



Ottawa County Improvement Corporation Strategic Plan

2022 - 24



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Keith Smith (Vice President) | Vice President, Materion Corporation

Jim Stouffer (Secretary) | Chairman & CEO, Catawba Island Club

Justin Moore (Treasurer) | Vice President, GenoaBank

Craig Trick (Past President) | President, Comprehensive Construction Solutions

Nick Marsico | President & CEO, Magruder Hospital

Rebekah Zimmerman | Founder, Trailblazers' Growth

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Rebekah Zimmerman | Founder, Trailblazers' Growth

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Wendy Chambers | Executive Director, Put-in-Bay Chamber of Commerce

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Emma Helvey | Director, The Mosser Group

Nicole Kochensparger | President, Port Clinton Area Chamber of Commerce

Gary Kohli | President, Ottawa County Park District

Stephanie Kowal | Director, Ottawa County Jobs & Family Services

Mark Messa | Director, Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission

Greg Peiffer | President & GM, WPCR Radio

P. J. Rudolph | Vice President, Rudolph Libbe Group

Hans Rosebrock | Advisor, First Energy Corporation

Craig Schabel | Manager, Gordon Food Service

David White | Director, Firelands Forward

Sandy Widmer | Owner, Whimsey & Blue

Valerie Winterfield | Executive Director, Oak Harbor Area Chamber of Commerce



I look forward to Ottawa County and OCIC implementing Reveille's Strategic Plan. This is a comprehensive plan that will benefit the diverse communities in Ottawa County, from the more agricultural west end of the county to the seasonal tourist east end. Ottawa County has so much to offer with great schools, recreational opportunities that are expanding with the Park District, commercial opportunities and a secure environment that is too often overlooked. The Strategic Plan will take all into consideration with a roadmap that should move Ottawa County's residents and businesses forward.



Mark E. Coppeler
County Commissioner



The Ottawa County community is special in many ways, but most importantly in my opinion is the commitment of the people to grow together for the betterment of all. I am excited to work toward the positive results outlined by the comprehensive strategic plan designed by the OCIC with the help of Reveille.



Ottawa County's charming and walkable communities have always made great places to live, work, and play. What's more, recent transformative investments in infrastructure and recreational facilities signal that the best is yet to come. As a partner in economic & community development, the OCIC has my full confidence that it is ready to sustain our momentum and to lead our coming renaissance.



Nick Marsico
CEO, Magruder Hospital



Quinton Babcock
Mayor, Village of Oak Harbor

Executive Summary

The 2022-24 Strategic Plan for the Ottawa Community Improvement Corporation (OCIC) is more than just a document to guide the internal underpinnings of the organization. The Plan represents a paradigm shift in the organization, as it looks outward for partnerships and tools that make it more resourceful and responsive to the true impediments to growth and revitalization within.

The first three pillars of this Strategic Plan discuss methods to promote business retention and expansion (Pillar One), attract new business (Pillar

Two), and/or assist in workforce development (Pillar Three), and improve communications and marketing to the OCIC's diverse market segments (Pillar Four). Additionally, a "Comprehensive Community Development" Pillar speaks to the refinement of elements that nurture community "livability". Common to these four Pillars is the attraction of residents and a quality workforce, and building upon the "Ottawa County- It's All Here" theme.

The Plan was developed with extensive public interaction. The graphic below shows this interaction:



The Plan is framed under the principle that Ottawa County will be best served by a holistic approach to economic development, one that nurtures opportunities that focus on providing high quality basic services, such as K-12 education, healthcare, utilities, infrastructure, and neighborhood, recreational and environmental improvements. For starters, this approach will help to put the County's best foot forward in capturing opportunities provided by the thousands of new jobs being activated in the region from both existing employers and new ones.

If this comprehensive approach is aggressively pursued, one negative trend - population decline - might be altered as the enhanced approach attracts new residents that long for a slower pace of life, friendly people who know their neighbors, attractive open spaces and beautiful scenery, quaint shops, historic homes and buildings, parades, festivals, and streets that are safe and free of traffic congestion.



