

Vanastra Revival

Honouring the Past ~ Shaping the Future



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Message from the Municipality of Huron East



The Municipality of Huron East is a unique composite of productive farmland, innovative technology, robust business districts and a medical-research & educational component, positioning itself well within competitive markets. Its natural and built heritage is unmistakable, gracefully cloaking the towns, hamlets and open countryside that complement this area offering an attractive blend of urban and country living.

Along our western border is the former Clinton Canadian Forces Base, known as Vanastra, located within the boundaries of Huron East. Comfortable residential living, recreational amenities, and a fragmented industrial park still exist, but many of the historic buildings are either gone or have fallen into disrepair accentuating the need for a revitalization strategy. However, its proximity to major transportation corridors and a healthy inventory of commercially zoned & serviced land speaks volumes to its potential to become once again, a vibrant commercial centre.

As the survey results from the Vanastra Business Retention and Expansion project become published, and the findings are reported to the business community, I trust that this document will help in re-building the community as a whole, and inject a renewed energy into its commercial area.

On behalf of the Municipality of Huron East, I want to commend our administration, the members of the BR+E Task Force and its volunteers, whose collective efforts have been the driving force behind this project. The recommendations evolving from the business surveys, and supported with an implementation plan, are expected to contribute greatly, not only to the vitality of Vanastra, but to that of the entire municipality. I believe that this document will serve us well in the future.

Equally gratifying is the partnership between the Municipality of Huron East and its funding partners, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs, the County of Huron, and the Huron Business Development Corporation. It is not only their financial support that is greatly appreciated, but the resources and encouragement they provide on an on-going basis to our municipal staff. We look forward to continuing this healthy working relationship in the years to come as we strive to improve the economy in rural Ontario.

Best regards,

Mayor **Bernie MacLellan**

Introduction

Overview of Vanastra

Governments and the military could not have known in 1941 that a freshly plowed field would eventually become a world-class training facility for leading edge technology. In answering the urgent call of Britain, Canada went above and beyond the call of duty in supplying and educating technicians and support staff for the top secret electronic science that would ultimately secure an Allied victory in World War II.

RADAR, an acronym for “Radio Detection And Ranging,” had more than proven its worth to the British who, in 1940, recognized that their staffing resources required replenishment—and fast! Nearly 1,300 Canadian radio specialists volunteered as recruits in the Royal Canadian Air Force for service overseas and left for England. But many more would be needed.

What followed was an unprecedented example of international cooperation. Royal Air Force personnel from the UK and Canadian government officials found the perfect location for a radar training base near the small town of Clinton, Ontario. The purchase of Norman Tyndall’s 100-acre farm in the spring of 1941 was indeed the start of something big.



By August the first trainees, from the US Army, Navy and Marines, arrived at RAF No. 31 Radio School, as the base was first known until 1943 when it was turned over to the RCAF and was renamed No. 5 Radio School. The first Canadian students arrived in September. From 1941 to 1945, the base would turn out over 7,000 graduates—American, British and Canadian. 5,000 Canadian radar technicians and officers educated at Clinton’s facility would serve overseas in all theatres of war. The SOS from Britain had been answered.

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Although threatened with closure following the war, No. 5 Radar School was, in fact, saved and authorized as a peacetime RCAF Signals School. Renamed Canadian Forces Base Clinton with military forces’ integration in 1966, the base experienced remarkable growth and development over the next 24 years.

Expansion technologically and sociality resulted in an excellent place to live and work, with comfortable married quarters and barracks supporting the exceptional training resources established at the base: the Radar & Communications School, the School of Food Services, and the School of Instructional Technique, to name a few. Recreational facilities were second to none, and clubs and sports teams flourished.



Opening Day of one of the two Swimming Pool on the base. Current storage yard of Hydro One.

Although, the year “1969” brought with it bad news. CFB Clinton would be declared surplus in two years. Sadly, due to Department of National Defence consolidation and a decline in the need for radar technicians, the base—then valued at 40 million 1969 dollars and covering 250 acres—was closed by 1971. Since that time, CFB Clinton, renamed Vanastra, has endured a checkered history of form and functionality.

Purchased by a developer for \$468,000, the Base was sold piece by piece to private home owners and businesses over the next several years—green space, the recreation centre and the curling club being deeded to the Township.

However, with each sale and as years passed, the lustrous history CFB Clinton became faded and mostly forgotten.



As a result of amalgamation in 2001, Vanastra became one of many communities to make up the Municipality of Huron East.

The current revitalization initiative by Huron East will honour the crucial international contribution made by CFB Clinton in the past, and includes plans to renew this once vibrant community for the future.

Executive Summary

The Municipality of Huron East initiated a Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) in Vanastra to further understand the dynamics of the local business climate and develop strategies to support the growth and development of local businesses as well as to attract new businesses to Vanastra. Much effort was taken to engage the community in the process with the belief that a healthy business environment leads to a healthy community. The project started in June of 2012 and involved 24 businesses and key representatives of community organizations. Every business and organization was given the opportunity to participate in the survey.

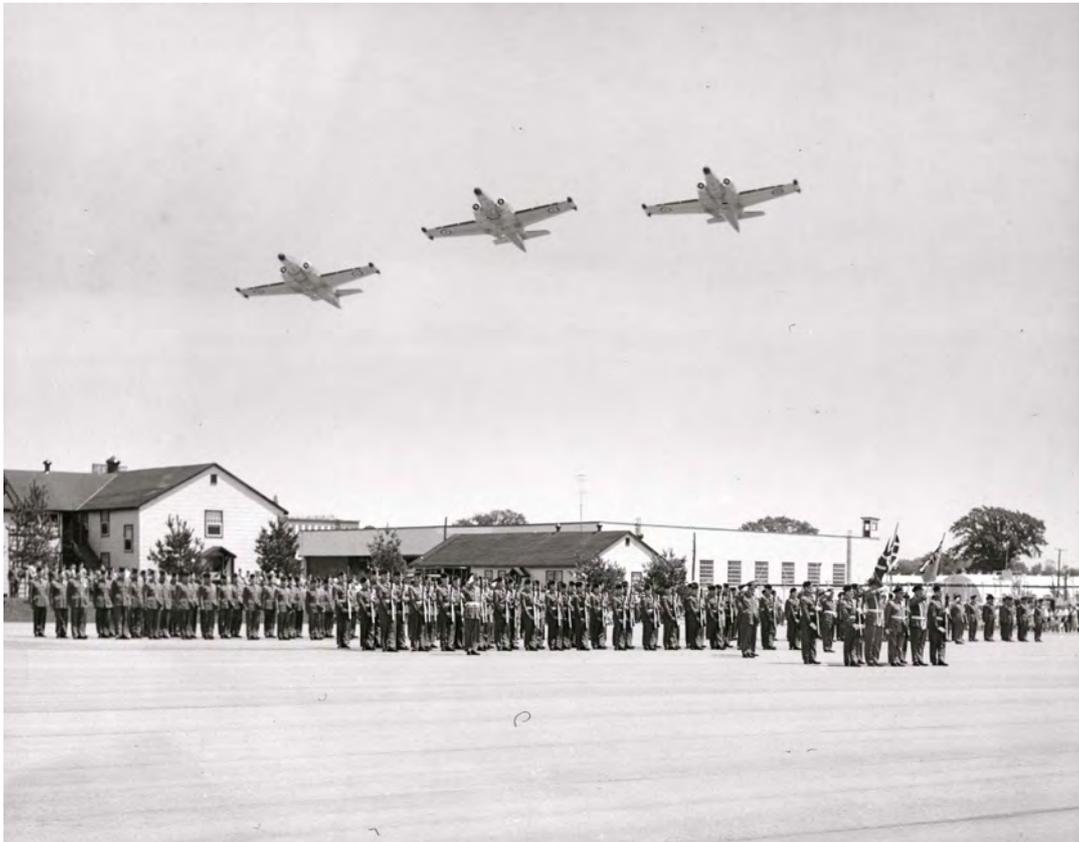
‘No matter the size of the community or municipality, community leaders are all interested in building strong vibrant local communities. Businesses and the jobs they create are critical components of strong economies’- OMAFRA quote.

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An overarching theme is that the Municipality and its partners must invest time and resources to effectively coordinate efforts in the area of economic development, and the Municipality must assume the lead role showing commitment to the process and to growing the area.

