase services and jobs in LaSalle.
5	Business community engagement/collaboration	Harness the power of the business community to establish LaSalle as a dynamic centre of commercial activity.

Economic Development Capacity

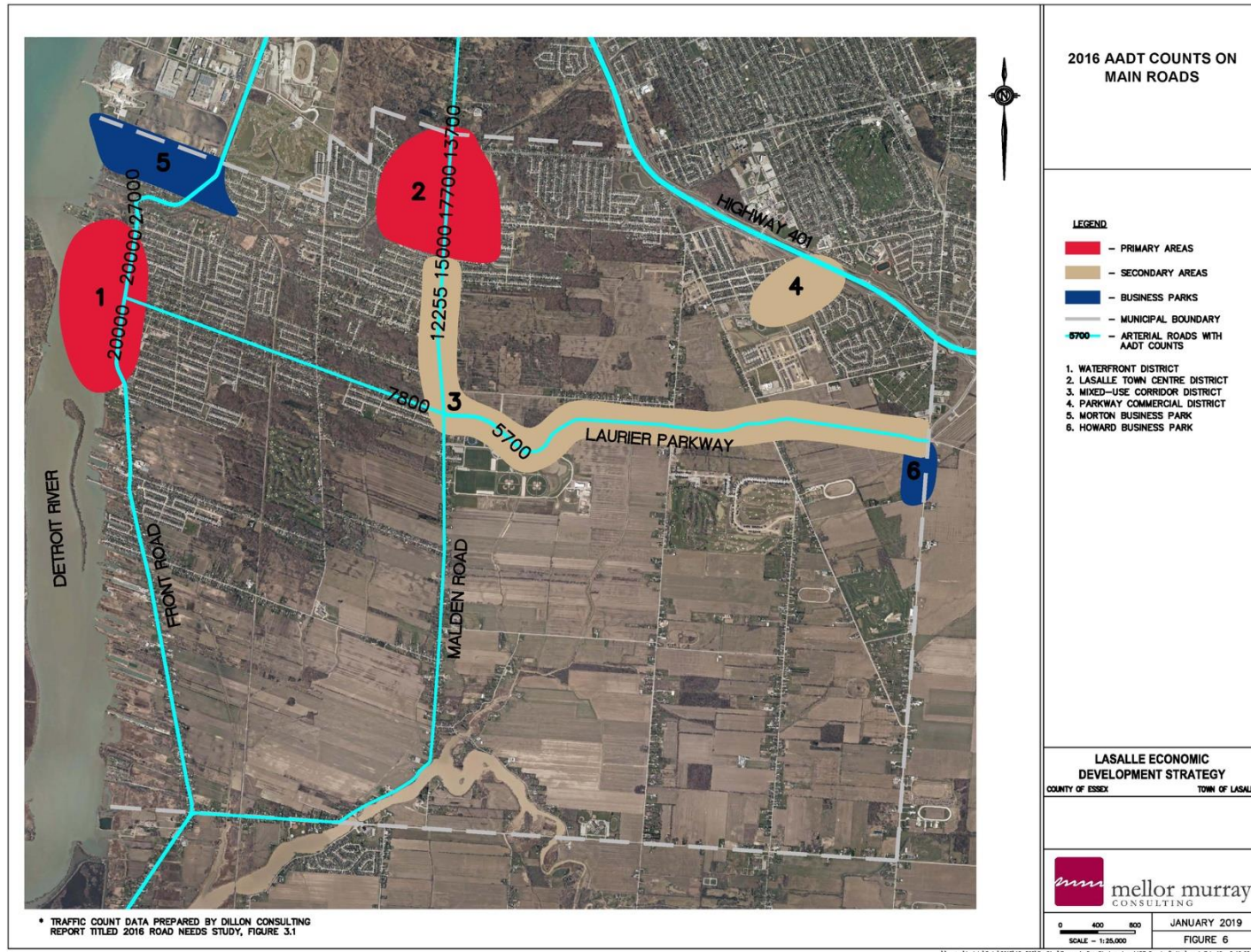
This Economic Development Plan is focused on strengthening the environment for economic activity in the Town and building the capacity to ensure its economic development potential is realized. There are eight actions under this goal that will help the Town reach the goal of a vibrant local economy with an adequate supply of shovel-ready land.