This Plan encourages the heightened cooperation and collaboration of related agencies beginning with the Ottawa County Community Improvement Corporation and its various stakeholders in the public and private sector, the Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission, and local Chambers of Commerce. Other Ottawa County departments like the Health Department, Engineer, Sanitary Engineer, Park District, and Job and Family Services, and the six primary local school districts, three career tech centers and Terra State Community College also play an important role in community building. As well as regional partners like Lake Erie Shores and Islands, Firelands Forward and the Regional Growth Partnership (JobsOhio). All of whom will be integrated into the holistic development approach that this Plan supports and requires.

Ottawa County's true potential will only be unlocked when an atmosphere of communication and collaboration is achieved. To see the fruits of this potential will require strong leadership, citizen engagement, and community/regional collaboration. A different type of thinking - one tolerant of change - will be required to position the county as a leader in economic development, to create a positive impact on the development within the county, and to produce results that Ottawa County's citizens will recognize and appreciate.

The Ottawa County Improvement Corporation Strategic Plan identifies recommendations which should be examined and evaluated on a regular basis to prioritize resource allocation and determine their effectiveness. They are by no means completely exhaustive: They were developed in conjunction with extensive stakeholder input, and take into account past, current and projected problems and opportunities.

Planning success may not occur by embracing one recommendation, but through the use of many recommendations in unison. Successful implementation will require a dedication toward each of the Plan's recommendations and strategies. Therefore, if success can be attained using other means, then it should be encouraged and incorporated within the respective sections of this document.

Plan Implementation

Section: Plan Implementation

While the primary importance of this Strategic Plan is for the benefit of the Ottawa Community Improvement Corporation (OCIC), a portion of this Plan provides its stakeholders, community officials, residents and business officials with a blueprint to accomplish organizational objectives while working to align the arenas of economic development and community development.

The effectiveness of the Plan will be dependent upon the level of organizational resources and strength of the relationships among the various OCIC stakeholders and political subdivisions in the County.

A. Plan Review and Updates

Because of the ongoing nature of community and economic development, this Strategic Plan is not a static document, but one in constant need of review. It will need to be amended to reflect the accomplishments of the OCIC, modifications to the organizational mission, resources and current environment of Ottawa County, and therefore be updated or reviewed in the following manner:

Annual Review

The Ottawa Community Improvement Corporation and its various stakeholders should have an annual meeting to discuss the progress and implementation of this Strategic Plan, success stories, failures and the readjustment or modification of Plan strategies and timing.

Critical Review

Because economic and organizational conditions can change quickly, it is recommended that OCIC officials take the necessary steps to review and update this Plan if major conditions warrant a review.

B. Economic Development Plan Implementation

The OCIC Executive Director will serve as the coordinator for the implementation of the recommendations outlined in this Plan. However, every effort should be made to delegate responsibilities to other entities, when appropriate.

The following implementation table presents the Plan's six broad goals with specific, measurable objectives under each goal (see *Plan Implementation Table*). Each strategy includes a listing of potential participants that could help achieving it, and a time frame (S-short, within 1 year; M-medium, 2-3 years; L-long, 4-5 years or more; and O-ongoing throughout the next 5 years).

Lastly, and most importantly, each Plan objective was given a progress grade for users of the Plan to track progress. The progress of the Ottawa County's comprehensive community development effort should be evaluated on an annual basis using the implementation "scorecard".