Six priority areas are clearly identified in the BR+E report and need to be addressed to encourage future growth and progress of businesses within Vanastra. This will help make Vanastra a community worth living, working and investing in;

- Improve appearance of the community
- Improve and have more effective signage
- Better marketing of the area
- Community Identity and Unity
- Small business support
- Heritage development



Air Force Day held on the Parade Grounds 1956 – Current location of large salt deposit storage area.

Several of these issues are multi-faceted with resources and support needed from many levels of government and business organizations. Certainly, the poor appearance of the community is the biggest area to be addressed and will take the largest number of resources and time to accomplish, but much success and progress can be made addressing the other priority areas and

will help give the community a renewed sense of ‘pride’. Overall, the business community and organizations in Vanastra have a positive attitude despite some obvious areas for improvement. They have a “can-do” attitude and are very willing and enthused to work with the Municipality and the County to develop the community to its full potential.

Business Retention and Expansion Project Overview

Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) is an action-oriented and community-based economic development tool that was developed by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs to encourage the growth and stability of local businesses. It offers a comprehensive interview and data gathering/analyzing process which helps to determine the viability of the local economy. It takes a unique approach of engaging the community to actively invest in the health of local businesses with the belief that a healthy business environment leads to a healthy community. BR+E promotes job growth by helping communities learn about issues, concerns of, and opportunities for local businesses and then sets priorities to address those needs.

The Vanastra BR+E project began in June 2012 with the assistance of the Municipality of Huron East Economic Development Committee, County of Huron, Huron Economic Development Partnership Committee and Ontario Ministry of Food & Rural Affairs. A total of 24 businesses and key community people participated in the project. The project is consistent with the OMAFRA program and involved direct communication with the business community and community organizations. The end result is the identification of some challenges and opportunities, which are categorized as *Priority Areas* that need to be addressed to encourage future growth and progress of businesses within Vanastra

The objectives in completing the Vanastra BR+E project were to;

- Identify the needs, concerns, and opportunities of existing local businesses and community organizations.
- Demonstrate the community’s pro-business attitude and develop an effective means of communication with local businesses.
- Build an effective partnership between local businesses and the community.
- Support the needs of the business community.
- Identify and act on key issues raised by the business community that are a disincentive to business operation/growth.
- Have the community actively involved in economic development. In turn, this survey information will be used to plan future economic development activities.

A Task Force Team, formed June 2012, guided the process and was an invaluable resource for generating awareness of the BR+E project and gaining community and business support. The Vanastra BR+E project conducted a cross-sector Business Retention and Expansion survey from October 2012 to December 2012. Every business and community organization was given the opportunity to participate in the survey.

The survey questions were comprised of the following sections:

- Retention Survey
- Local Community Specific Sector (Manufacturing, Retail)
- Community Questions

The average length of time for the one-on one interviews that were conducted took between 1.5-2 hours per person.

This project utilized the OMAFRA Rural Economic Development secure web-based tool “Executive Pulse” to manage the data collected.

Vanastra BR+E Project Team

A special thank you to the dedicated members of the Task Force Team for its assistance, and commitment to the project.

Vanastra BR+E Task Force Team

- Tom Costello, Business Person
- Heather De Jong, Business Owner
- Stephen Oud, Business Owner
- Jason Oud, Business Owner
- Andrew Oud, Business Owner
- Andy Phillips, Business Owner/ Resident
- Diane Ryan, Business Person/Resident
- Jim Ryan, President Lions Club/Resident
- Les Falconer, Municipal Councillor
- Andrew Flowers, Municipal Councillor
- Lissa Berard, Manager – Vanastra Recreation Centre
- Tammy Martene, Manager – Tuckersmith Day Care
- Jane Muegge, Economic Development Advisor, OMAFRA
- Douglas Barill, Economic Development Coordinator, County of Huron

BR+E Co-coordinators

- Nancy Ross, Economic Development Consultant
- Jan Hawley, Economic Development Officer- Municipality of Huron East

Vanastra BR+E Interviewers

- Nancy Ross
- Jan Hawley

Vanastra Data Entry

- Debra Anderson

Profile of Businesses Surveyed

Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) projects offer an opportunity to either survey a cross-section of community businesses or to focus on a specific sector(s). A modified approach was used that would provide a cross-section profile of the key sectors contributing to the economy, namely manufacturing and retail. In addition, a number of key individuals representing community organizations were interviewed.

The surveys were conducted under an agreement of anonymity and confidentiality to ensure those being surveyed would be able to provide their comments and suggestions in an unbiased environment. Also, those being surveyed were able to skip any question that they couldn't or didn't want to answer.

Survey numbers

Total number of surveys completed: 24

Retention survey completed: 24

Vanastra and Area survey completed: 23

Retail survey completed: 16

Manufacturing survey completed: 6

One business completed only the Retention and Vanastra & Area Survey and one business completed only the Retention Survey.

Retention Survey Results

Company Information

Which of the following best describes your business?

Responses	Number	%
Corporation	3	13%
Sole Proprietorship	4	17%
Non-Profit Corporation	2	8%
Limited Liability Corporation	5	21%
Limited Liability Partnership	1	4%
Partnership	2	8%
Home-based business	1	4%
Other (Specify)	6	25%
Total	24	100%

Other (Specify): Key Community Representatives

How many years has your company been in operation in this community?

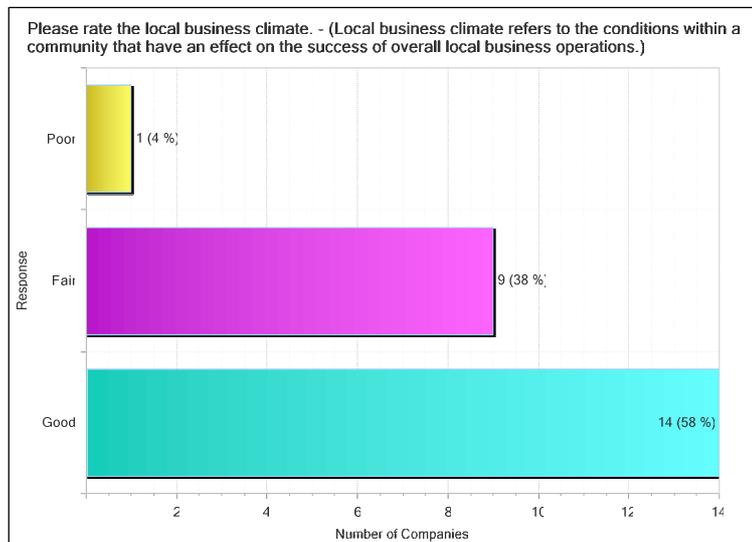
Responses	Number	%
Less than 1 year	1	4%
1 to 3 years	1	4%
4 to 10 years	3	13%
11 to 25 years	8	35%
26 to 35 years	4	17%
Over 35 years	6	26%
Total	23	100%

How many employees work at this location?

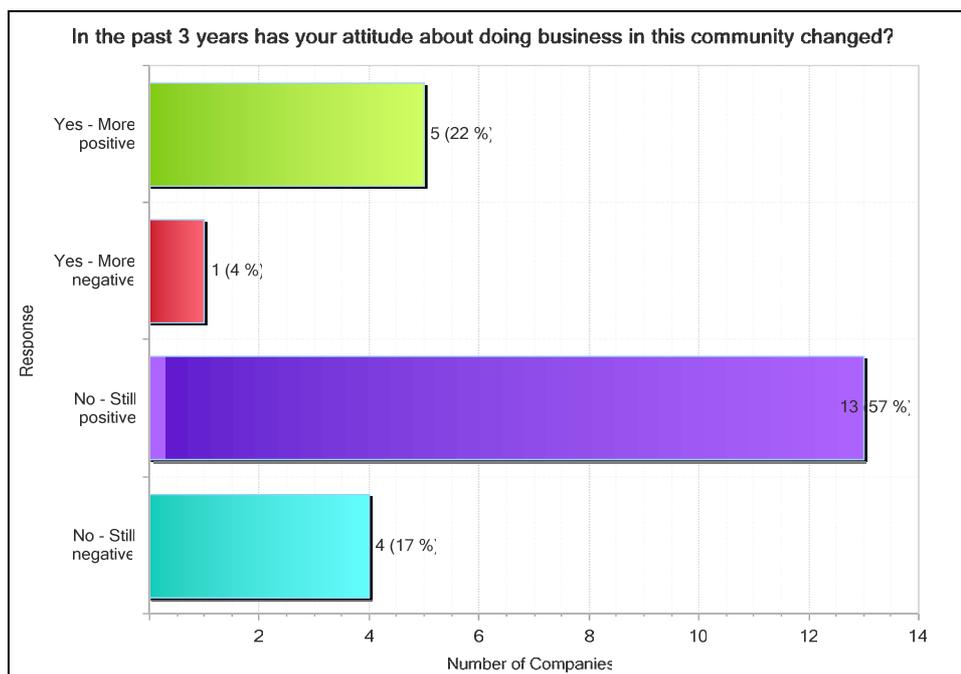
Responses	Number	%
1 - 4	8	40%
5 - 9	7	35%
10 - 14	3	15%
20 - 29	1	5%
100 - 299	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Business Climate

The Business Climate portion of the survey reviewed the climate for doing business in Vanastra. It covered the respondent’s perception of the climate and factors, which facilitate/hamper the development of business in the village. They were also asked to assess, over the course of the last 3 years, whether their opinion had remained the same or grown more, or less, negative or positive.



