



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS LASTING IMPACTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON LOCAL BUSINESSES

77% of respondents expect to feel impact of COVID-19 pandemic for the next 6-18 months, many adapt, pivot in face of lasting conditions

Windsor, ON – Today, as part of International Economic Development week in Windsor-Essex, Workforce WindsorEssex, St. Clair College, and Invest WindsorEssex launched the results of their Windsor-Essex Economic Development Survey.

The survey received 280 responses from local businesses, the majority of which were from the Retail and Manufacturing sectors. Of the 280 responses, 41% were from micro businesses, which have between one and four employees.

This annual survey, which was conducted from April 8-30, 2021, identifies the needs of businesses and assists economic development professionals to develop strategies that will support businesses to stay, grow, and become more competitive.

The pandemic undoubtedly had an impact on respondents and has shaped how they do business. A total of 43% of respondents have all employees in the workplace, while 12% of respondents noted that they will continue to operate their businesses remotely on an indefinite basis. Moreover, 46% of respondents added a new product or service related to the pandemic to their business.

Survey respondents varied in their experiences with the pandemic. While 48% of respondents reported no attitude change about doing business in the community since last year, 24% feel more negative since last year. Of the respondents, 118 businesses reported they plan to expand and seven indicated they will be closing. The top barriers to growth in the region were identified as closure due to the pandemic, marketing, and capacity limits due to the pandemic. The cost of electricity, development charges, and the cost of space for rent or lease were identified by respondents as the most negative factors in doing business in the community.

On the brighter side, 75% of respondents feel that the Windsor-Essex region is an Excellent or Good community in which to do business and most positively ranked the following factors: availability of adequate electricity and availability of natural gas.

Responses from the Windsor-Essex Economic Development Survey will inform efforts in developing economic recovery plans for the region and for individual sectors as well as for broader programming for Windsor-Essex businesses.

QUOTES:

“Employer surveys and consultations are critical to keeping Workforce WindsorEssex’s current and future work aligned with industry. Businesses have navigated unprecedented market disruption, so we’re pleased that nearly half of all businesses are offering a new product or service related to the pandemic.”

- Justin Falconer, CEO, Workforce WindsorEssex

“The Windsor-Essex Economic Development Survey provides valuable data and insights that help shape the region’s action plan including COVID recovery strategies and relevant programming. A number of positive opportunities and business needs have been highlighted from our local businesses. The outcomes from this survey will help Windsor-Essex overcome the economic challenges we have faced and continue to grow and remain competitive.”

- Stephen MacKenzie, President and Chief Executive Officer, Invest WindsorEssex

QUICK LINKS:

- Results from the Windsor-Essex Economic Development survey, including an interactive dashboard, can be found by clicking [here](#).

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About Workforce WindsorEssex

Workforce WindsorEssex is a workforce and community development board whose mission is to lead regional employment and community planning for the development of a strong and sustainable workforce.

Workforce WindsorEssex is an experienced leader in the development of regional labour market tools, research, guides, and events that create positive change in the local labour market while saving others time and effort. These resources, created in close coordination with employment, education, and industry partners, are designed to help job seekers, employers, students, and

educators, as well as the community, make more informed labour market decisions using locally-responsive, data-rich, and unbiased resources. To learn more about Workforce WindsorEssex and view our tools and resources, visit www.workforcewindsoressex.com.

About Invest WindsorEssex

Invest WindsorEssex is the lead economic development agency for the Windsor-Essex region. The focus of the organization is to develop and execute strategies to retain, expand, attract, and help new businesses start-up in the Windsor-Essex region. Invest WindsorEssex is led by a board of distinguished community leaders. A team of professional staff assists with location and investment decisions by working one-on-one with businesses to facilitate the process of starting, growing, or locating in Windsor-Essex. To learn more about Invest WindsorEssex, visit www.investwindsoressex.com.