Retention and Expansion

| Strategy | Collaborating Entity or Organization | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|---|------------|------------------|
| | OCIC | County Organizations | City/Village Councils | Township Trustees | Area Schools | Local/Other Organizations | Time Frame | Percent Complete |
| Initiate formal Business Retention & Expansion program | ✓ | Commissioners | ✓ | ✓ | | Local Chambers, business councils, businesses, The Ohio State University BRE Team, other stakeholders | S | |
| Establish terms and protocol for OCIC to serve as a clearinghouse and business technical assistance provider | ✓ | | | | | Local Chambers, Regional Growth Partnership, Jobs Ohio, Terra Small Business Center | S | |
| Update and distribute a business resources and technical assistance guide | ✓ | Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission | | | | Stakeholders; Participating businesses | S | |
| Provide information to businesses on zoning, permitting, and other regulations | ✓ | Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission, Health District, Engineer | ✓ | ✓ | | | S | |
| Develop structure within OCIC to support and coordinate with local chambers of commerce | ✓ | | ✓ | | | Local Chambers, Shores and Islands | S | |
| Plan and host peer-to-peer business roundtable on common issues | ✓ | | | | | Participating businesses | M | |
| Provide elements of a comprehensive "RISE" program for small business assistance: Kern Center programs, RLFs, mentorship | ✓ | Commissioners | | | | Revolving Loan Fund Advisory board members, commercial lenders, Regional Growth Partnership, Terra State, business services | M | |
| Explore development of an entrepreneurship curriculum in local schools | ✓ | | | | ✓ | Business Advisory Council, local schools, contributing businesses, Terra, other curriculum providers | M | |
| Determine feasibility of a business incubator or co-working space. | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | Chambers, Regional Growth Partnership, property owners, developers, Terra | L | |
| Advocate for improvements in telecommunications systems in deficient areas | ✓ | Commissioners, Engineer | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Internet providers and contractors | O | |

PILLAR ONE

Business Attraction



| Strategy | Collaborating Entity or Organization | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|--|------------|------------------|
| | OCIC | County Organizations | City/Village Councils | Township Trustees | Area Schools | Local/Other Organizations | Time Frame | Percent Complete |
| Catalog available industrial sites with details on site amenities and capacities | ✓ | Commissioners, Engineer, Sanitary Engineer, RPC | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Local property owners, developers, Realtors, utilities | S | |
| Maintain data base of available industrial and commercial buildings and their characteristics and capacity. Develop strategy for renovating substandard buildings. | ✓ | Commissioners, Land Bank, Auditor | ✓ | ✓ | | Property owners, developers, Realtors | M | |
| Develop a spec building for prospective or expanding industry | ✓ | Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission, Commissioners, Engineer | ✓ | ✓ | | Regional Growth Partnership/ Jobs Ohio, Developers, private businesses, contractors | L | |
| Develop one or more state-certified industrial parks | ✓ | Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission, Commissioners, Engineer | ✓ | ✓ | | Regional Growth Partnership, JobsOhio, Developers, private businesses, funding agencies | L | |
| Review and expand Economic Incentives | ✓ | Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission; Commissioners, Auditor | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Local Chambers of Commerce; Businesses, Developers; Regional Growth Partnership-Jobs Ohio; Ohio Department of Development, Tax Incentive Review Committees | S | |
| Advocate for and provide assistance in seeking funding for infrastructure improvements that overcome site limitations | ✓ | RPC, Engineer, Commissioners, sanitary engineer | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Local legislators, outside funding agencies, Ohio Department of Transportation, | L | |
| Recruit targeted businesses; market sites, parks, and properties; coordinate and align outreach efforts | ✓ | Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission, Commissioners | ✓ | ✓ | | Developers, property owners, Realtors, Regional Growth Partnership, JobsOhio, Chambers | O | |
| Advocate for road projects that improve logistics | ✓ | Commissioners, Engineer | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Leadership impacted by transportation limitations | O | |
| Appeal to workers and entrepreneurs through quality-of-life assets: "O.C.: It's All Here" | ✓ | Commissioners, Park District | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Lake Erie Shores/Islands, local chambers, business leaders | O | |