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Reasons given for being positive included: location of office works well as it is central to county, municipal support has been good and municipality has been easy to work with, good customer base, local variety store started up, recreation centre improving and more new house construction. On the other hand, there were some who were negative as they little assistance or support has been given by the municipality to improve the situation.

Survey respondents were asked their opinions on opportunities and challenges facing the local business climate and specific recommendations to improve the local business climate

What is the biggest opportunity for the local business climate in the community?

Many of the responses included the following: availability of serviced industrial land, good utilities available – hydro, water, sewer and natural gas, good access off a major highway, location is fairly central, affordable housing, reasonable tax rate, available space for rent/lease, low rent and property costs, good relationship with municipality, available workforce.

One respondent emphasized that this was an opportunity to rejuvenate the community by recruiting and getting new businesses that take pride in their building/surroundings. Another thought that Vanastra should be made into a senior’s community and provide the appropriate services that are needed for this target group as they are already providing recreational services to several nursing homes and seniors in the area – therapeutic exercises and pool services.

What is the biggest challenge facing the local business climate in this community?

Many of the responses included the following: poor appearance of community – detracts from businesses locating here and detracts from attracting clients, stigma associated with name ‘Vanastra’ and outside negative perception of Vanastra, prohibitive cost to upgrade buildings if

decide to rent or buy buildings in state of disrepair, address cannot be found on GPS, getting skilled employees in a specialized field of work, many derelict buildings– expense of taking them down and the necessary cleanup needed, zoning could be an issue if a business wishes to expand as some industrial areas as close to residential properties, distance from larger centers so increased transportation costs.

What are your specific recommendations to improve the local business climate?

Many of the responses included the following: improve appearance of community by cleaning up debris and tearing down derelict buildings, improve signage, industrial sign with name of business and where located, better and more aggressive marketing of the area as need to bring more quality industry and business into Vanastra, need support and encouragement from municipality – tax incentives to improve property and keep taxes low, address issue needs to be resolved as truckers need to be able to locate by GPS, more communication between businesses - business networking sessions, effective directional signage, need to celebrate the history of Vanastra and its historic features, instill pride of ownership in both business owners and resident owners, develop a truck route and entrance.

There were a number of recommendations about Vanastra getting an identity of their own as no one recognizes who they are or where they are located.

Describe the barriers to expansion of existing and new business in the community?

Top Barriers

The top seven from each category are listed.

Existing business	New business
1. Availability of skilled labour	Availability of skilled labour
2. Lack of proactive new business recruitmt	Lack of proactive new business recruitment
3. Availability of space for rent or lease	Availability of space for rent or lease
4. Security/policing & fire service	Security/policing & fire service
5. Utilities: Cost	Availability of training opportunities
6. Availability of unskilled labour	Availability of unskilled labour
7. Availability of training opportunities	Utilities: Cost

It should be noted that those indicating security/policing & fire service pointed out that it was security/policing that was the barrier as they felt fire services was adequate.

Have you accessed any Federal or Provincial programs/services with the past 2 years?

Responses	Number	%
Yes	8	40%
No	12	60%
Total	20	100%

Are you planning on accessing any Federal or Provincial programs/services?

Responses	Number	%
Yes	7	37%
No	12	63%
Total	19	100%

Would you like to receive any information on Federal or Provincial programs/services?

Responses	Number	%
Yes	8	44%
No	10	56%
Total	18	100%

Information was requested for home renovation and energy fit programs, small business assistance initiatives, export assistance programs, apprenticeship programs and accessibility programs.

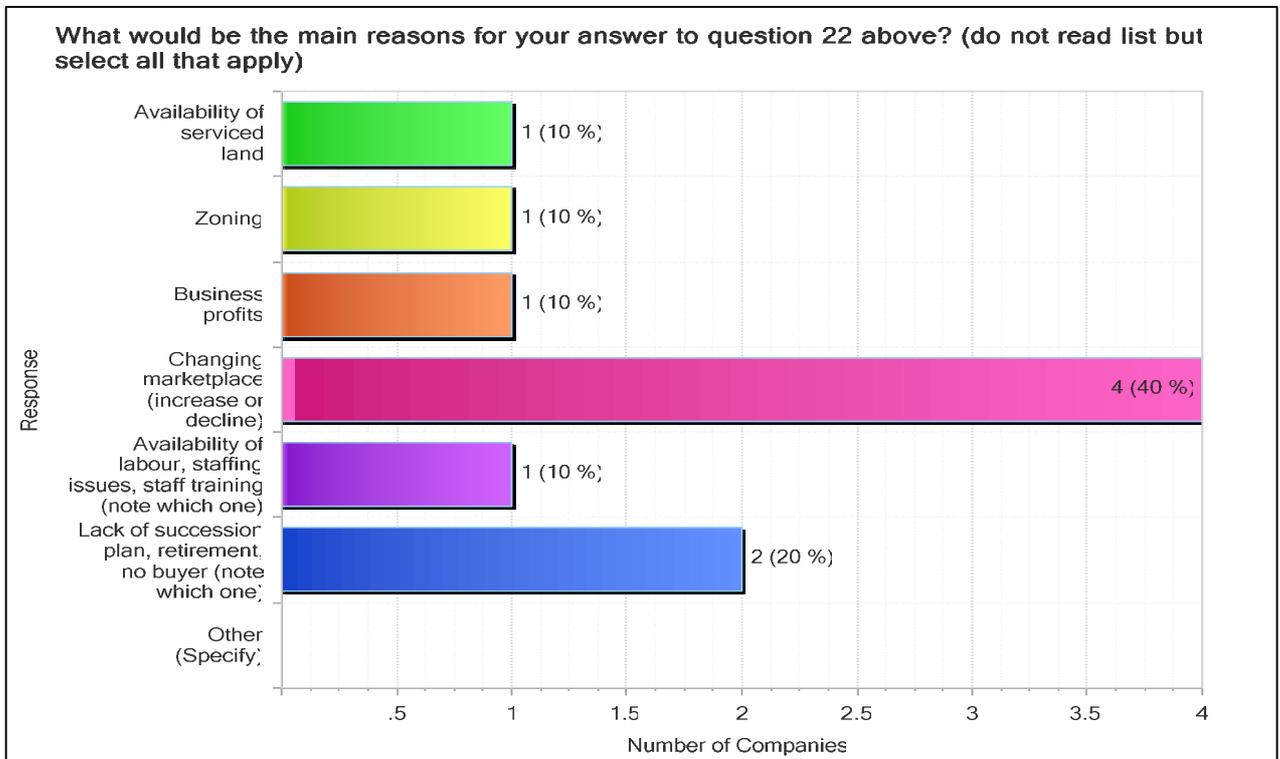
Future Plans

A series of questions were asked to predict business growth over the next 3 years. 19 businesses responded to these questions. The majority of these businesses expect to remain the same (58%) while those expanding make up 32% of the businesses. Two businesses predict downsizing as they want to gradually move into retirement. No businesses reported that they were planning on relocating or closing.

Which would best describe your plans for your business over the next 3 years?

The businesses predicting that they would be making some changes in the next 3 years were asked the following question.

What would be the main reasons for your answer to the above question?



Business Development

The Business Development portion of the survey considered the factors and strategies that impact growth of the business.

Would your business benefit from receiving information about exploring alternative energy sources or more appropriate energy source?