All these actions assume that LaSalle has a staff member dedicated to implementing the economic development plan, coordinating the Town and community efforts and working with regional stakeholders.

Figure 7 is a conceptual illustration of the Primary and Secondary areas of future commercial and mixed-use development in LaSalle. The Primary Areas include the LaSalle Town Centre and the Waterfront District, while the Secondary Areas include the Mixed-Use Corridor between the LaSalle Town Centre to - and including - the Vollmer Recreation District and the Parkway Commercial District. All of these areas are designated for commercial and/or mixed-use development in the existing and 2018 Council-adopted Official Plans, are located on or near highways or arterial roads with relatively high traffic volumes, and are supported by public transit service (i.e., Transit Route 25).



Figure 7: Priority Areas for Future Commercial and Mixed-Use Development with Traffic Counts on Main Roads





The Primary Areas are expected to evolve over time to become the Town's two major nodes. This expectation is supported by recent investor interest and comments received from LaSalle residents and business owners through the community engagement process. The Secondary Areas are also important nodes that will evolve over time, but the expectation here is that change may be slower and/or of a lesser quantum of investment until such time as development constraints in the Bouffard and Howard Districts are resolved.

The Bouffard and Howard drainage plan is key to the community's long-term economic development by ensuring there is available, zoned and serviced land for both residential and non-residential investment.

LaSalle must ensure economic development is a priority in the LaSalle Corporate/Community Strategic Plan and provide funding and support for proactive economic development activities. There are many options for residential and commercial development across the Windsor metropolitan area. The other towns adjacent to the City of Windsor are also competing to attract investment as are other communities in the wider area. It is important for LaSalle to be competitive and focused if it wants to maintain its position as a growing, dynamic and prosperous municipality. This investment in economic development can be staged over several years.

LaSalle's Economic Development Plan is focused on attracting and retaining Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) investment and talent. However, it is also imperative that the plan recognize the importance of residential development in ensuring the future economic health of the community.

The most significant form of recent real estate investment in most Canadian downtowns, waterfronts and transit corridors has been mixed-use (i.e. multi-storey residential buildings with complementary ground floor retail and office uses, and free-standing multi-storey residential buildings. The residential component is actually driving most of the ICI investment.

Examples of smaller Ontario communities where this pattern is occurring include Cobourg, Collingwood, Grimsby, Kingston, Mount Forest, Penetanguishene, Port Hope, Port Dover, Saugeen Shores, and Wasaga Beach. In LaSalle's case, much of the Town's future development is planned to occur in the LaSalle Town Center, the Waterfront District and the Mixed-Use Corridor along Malden Avenue and the Laurier Parkway. Residential development will be a critical component of much of the new development.

Funding and construction of the trunk infrastructure identified in the Master Drainage Plan is one of the most important infrastructure investments required to support long-term economic development. This public and private sector investment will help ensure there is enough physical space for growth in the years ahead. The Town should make a strong case to both the provincial and federal government that a strong and vibrant LaSalle is important for the economy in southwestern Ontario. It should demonstrate that their investment in LaSalle's infrastructure will help ensure the Windsor metropolitan area will continue to grow, generating incremental tax revenues for all three levels of government. Other government funding through FedDev (federal) and provincial departments⁵ should be leveraged to support economic development programming.

⁵ For example, Ontario's Rural Economic Development Fund which is available to municipalities with less than 100,000 population.



It is important for LaSalle to expand its commercial activity to ensure residents have access to local services and to diversify the Town's sources of property tax revenue. The development of a business retention and expansion program (BR&E) will help the Town determine the barriers to local firm growth and identify new opportunities.

Finally, LaSalle can ensure it leverages the work of regional economic development organizations such as the Windsor Essex Economic Development Corporation, Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island, University of Windsor, St. Clair College, Workforce Windsor-Essex and the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce. It will be important to identify specific initiatives where these organizations can play a role supporting the LaSalle Economic Development Plan while recognizing that they service a wider region.

Goal 1	A vibrant local economy, with an adequate shovel-ready land supply.
Objective	Invest in the infrastructure, tools, resources, programs that provide the foundation for continued growth and economic development activity.