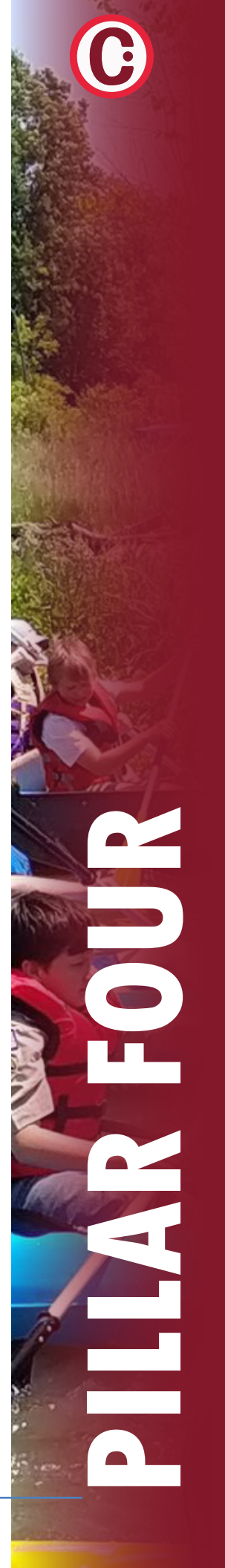
PILLAR TWO



Workforce Development & Attraction

| Strategy | Collaborating Entity or Organization | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|--|------------|------------------|
| | OCIC | County Organizations | City/Village Councils | Township Trustees | Area Schools | Local/Other Organizations | Time Frame | Percent Complete |
| Reconvene regular meetings of Safety Council and HR Network | ✓ | | | | | Bureau of Worker's Compensation, Workforce development officials, area employers | S | |
| Fulfill and secure future funding for Workforce Development Outreach Contract | ✓ | Commissioners, Ottawa DJFS, | ✓ | | ✓ | Bureau of Worker's Compensation, area employers | M | |
| Fulfill and secure future funding for Ohio Means Jobs Ottawa County Contract | ✓ | Commissioners, Ottawa DJFS | ✓ | | ✓ | Bureau of Worker's Compensation, area employers, Chambers | M | |
| Build formal pathways and pipelines for new employees | ✓ | BAC | | | ✓ | Career Tech centers, Terra, NW State, DJFS, local employers | M | |
| Continue promotion and optimization of Skilled Trades Academy | ✓ | Commissioners; Ottawa County Business Advisory Council | | | ✓ | Northpoint Educational Services Center; Penta Career Center; EHOVE; Terra State Community College; Teachers; Parents; Great Lakes Community Action Partnership | M | |
| Support existing and new BAC activities and programs | ✓ | Commissioners, Ottawa County Business Advisory Council (BAC) | | | ✓ | County employers, Chambers | O | |
| Address workforce issues within the regional, multi-county context | ✓ | Commissioners, DJFS, OhioMeansJobs | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4CG, Firelands Forward, Toledo CEDS, Regional Growth Partnership, NWOH workforce coalition, other regional partners | O | |
| Additional initiatives to attract new work force and residents: housing, quality of life, healthcare | ✓ | Commissioners, Park District, Engineer | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Housing developers, Realtors, arts councils, Local Chambers, downtown organizations, Lake Erie Shores/Islands, Magruder Hospital, other stakeholders | O | |

PILLAR THREE



PILLAR FOUR

Communications and Marketing

| Strategy | Collaborating Entity or Organization | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|--|------------|------------------|
| | OCIC | County Organizations | City/Village Councils | Township Trustees | Area Schools | Local/Other Organizations | Time Frame | Percent Complete |
| Make PR a portion of duties of a specific OCIC employee | ✓ | | | | | OCIC Trustees | S | |
| Determine feasibility of fee based membership structure | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Existing and potential members and Trustees | M | |
| Improve pathways between business community and OCIC through increased membership and trustee participation | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | OCIC Trustees and Members, Potential Stakeholders | M | |
| Increase interactions between OCIC and businesses through BRE visits and other means | ✓ | | | | | Stakeholders, Businesses | O | |
| Develop more in-person events; continue Chamber, HR, safety meetings/forums | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Participants in Chamber, HR, safety meetings | O | |
| Provide outreach and take actions regarding specific target groups | ✓ | Commissioners, ODJFS | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Lake Eries Shores/Islands | M | |
| Update and pursue more extensive use of website and social media as a communications medium | ✓ | | | | | IT providers, membership | O | |
| Continued engagement w/ Economic Development and Workforce Development Partners | ✓ | Commissioners | ✓ | | ✓ | 4CG, Firelands Forward, Toledo Area CEDS, NWOH Workforce Coalition | O | |