Responses	Number	%
Yes	7	39%
No	11	61%
Total	18	100%

The most requested information for alternative energy was solar.

Which of the following factors related to your use of information technology/internet factors, if any, are barriers to your business?

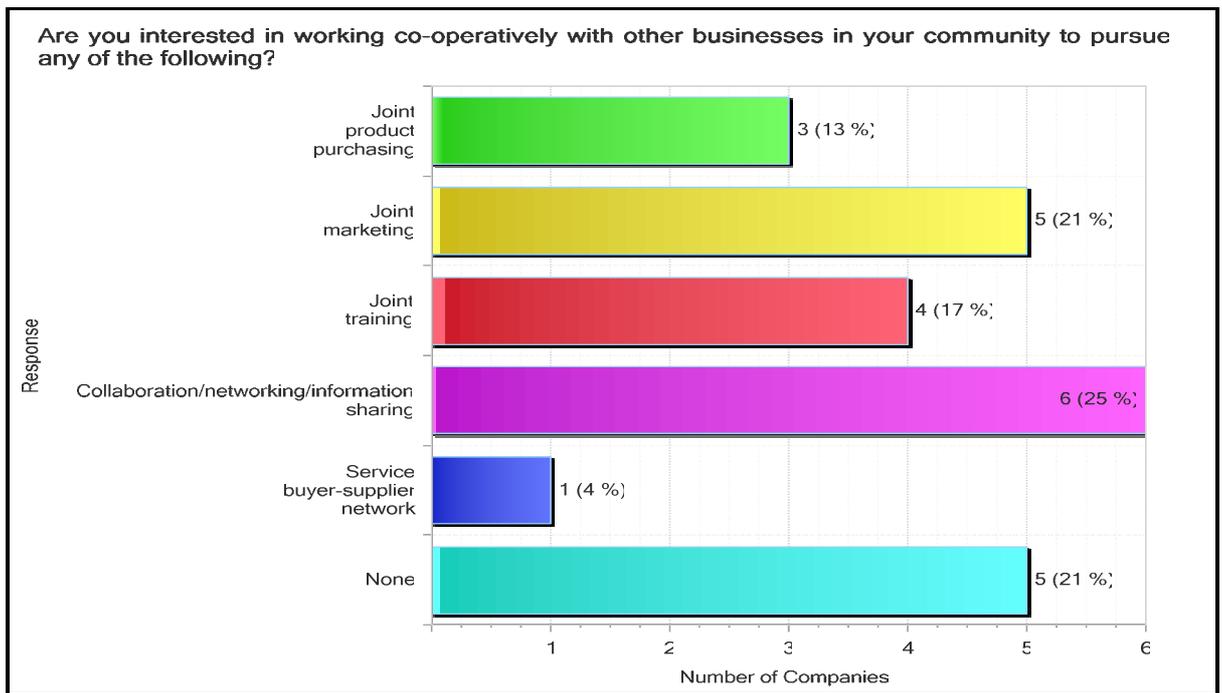
42% of the respondents said that they currently were not experiencing any barriers to their use of IT/Internet in their business. 13% said that time to learn and stay current was a barrier while 8% of the respondents mentioned speed, cost, knowledge and staff training as being barriers,

What products or services would you like to purchase locally that are now being purchased outside of the area?

The majority of the respondents said it would not be feasible to buy locally for their particular business. However, some did mention that they would like to purchase office supplies, hardware, paint, stains and packaging supplies locally, if possible.

Are you interested in working cooperatively with other businesses in your community to pursue any of the following?

When businesses were asked to choose, how they would like to work cooperatively with businesses, collaboration/networking/information sharing (25%), joint marketing (21%) and joint training (17%) came out on top.



Is access to financial planning expertise a barrier to your business growth?

Only 2 (13%) out of 15 respondents said that it was a barrier.

Is access to or knowledge of financing or lending sources a barrier to your business’s growth?

Only 2 (13%) out of 15 respondents indicated that this also was a barrier.

Business Development Markets

What are the projected sales growth in the next year at this company?

Responses	Number	%
0%	3	21%
1 - 9%	6	43%
10 - 24%	2	14%
25 - 49%	1	7%
Declining	2	14%
Total	14	100%

Fourteen businesses responded to this question. Sixty-four percent (64%) of these businesses expect to have higher sales next year, 21% expect to stay the same and 14% expect to have lower sales.

What do you feel is the reason for this?

Those expecting to increase their sales gave the following reasons; Increase in marketing services, increased interest in home improvements, funding programs for energy conservation, having a more established business and word of mouth marketing is bringing in more customers, adding more products to attract more customers, increase in competitive pricing.

Those expecting to stay the same or have declining sales gave the following reasons; Economy - unemployment is high and people are spending less, sluggish/stagnant economy worldwide, intending to downsize or retire so not looking for more sales.

Workforce Development

Uncovering the dynamics of the local labour force is necessary to understand a significant driving force of business growth and development. This section looks at current employment, labour supply and needs, recruitment and skills training.

During the next 3 years, do you think the number of employees in your business will increase, decrease, or remain the same?

The majority of businesses (15), expected, over the next 3 years, their workforce to grow or remain the same.

No Response	4
Decrease	2
Remain the same	9
Increase	6
# of respondents	21

What factors are responsible for this? (able to select all that apply)

Responses	Number	%
Increase or decrease in market competition	2	10%
Renovation or expansion	2	10%
Increase or decrease in sales	4	19%
New products or services introduced	3	14%
Entered new market	1	5%
Increase or decrease in market share	4	19%
Other (specify)	5	24%
Total	21	100%

Has your business had difficulty hiring?

A third of the business respondents (7 out of 21) reported experiencing hiring difficulties.

How did you overcome the hiring difficulties?

When asked this question, respondents mentioned improved training (25%), acquired new technology (17%), hired someone even though the person didn’t meet the requirements (17%), other – waited it out, used family members, increased workload (17%). 8% selected improved salary/benefits or passed some responsibilities on to someone else.

How would you describe your company’s hiring challenges?

Too few applicants, lack of relevant experience and lack of motivation/poor attitude were the responses given to this question.

How do you currently recruit new employees?

Responses to this question include referral from friends or current employees (38%), cold calls from prospective employees (21%), through your personal network (10%), local media advertising (7%) and professional recruitment firm (7%).

Would your business be interested in participating in partnership initiatives?

Co-op student opportunities - eight businesses (47%)
 Internship program – 4 businesses (27%)
 Mentorship – 4 businesses (27%)
 Shared paid job placement – 6 businesses (40%)
 Unpaid job placement – 4 businesses (27%)
 Industry advisory committee – 3 businesses (21%)

Where do your employees currently receive training?

Forty-eight percent (48%) of the respondents said their employees currently are receiving training through in-house training, 22% said through community college, 11% through university, 11% through customized training, 4 % through distance education and 4% outside of the area.

Employers felt their needs were met the best through In-House, Customized training and Outside of area (specialized training).

What are the most significant barriers to your employees receiving the necessary training?

Responses include cost (17%), relevant training is not offered at local institutions (13%), loss of productivity during training period (13%), losing trained employees to other businesses (13%), availability of training locally (10%), awareness of existing training programs (7%), awareness of training support programs (7%), unable to release employees (3%)

Business Development Community

This section explores local economic development efforts and strengths of operating in the local economy.

List the community’s 3 largest advantages as a place to do business.

Responses include; central location, close to major highways, affordable housing, land costs, availability of serviced industrial land, lower taxes, recreation center, child care available, good services & utilities, reasonable labour rates, lots of room for development, history of community, good rapport with municipality, slower pace, young workforce is available.

List the community’s 3 largest disadvantages as a place to do business.

Responses include; poor appearance of business park, derelict buildings, poor image of name (Vanastra), not easily located or identified on maps or GPS, distance to larger urban centers, buildings in poor shape to rent or buy, distance from major markets, declining workforce, lack of signage and community identity, lack of assistance from municipality to cleanup business park

Which new businesses, services or products would you like to see added to this community?

Responses include signage improvements, improve recreation center both in appearance and services, more commercial manufacturing businesses, a large manufacturer that can employ many people and use large space – has the resources to keep premises clean and attractive, larger variety store, gas station, more services at Kate’s Station for transport trucks, truck entrance and route, welding shop & fabrication, artisan center, take out fast food place, laundry facility.

On a scale of 1-5, where 1 means poorly and 5 means ideally, how well positioned is your community to attract new immigrant employees?