Actions:

1. Ensure there is sufficient shovel-ready residential and commercial land by completing, funding and implementing the Bouffard and Howard drainage plan in partnership with the private sector.
2. Facilitate and support the creation of and maintenance of an adequate supply of vacant residential and non-residential properties.
3. Establish economic development as a pillar in the LaSalle Corporate/Community Strategic Plan.
4. Provide permanent funding for economic development programming and strategic infrastructure investments.
5. Complete the Master Drainage Plan for the Town's largest remaining greenfield area, and partner with the major landowners/developers to secure the necessary funding and cost-sharing agreements to construct the required trunk infrastructure improvements.
6. Leverage other sources of funding to support economic development programming, and assist with major infrastructure renewal and expansions.
7. Develop a business retention and expansion program with a focus on retail, manufacturing and service businesses, restaurants, and other commercial activities that serve the needs of a growing urban community.
8. Leverage regional economic development organizations and activities to ensure LaSalle is aligned with regional efforts and local benefits are maximized.



A Vibrant Waterfront District

LaSalle's waterfront has tremendous potential as a mixed-use district. The Town has taken initial steps in this direction through the development of Gil Maure Park and the recent acquisition of the adjacent Westport Marina property. The actions associated with the Waterfront District Goal are intended to identify and support the "next step" of creating and implementing a comprehensive community planning process for the Waterfront District. A comprehensive community engagement process to create a Waterfront District Master Plan that identifies an appropriate mix of land uses (e.g. recreation, residential, commercial and tourism) and addresses considerations such as transportation, infrastructure, cultural heritage, environmental, and natural heritage will be key to achieving a vibrant waterfront district. Once complete, the Master Plan should be complemented by a Waterfront District Community Improvement Plan (CIP). The waterfront CIP will allow the Town to undertake environmental remediation, develop financial incentives and apply for funding from senior levels of government.

Goal 2	A vibrant waterfront district.
Objective	Establish LaSalle's waterfront as a destination for recreation, higher density residential, mixed-use, commercial and tourism activity.

Actions:

1. Develop a master plan for the Waterfront District as outlined in the Official Plan. The plan would address appropriate land uses such as recreation, residential, commercial and tourism activity and include transportation, infrastructure, environmental and natural heritage considerations.
2. Ensure comprehensive engagement of residents and other community stakeholders in the creation and implementation of the Waterfront District Master Plan.
3. Consider the establishment of a Waterfront CIP to support the implementation of the Waterfront District Master Plan.



Supportive Planning Environment

LaSalle has a solid record of supporting economic development. Examples include the recently adopted new Official Plan, the Howard/Bouffard Master Drainage Study to ensure an adequate supply of developable lots and plans to commence a comprehensive update of the Town's existing zoning by-law. There are opportunities to further strengthen and formalize the connection between planning and economic development to facilitate and encourage business investment. The actions associated with the Supportive Planning Environment Goal are intended to further strengthen and formalize the connection between planning and economic development to facilitate and encourage business investment. Particular attention is paid to better aligning the Town's community planning and master planning initiatives and improving customer service to prospective investors. The Town should review existing community plans and master plans to ensure they align with the new Economic Development Plan. They should develop Community Improvement Plans for the LaSalle Town Centre and the Waterfront District. A simple but highly effective action will be to make development approval process information on the Town's website easy to access, read and understand through the use of graphic design. It should also ensure that the Town consistently provides customer-oriented service to prospective investors.

Goal 3	A supportive planning environment.
Objective	Strengthen and formalize the connection between economic development, land use, transportation and infrastructure planning to facilitate and encourage business investment.

Actions:

1. Align all community planning and infrastructure master plans with the Economic Development Plan.
2. Complete a comprehensive zoning by-law update to implement the new LaSalle Official Plan and facilitate the development process.
3. Create a Community Improvement Plan for the LaSalle Town Centre.
 - a. Incorporate targeted development charge reductions or exemptions for specific targeted investment (e.g. new multi-storey mixed-use development).
 - b. Consider financial incentive grants for improvements to existing buildings and sites (e.g. public amenities, pedestrian-oriented design, signage).
4. Provide development approval process and timing information on the Town's website using easy to read and understand graphic design.
5. Provide one-on-one service for investors throughout the development process, making it as customer-centred and streamlined as possible.



