

## **Business Friendly Communities**

The Chamber of Commerce Brantford Brant has developed a number of policy papers on issues our members report as being their biggest concerns. The 2018 member survey "What Makes a Business Friendly Community?" identified a number of roadblocks and concerns that should be addressed to enable our community to be considered as Business Friendly. A strong and vibrant business community represents the foundation of a prosperous Brantford and Brant. Continued economic development in a competitive world requires communities to be aware of and positively impact the characteristics that factor into a Business Friendly Community.

### **Issue**

The Chamber of Commerce Brantford-Brant recognizes the major impacts that a significant number of issues have on helping our businesses grow and prosper in our community. The difficulty faced by businesses are varied, however there are many common elements as well.

### **Member Concerns**

- Shortage of Skilled Labour (all trades)
- Shortage of General Labour
- Quality of Life
- Ease of dealing with the municipalities
- Development costs
- Operating costs
- Transit availability time and location need to include outlying employment lands
- Pro business attitude needed
- Reduced red tape
- Cost of natural gas, electricity and water
- Business/Property taxes – should meet the Provincial range of fairness guidelines
- Improve guidance, cooperation and coordination from municipal departments to eliminate cost, time and silo approach
- Equal treatment for all business sizes
- Hire local consultants and contractors wherever possible rather than spending tax dollars outside the community
- Municipal Leaders should reduce the roadblocks to growth

## **Our Position**

Brantford and Brant County must exhibit the following characteristics to be acknowledged as Business Friendly Communities in order to retain and attract businesses in a very competitive environment. Characteristics should include, but are not limited to:

- Communities have “Pro Business” attitudes - starting at the top. When top government officials support new and existing business, others in the community will be supportive as well.
- “Open for Business” attitude. Economic development staff should act as liaisons between business and community officials to streamline the development process.
- Work force - promote initiatives to improve our work force by forming partnerships with businesses and community colleges in training programs to meet specific needs for both skilled workers and general labour.
- Continue to improve infrastructure services including water, sewer, electricity and internet access. New businesses will be attracted, and the tax base will be improved.
- Promote quality of life. Good school systems, recreational opportunities and a vibrant arts community will ensure our location is where current and future workers will want to live, work, play and raise their families.
- Recognise time is money. Officials must be willing to cut through Red Tape to encourage investment by streamlining the development process.
- Develop a “Places to Grow” strategy. The Strategic plan should include detailed plans to promote growth in the City and County that follow the provincial guidelines.
- Promote affordable housing. Residents need to know they have safe places to live and can afford to take care of their families.
- Encourage and support housing affordability. The ‘missing middle’ segment of housing is necessary to encourage immigration to the area and to ensure that both current and new residents have safe and affordable housing options for themselves and their families.
- Ensure ongoing investments in effective transportation – both infrastructure and public transit.
- Include business friendly communities’ initiatives when setting direction in the municipal strategic plans and ensure that these initiatives are established as top priorities.
- Ensure municipal policies reflect and focus on the competitive nature of retaining and attracting business for our area.