Responses	Number	%
No Response	10	42%
1 (poorly)	7	29%
2	2	8%
3	3	13%
4 (ideally)	2	8%
Total	24	100%

Comments include the following:

Feels community is open to receive immigrants if employment was available for them however transportation would be an issue as no public transit.

Cultural preference for food/church could be a problem.

Affordable housing available

On a scale of 1-5, where 1 means poorly and 5 means ideally, how well positioned is your community to attract and retain employees under the age of thirty?

Responses	Number	%
No Response	7	29%
1 (poorly)	6	25%
2	7	29%
3	3	13%
4 (ideally)	1	4%
Total	24	100%

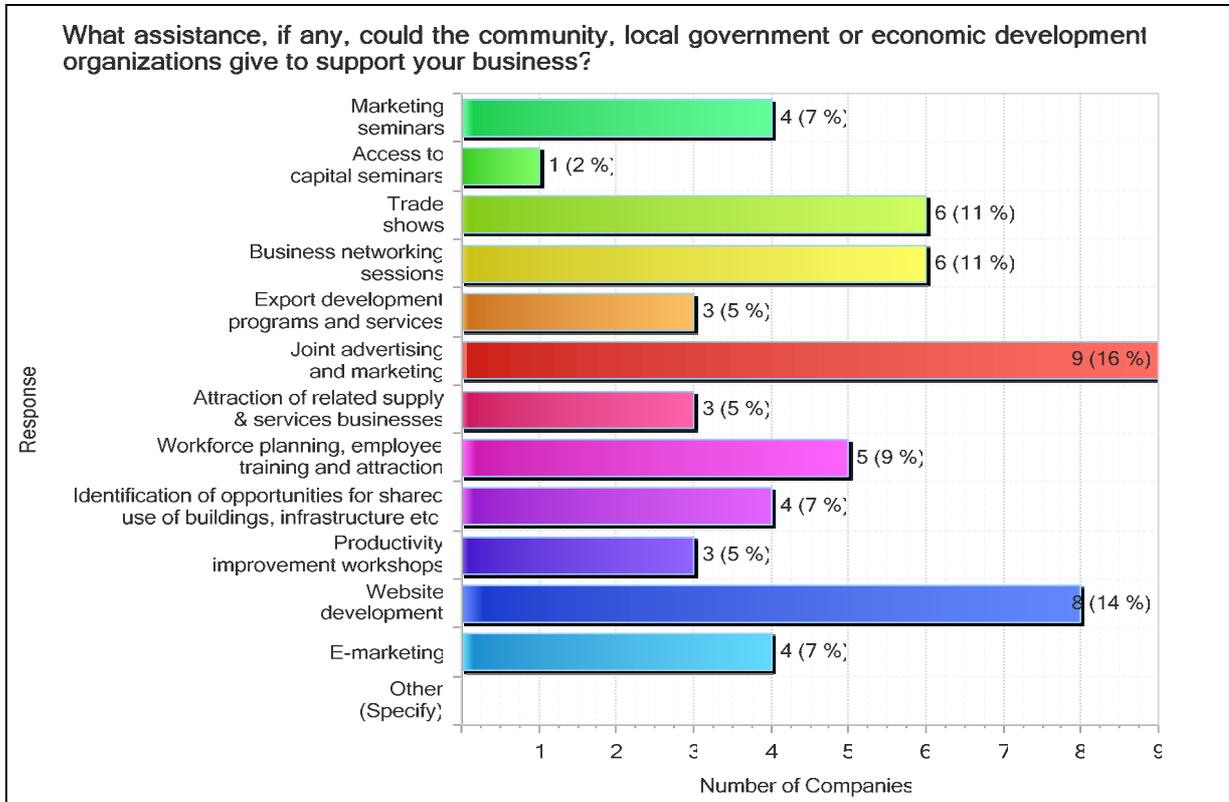
Comments include the following:

Not a lot of employment opportunities and attractions for this age group.

Jobs available would be manufacturing which is not appealing to youth.

We have tourism, recreation, theatre, affordable housing, which helps to retain & attract young people.

What assistance, if any, could the business community, local government or economic development organizations give to support your business?



Joint advertising and marketing, website development, business networking sessions, trade shows and workforce planning, employee training & attraction were the most cited requests for assistance.

In terms of overall impact on this community’s economic development, what is the most significant change, positive or negative, that you have witnessed in your community in the past 5 years?

Please note that no attempt was made to combine/summarize the responses to this question.

Started to do some clean up in Vanastra.
Some positive improvements on clean up in business park. New subdivision has been developed in Vanastra.
Both the closing of Volvo and the tornado in Goderich have had a major impact. More younger and middle age people moving out of area. More senior people moving to area, older retirees coming in, who have an interest in upholstered furniture, either because it is of higher quality then can buy or has a sentimental attachment.
Positive: Retail Store open (Buckey's General Store) Positive: Expansions - 3 major in Cap Products which directly increased workforce.

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Negative: More buildings run-down and maintenance of roads, parks, general up keep as a whole declined.
Positive - Appearance in roads, more businesses located in Vanastra. Negative - More litter, unappealing visual appearance, storage/junk/litter/clutter, more open fires being done.
Decline of major employers or major employers leaving the area.
Taxes have remained constant so businesses can remain here (if taxes go up, several businesses may have to close or move). Vanastra Community Centre has been upgraded, expect positive impact as a result. Community as a whole has a more positive attitude, more pride, a 'can do' attitude (we can make this a better place).
There has been an increase in the number of businesses and number of new homes which gives a better perception of Vanastra. More people buying places and fixing them up, taking pride in appearance. Homes and apartments - full occupancy.
Feels very little has been done to attract new businesses or cleanup the community. A few businesses have set a good example for others to follow but they are not doing it. Municipality needs to get up and get going - take the lead and offer some incentives - otherwise nothing is going to happen.
New subdivisions have added to the appearance as well as the new townhouses. Lion's apartment building an asset. Good Choice attracts a lot of consumers. Some good businesses that lead by example with neat/tidy properties.
Street repairs by Curling Club, paved, curbs put in, parking lot paved. Noticeable improvements made in infrastructure.
Municipality have started to put more effort and money into Vanastra. Starting to do a better job of clean up so appearance of the community is improving.
Addition of community minded businesses to Vanastra - CAP Products, Vanastra Packaging, Composite Creations that care about the appearance of their businesses facilities.
Improvements in housing stock and recreation centre. More activity in economic development from Municipality of Huron East and actions related to it.
Street repairs - very positive. Improvements/enhancements in community centre – positive. Dilapidated buildings becoming worse – negative.
No new industry in the past 5 years. Appearance of community improving. Municipality doing more clean up - cutting grass, etc. Better relationship with municipality.
Property values have been increasing.
Community is slowly cleaning up, going in the right direction.
Positive: More clean up has happened. park is being maintained and timely grass cutting is being done. more infrastructure improvements. renovations being done at recreation centre
Not as many businesses in Vanastra today as there were five years ago.

Haven't seen any positive changes. If recreation centre closes, this would be a big negative.
Municipality has supported and valued recreation centre more. Community people are becoming more vocal on viewing their opinions. Types of residents have changed for the better.
Hear good things that they are making improvements in Vanastra. Appears cleaner and neater.

In terms of overall impact on this community’s economic development, what is the most significant change that you would like to see in your community in the next five years?

Please note that no attempt was made to combine/summarize the responses to this question.

Clean up of buildings and surroundings. Get those old buildings taken down (ghetto look). Improved signage.
Clean up community.. Make it attractive to retain and attract businesses and clients.
Need to take down derelict buildings. Develop more green space. Clean up the community. Market the community more.
Positive: More businesses recruited to area Positive: Develop industrial section to its potential Positive: Increase in job growth.
More public garbage cans. More business networking events. More awareness of what services are available. Publicity marketing of Vanastra. Establish a community committee for beautification. Residential beautification. Take pride in community.
Community needs an identity of its own. Need more pride in being from Vanastra. Get rid of absentee landlords. Get rid of derelict buildings.
Awareness that viable Businesses exist in Vanastra and that it has been cleaned up. Poor image and stigma of being from Vanastra has changed for the better.
Get rid of eye sore buildings. Recruit/attract more businesses that can employ people. Develop more senior housing/apartments as there is a need.
The Municipality should take the lead in cleanup and attracting more businesses to locate in Vanastra, which will get more people coming in - more employment and more people living in Vanastra, which will support other local businesses and organizations.
Clean it up and remove debris around the buildings. Take down derelict buildings.