Targeted Investment Attraction and Support

LaSalle's ability to attract business investment is fundamental to the success of the LaSalle Economic Development Plan. This effort must be led by the Town with the support of the business community. There is potential to partner with the Windsor Essex Economic Development Corporation on regional investment attraction activity (i.e. attracting firms into the wider urban region), but the primary opportunity for LaSalle involves attracting industries that service the local population within the municipality.

An investment attraction program targeting local services such as restaurants, professional and personal services and health care to the region will provide residents with local options rather than forcing them to leave LaSalle for these services and reducing economic 'leakage' to other municipalities. Three business case documents have been developed for this Economic Development Plan outlining the value proposition for restaurants, professional and personal services (including legal, insurance, health care and financial institutions), and building supply, home furnishing, home improvement, home décor and other similar businesses that cater to LaSalle's existing and growing residential market.

As discussed in Goal One, a BR&E program is also part of this effort, as the same business case targeting firms outside the municipality can be used to help convince local firms already in LaSalle to consider expansion.

In conjunction with the investment attraction and BR&E programs, it is important to develop a community marketing program that communicates the case for investment in LaSalle to target audiences. Creating an economic development section within the Town's website is important because the Internet is now the first place businesses go to start their search into new locations. The Town can use much of the content developed for the business case documents on its website to make a compelling case for business investment in LaSalle. In addition to the website, LaSalle will need digital and print collateral marketing materials making the case for investment.

LaSalle should also compile a wide range of relevant site selection data that can be made available to potential investors. This data set should include available land and buildings, demographic and economic data, planning and zoning data, incentives and the services available to support firms looking to invest in LaSalle.



Goal 4	Targeted investment attraction and support.
Objective	Attract new services and other business investment, diversify tax revenues and increase services and jobs in LaSalle.

Actions:

1. Develop an investment attraction program targeting professional services, restaurants and firms supporting the expanding residential housing market in LaSalle.
2. Establish a business retention and expansion program.
3. Implement a community marketing program with a focus on business expansion and attraction.
4. Create an economic development section within the LaSalle website.
5. Develop digital and print collateral marketing materials to support the marketing program.
6. Ensure LaSalle is investment ready and has compiled relevant data for potential development opportunities.

Business Community Engagement/Collaboration

A common feature of vibrant economic regions is a rich, deep network of connections. The establishment of BIAs in the LaSalle Town Centre and waterfront districts will empower businesses to work together to create an environment where commercial businesses thrive and grow. It provides an opportunity to harness the collective knowledge of the business community to focus on the infrastructure, events and promotion that will best support their business activity.

The business community will benefit from networking, workshops and events that strengthen the connection to their community and each other while supporting business to business promotion and sales. A communications strategy that targets LaSalle businesses will reinforce their connection with the Town and the LaSalle business community and provide a conduit for two-way dialogue on the policies and programs that impact business.

Equally important is the physical connection between the business districts or neighbourhoods in LaSalle. Wayfinding signage will help support movement between the business districts for residents and visitors.



Goal 5	Business community engagement/collaboration.
Objective	Harness the power of the business community to establish LaSalle as a dynamic centre of commercial activity.

Actions:

1. Consult with business owners, identify champions and build support for the establishment of Business Improvement Areas for the LaSalle Town Centre and Waterfront District.
2. Develop a communications and networking program to engage the business community in partnership events, workshops, provide feedback on programs and policies affecting business and encourage business to business collaboration.
3. Establish a signage program to encourage integration and connections between Windsor Crossing, Vollmer Centre, Town Centre and Front Road businesses.