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Get rid of old buildings and clean up around buildings.
Municipality continues improvement to the infrastructure. Municipality enforcing property standards and cleaning up. Derelict buildings need to be addressed, torn down preferably.
Physical and land improvements. Restoration of the community. Incentives for businesses to improve their property. Comprehensive advertising campaign.
More small manufacturing located in Vanastra. Improvements in appearance of business park. Aggressive marketing campaign of service industrial land.
Would like to see more businesses, especially small manufacturing move to Vanastra. Need to fix up derelict building across from the Lion's Club Apartment building. Why has it not been done or at least torn down? Kids play in the derelict buildings and could get hurt.
More business locating to Vanastra. Less vacant buildings & absentee landlords. Tear down derelict buildings. Vanastra cleanup and make attractive.
N/A Property values have been going up.
Clean up derelict buildings. Dedicating a piece of property, memorial. Celebrate heritage.
Abandoned buildings need to be torn down and site cleaned up.
Would like to see a significant business industry that employs a large number of people locate to Vanastra. Fix up and reuse some of the present buildings.
Old buildings torn down or all cleaned up. Garbage cleaned up. Recreation centre kept and improvements made. Property standards maintained and enforced.
Community recognition as a nice community, more beautification, increased positive identity. Vanastra mailing - Post Office address changed to RR #5 Clinton - this is an identity problem.
Need to get more businesses in Vanastra and that will get more people to come. Promote community unity.

Manufacturing Survey Results

What are your current and projected plans regarding the plant operation?

Maintain the current size and type of production

Responses	Number	%
Current	1	50%
Projected	1	50%
Total	2	100%

Expand the size of plant and diversify

Responses	Number	%
Projected	3	100%
Total	3	100%

Maintain current size, but diversify products

Responses	Number	%
Current	1	100%
Total	1	100%

Downsize

Responses	Number	%
Projected	1	100%
Total	1	100%

Do you compete for business against your sister plants within your organization?

Responses	Number	%
Yes	1	20%
No	4	80%
Total	5	100%

If Yes, are these sister plants (s)....?

Responses	Number	%
About the same/little difference	1	100%

Where is your primary and secondary product in its life cycle?

Primary

Responses	Number	%
No response	1	17%
Emerging	1	17%
Maturing	2	33%
Declining	2	33%
Total	6	100%

Secondary

Responses	Number	%
No response	3	50%
Emerging	1	17%
Growing	1	17%
Declining	1	17%
Total	6	100%

What percentage of your products components are outsourced from another manufacturer?

Responses	Number	%
No response	1	17%
0-10%	2	33%
50%+	3	50%
Total	6	100%

From what areas do you primarily outsource products?

Responses	Number	%
Within Canada	3	50%
USA	1	17%
Other (Specify)	2	33%
Total	6	100%

Other (Specify): Costa Rica, Germany, Africa, Mexico, Global Market

Is there a new technology emerging that will change your primary product or how it is produced?

Responses	Number	%
Yes	2	40%
No	3	60%
Total	5	100%

Examples of new technology included computer aided cutting machines, equipment to handle bulk commodities.

In which of the following will new technology play a key role?

Responses	Number	%
Computer Software/Information Technology	2	33%
Distribution/Inventory Innovation	1	17%
Product/Service Innovation	2	33%
Production/Manufacturing Innovation	1	17%
Total	6	100%

As a percentage of sales, how much does the company spend on research and development (R&D)?

Responses	Number	%
No response	1	17%
Under 3%	3	50%
3% - 6%	2	33%
Total	6	100%

Do you conduct R&D at:

Responses	Number	%
This location	5	83%
Other branch location	1	17%
Total	6	100%

Retail Survey Results

Are you located in an identifiable commercial district?

Responses	Number	%
Yes	11	71%
No	3	29%
Total	14	100%

Those businesses responding Yes

Highway/Commercial strip plaza	- 3 businesses
Industrial Park	- 5 businesses
Neighbourhood commercial	- 3 businesses

Using the scale provided, please rate the condition of your commercial district for each factor. (16 businesses/individuals responded to this question)

Percentages are shown for those that selected ‘needs improving’.	Needs Improving
Street furniture(lights, benches, waste containers)	69%
Customer service programs	25%
Advertising campaigns	88%
Sidewalks, pedestrian environment	56%
Number of parking spots/Facilities	13%
Highway signage/Tourism directional signs	81%
Exterior appearance of facades	94%
Vagrancy/Homelessness/Panhandling	13%
Appropriate mix of businesses	19%
Adequacy of public transit	6%
Accessibility for people with disabilities	31%
Organizations of special events	56%
Plantings, trees, flower boxes	88%
Parking signage	38%
Fees, enforcement	No response
Graffiti and liter	63%
Roadside advertising	88%
Visual identity of the area - unifying banners	63%
Public amenities (parks, fountains, washrooms)	50%
Window displays	13%
Signage	94%
Traffic flow on streets in the area	6%

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Vandalism	69%
Public safety services - e.g. lighting, security, police presence, etc.	31%
Conditions of housing stock	31%
Appropriate range of quality/prices for target markets	No response
Number of vacancies/turnover	19%
Uniform hours of operation	No response

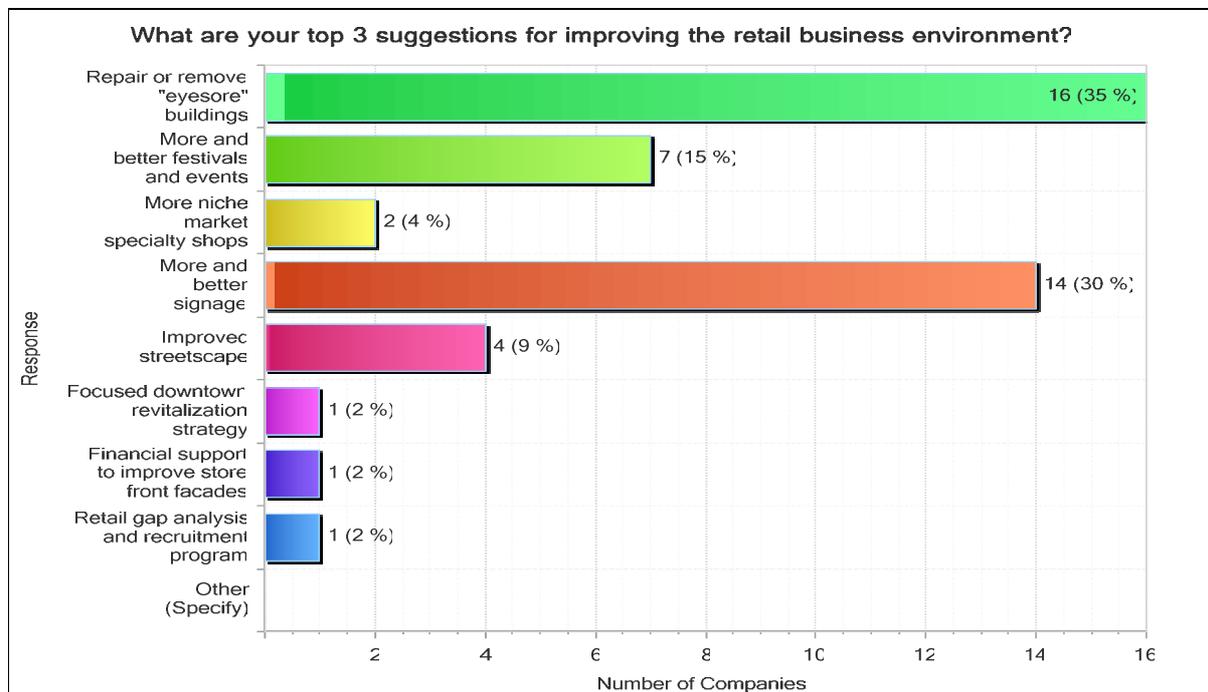
Would your business benefit from any of the following programs or services?

(10 businesses responded to this question)

The programs or services that were felt would be most beneficial were:

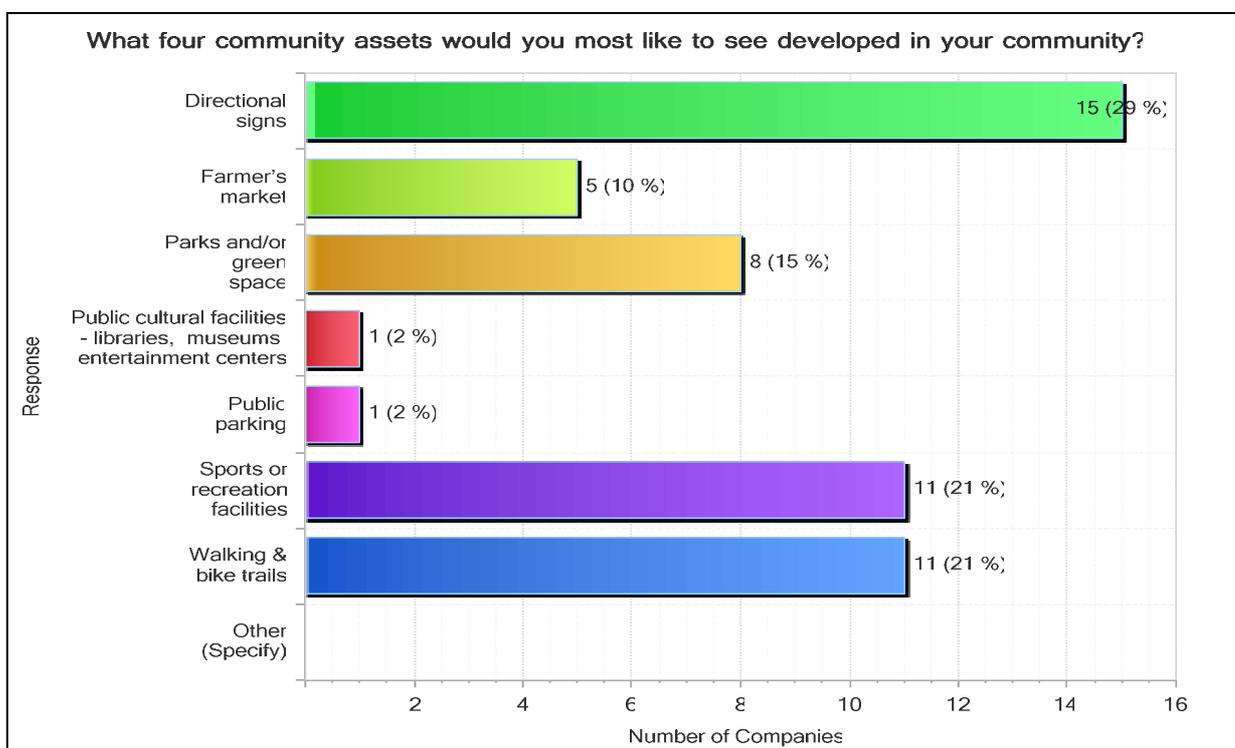
Networking events	80%
Cooperative advertising/joint marketing	60%
Building improvement loan/grant programs	60%
Sign improvement/grant programs	60%
Physical improvements in public areas	50%
Business directories, brochures, maps	100%
Marketing on the web	60%

What are your top 3 suggestions for improving the retail business environment?



An additional comment: Financial support/incentives given to improve signage/facades

What four community assets would you like to see developed in your community?



Some additional responses included the following:

- Public cultural facilities - Air force Museum & Information Centre, History of Vanastra/RCAF Clinton
- Sports or recreation facilities- Baseball Diamond needs improving.

Vanastra and Area Survey Results

These questions were developed with the assistance of the Vanastra BR+E TaskForce Team. All 24 businesses/individuals were asked to answer these questions.

What are the top five (5) things in that could be done in Vanastra to improve business?

Clean up/tear down derelict/eyesore buildings, deal with absentee landlords	24
Signage - street, HWY, truck, visual mapping/legend signage, community billboard	15
Clean up community, make it more presentable	10
Advertising of Vanastra (available land, buildings)	6
Heritage - promote all of Vanastra's heritage	4
Park and playground improved and maintained	2

Additional responses include:

- Need more communication among residents and businesses.
- Restore a barrack building to display history.

What five (5) words best describe the community as a whole?

Words	Responses
Friendly	11
Untapped Potential/Opportunity/Work in progress/Improving	9
Close knit community/Family oriented	5
Safe	5
Caring	5
Proud community pride/citizens want a better community/citizens want to be involved/citizens have hope that Vanastra can improve	5
Low income/blue collar working class	3
Run down	2
Forgotten/neglected	2
Negative stigma attached to name of Vanastra	2
Historical	2
Small/Rural setting	2
Quiet	1
Recreation centre is heart and sole of community	1
Open to new ideas	1

Please indicate if you think the following special events benefit or would benefit Vanastra.

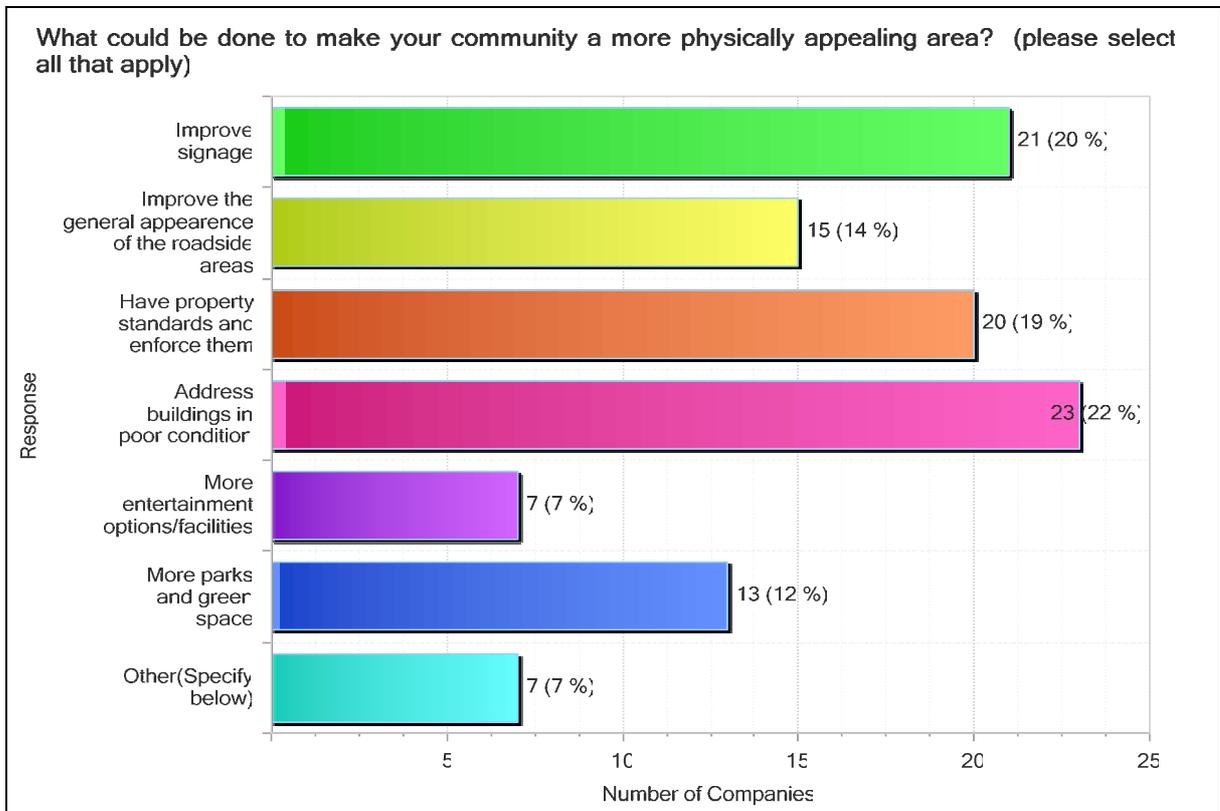
Events	Benefit	Would Benefit
Yard Clean Up Day		21
Open House/Tour Bus Day		11
Vanastra Community Day	1	19
Farmers’ Market		14
Christmas Parade		2
Scarecrow Festival		1
Other (Specify below)	1	18

Other responses included the following:

Would Benefit:

• Industrial Trade Show with training seminars ongoing at same time. To be held once a year.
• RCAF History Day/Weekend - part of Doors Open.- to celebrate history of Vanastra
• Vanastra Business Networking group meeting.
• Flea Market & another Community Event.
• Community yard sale (x8)
• Community Supper (BBQ)
• Veterans Day celebration – involve the schools