Implementation Plan

1. A vibrant local economy, with an adequate shovel-ready land supply.	Priority	Ongoing	Start			
			Immediate	<1 year	< 3 years	3 to 5 years
Invest in the infrastructure, tools, resources, programs that provide the foundation for continued growth and economic development activity.						
1. Ensure there is sufficient shovel-ready residential and commercial land by completing, funding and implementing the Bouffard and Howard drainage plan in partnership with the private sector.	Critical		Immediate			
2. Facilitate and support the creation and maintenance of an adequate supply of vacant residential and non-residential properties.	High	Ongoing				
3. Establish economic development as a pillar in the LaSalle Corporate/Community Strategic Plan.	High	Ongoing				
4. Provide permanent funding for economic development programming, staff resources and strategic infrastructure investments.	High	Ongoing				
5. Complete the Master Drainage Plan for the Town's largest remaining greenfield area, and partner with the major landowners/developers to secure the necessary funding and cost-sharing agreements to construct the required trunk infrastructure improvements.	High		Immediate			
6. Leverage other sources of funding to support economic development programming, and assist with major infrastructure renewal and expansions.	Medium	Ongoing				
7. Develop a business retention and expansion program with a focus on retail, service businesses, restaurants, and other commercial activities that serve the needs of a growing urban community.	High					



1. A vibrant local economy, with an adequate shovel-ready land supply.	Priority	Ongoing	Start			
			Immediate	<1 year	< 3 years	3 to 5 years
8. Leverage regional economic development organizations and activities to ensure LaSalle is aligned with regional efforts and local benefits are maximized.	Medium	Ongoing				

2. A vibrant waterfront district.	Priority	Ongoing	Start			
			Immediate	<1 year	< 3 years	3 to 5 years
Establish LaSalle’s waterfront as a destination for recreation, higher density residential, mixed-use, commercial and tourism activity.						
1. Develop a master plan for the Waterfront District as outlined in the Official Plan. The plan would address appropriate land uses such as recreation, residential, commercial and tourism activity and include transportation, infrastructure, environmental and natural heritage considerations.	High					
2. Ensure comprehensive engagement of residents and other community stakeholders in the creation and implementation of the Waterfront District Master Plan.	High					
3. Consider the establishment of a Waterfront CIP to support the implementation of the Waterfront District Master Plan.	High					



3. A supportive planning environment.	Priority	Ongoing	Start			
			Immediate	<1 year	< 3 years	3 to 5 years
Strengthen and formalize the connection between economic development, land use, transportation and infrastructure planning to facilitate and encourage business investment.						
1. Incorporate economic development objectives as integral components of all community planning, transportation and infrastructure master plans.	High					
2. Complete a comprehensive zoning by-law update to implement the new LaSalle Official Plan and facilitate the development process.	High					
3. Create a Community Improvement Plan for the LaSalle Town Centre. a. Incorporate targeted development charge reductions or exemptions for specific targeted investment (e.g. new multi-storey mixed-use development). b. Consider financial incentive grants for improvements to existing buildings and sites (e.g. public amenities, pedestrian-oriented design, signage).	High					
4. Provide development approval process and timing information on the Town's website using easy to read and understand graphic design.	High					
5. Provide one-on-one service for investors throughout the development process, making it as customer-centred and streamlined as possible.	Medium	Ongoing				



4. Targeted investment attraction and support.	Priority	Ongoing	Start			
			Immediate	<1 year	< 3 years	3 to 5 years
Attract new services and other business investment, diversify tax revenues and increase services and jobs in LaSalle.						
1. Develop an investment attraction program targeting professional services, restaurants and firms supporting the expanding residential housing market in LaSalle.	High					
2. Establish a business retention and expansion program.	Critical					
3. Implement a community marketing program with a focus on business expansion and attraction.	High					
4. Create an economic development section within the LaSalle website.	Critical	Ongoing	Immediate			
5. Develop digital and print collateral marketing materials to support the marketing program.	High					
6. Ensure LaSalle is investment ready and has compiled relevant data for potential development opportunities (e.g. land/building inventory, demographics, planning processes, financing and other services required to invest and grow in LaSalle).	Critical	Ongoing				



5. Business community engagement/collaboration.	Priority	Ongoing	Start			
			Immediate	<1 year	< 3 years	3 to 5 years
Harness the power of the business community to establish LaSalle as a vibrant centre of commercial activity.						
1. Consult with business owners, identify champions and build support for the establishment of Business Improvement Areas for the LaSalle Town Centre and Waterfront District.	High					
2. Develop a communications and networking program to engage the business community in partnership events, workshops, provide feedback on programs and policies affecting business and encourage business to business collaboration.	Critical		Immediate			
3. Establish a signage program to encourage integration and connections between Windsor Crossing, Vollmer Centre, Town Centre and Front Road businesses.	Medium					