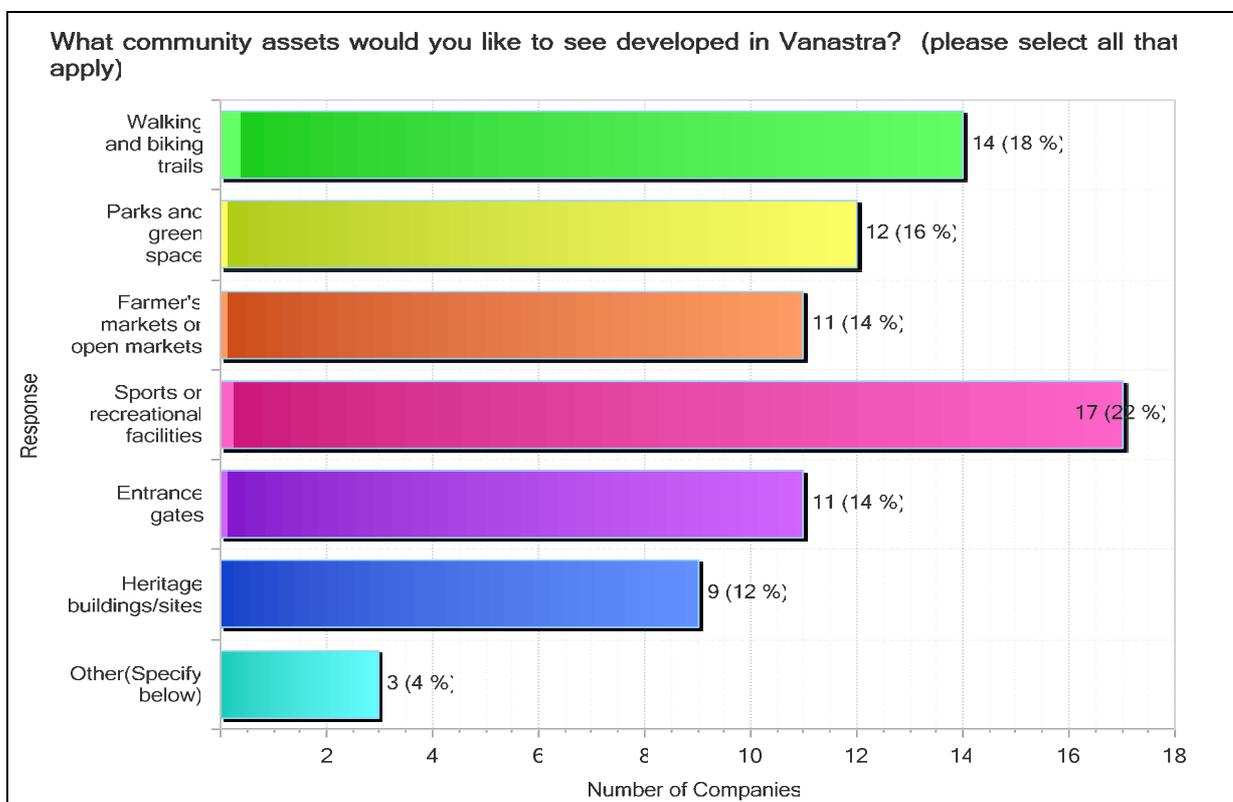
What could be done to make your community a more appealing area?



Other responses included:

- Pave parking lot of recreation centre.
- More garbage cans/public washrooms at recreation centre.
- Clean up around vacant buildings. Improve the parks and green space we have already.
- Rest area with public washroom along HWY #4 so cars/trucks can stop/rest.
- Park dedicated to Vanastra history, historical plaquing project.
- Movie night in park, fix the Blue Ball and use building.
- Sports Bar – family oriented with pool table, ping pong table
- More picnic tables/benches in park
- Splash Pad
- More entertainment options/facilities: More accessibility to recreational programs. Gear them to age of community, population is getting older.
- More needs to be developed in the parks.

What community assets would you like to see developed in Vanastra?



Other responses include:

- Develop history of Air Base & locate it in a building (Blue Ball building)
- Need to use ball park & recreational facilities more
- Need to make Entrance gates useable – near recreation centre or major entrance.
- Promote history of Vanastra
- Current entrance gates need to be moved or actually provide an entrance to Vanastra.
- Heritage buildings/gates: Heritage gates, improve visibility.

What are your Economic Development priorities for the community?

Economic Development Priority	#1 Choice # of responses	In top Three # of responses
Community Infrastructure	10	18
Heritage & Cultural promotion		4
Attraction of visitors & tourism	1	5
Development of recreational facilities	6	15
Support to farm community & agri-business	1	5
Small business support & development	8	21
Other (Specify below)	2	3

Other (Specify below) Responses and their individual priority number:

- #1 Clean Up & repair streets
- #1 Marketing community for work/living/playing
- #3 Educational Site - bring back history of Airbase and have in one location. (Also have identifiable plaques on key buildings. Need to celebrate heritage.)
- #5 Community Unity promotion

If you had \$25,000 to donate to Vanastra business park how would you like this donation spent?

Most respondents mentioned that \$25,000 would not have much of an impact on cleaning up or tearing down/removing derelict buildings in Vanastra (which would be their number one priority) and felt the money would be better spent on signage and marketing. Also they felt that signage would help build Vanastra’s identity.

Top Priority Areas

After the completion of all the surveys, the data was compiled and analyzed. As a result of this analysis, six (6) priority areas were identified that need to be addressed.

The six priority areas are:

- Improve appearance of the community
- Improve and have more effective signage
- Better marketing of the area
- Community Identity and Unity
- Small business support
- Heritage development

Please note at this stage in the BR+E process, the ‘priority areas’ have simply been identified. It is expected that an action plan addressing these priority areas will be completed at a later date.

Task Force Meeting December 18th, 2012

On December 18th, Task Force members were given the opportunity to review the preliminary findings from the survey results and give their input into what the data had to say.

They were given two questions to brainstorm in a group.

1. What initiatives could be done in Vanastra that would give some ‘quick wins’? Asked to consider that these ‘quick wins’ would have an impact but would not take a long time or cost a lot of money.
2. What are some recommendations to instill a ‘Pride of Place’ program for both businesses and residents in Vanastra.

The following is a summary of those ideas collected that night:

Quick Wins

- Enforce municipal by-laws
- Vanastra needs a ‘catch phrase and logo’
- Improve designated heritage gate area with picnic tables – rest area
- Website development
- Seek out a corporate sponsor – bank, credit union etc.
- Community wide clean up day – businesses, property owners
- Community beautification competition – prizes for both commercial and residential
- Celebrate 40th anniversary – heritage/cultural designation, plaque, put story of the history of Vanastra in the paper, have tour of community, airforce reunion
- Re-do Blue Dome with Vanastra written across it
- Celebrate 40th Anniversary – have ‘did you know’ activities in the paper – quizzes, twitter etc.
- Enhance the gates to highlight the area – sign, cenotaph or move the gates closer to the residential area
- Ask businesses to put in dollars to highlight their business on a directory sign
- Start a Friends of Vanastra Fund
- Contact Veteran Affairs, legion, Department of National Defense for assistance
- Competition for most improved house, most improved building – prizes and recognition in paper
- Vanastra Day, yard sales, community event
- Directional (commerce) signs/maps – business directory
- Inventory of Industrial land – as to what is available
- Need better signage
- Signage on Hwy#4 – Vanastra (not Huron East) listing all businesses located in Vanastra

Pride of Place

- Publicize important history of CFB Clinton
- Vanastra Day, Radar Fest, Air Force Day
- Website development – history, location, commercial lots available
- Enforce property standards
- Communities in Bloom concept
- Promote Arbor Day and clean up, trim trees etc.
- Be a role model
- Block party
- Do municipal maintenance when needed
- Encourage a community culture for clean up – a little at a time
- Have flyers promoting clean up days etc.

Pride of Place con’t:

- Community Clean Up day – Vanastra Improvement Party (VIP) – Municipality provide the dumpsters
- Tax rewards for zoning to ‘light industrial’



Beautifully restored building owned & operated by the Lions Club of Vanastra and used as affordable housing.

For information on how to become involved in this project contact:

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Municipality of Huron East
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519.527.1997 Email: jhawley@huroneast.com
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The Municipality of Huron East



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Huron Business Development Corporation