Comprehensive Community Development

PILLAR FIVE

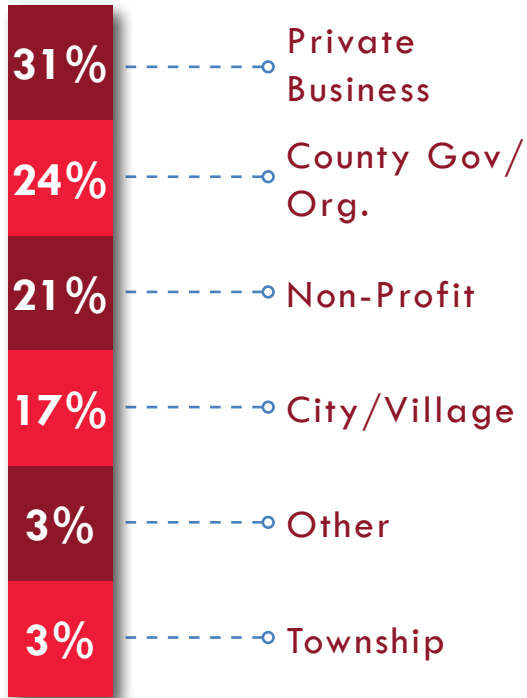
| Strategy | Collaborating Entity or Organization | | | | | | | Percent Complete |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|---|------------|------------------|
| | OCIC | County Organizations | City/Village Councils | Township Trustees | Area Schools | Local/Other Organizations | Time Frame | |
| Embrace the Tipping Point Planning Program (TPP) | ✓ | Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission; SWCD | ✓ | ✓ | | Sea Grant Tipping Point Team; Portage River Basin Council; Ohio Department of Natural Resources; Ohio Environmental Protection Agency | S | |
| Update the Ottawa County Comprehensive Plan | ✓ | Commissioners; Engineer; Sanitary Engineer; Health Dept; SWCD | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Local Developers; Businesses; Regional Growth Partnership-Jobs Ohio; Residents; Students | S | |
| Perform Livability Audits with Local Communities | ✓ | Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission; Health Dept; Engineer; Sanitary Engineer | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Great Lakes Community Action Partnership; Social Service Agencies; United Way | S | |
| Develop Effective Nuisance and Property Maintenance Standards | ✓ | County Commissioners; Ottawa Land Bank; Health Dept. | ✓ | ✓ | | Fire Depts; Neighborhood Groups; Homeowner Associations | S | |
| Collaborate on Downtown Planning Efforts | ✓ | Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Local Chambers; Downtown Business Assn; Main Street Groups | M | |
| Reduce Blight and Improve Public Infrastructure in Targeted Areas | ✓ | Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission; Commissioners; Land Bank; Engineer; Sanitary Engineer | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Regional Growth Partnership-Jobs Ohio; Ohio Department of Development | O | |
| Help facilitate Residential Development | ✓ | Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission; Engineer; Sanitary Engineer | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Local Chambers; Developers; Magruder Hospital; Regional Growth Partnership; Banks; Realtors | O | |
| Infuse Zoning / Subdivision Regulations with Best Practices | ✓ | Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission | ✓ | ✓ | | Planning/Zoning Commissions; Developers | O | |
| Pursue the feasibility of Improving Preventative Health Care Opportunities | ✓ | Commissioners; Health Dept. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Magruder Hospital; Businesses; Stakeholders | M | |
| Conserve Prime Farmlands and Environmentally-Sensitive Areas | ✓ | Ottawa County Regional Planning Commission; Sanitary Engineer; Health Dept; Parks; Soil & Water Conservation District | | ✓ | | Farmers; Farm Bureau; Black Swamp Conservancy; Portage River Basin Council Coalition | O | |
| Increase Accessibility to Healthy and Locally-Sourced Food | ✓ | Farm Bureau; Commissioners; Health Dept | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | Local Chambers; Farmers; Farmer's Markets; USDA-Farm Services Agency; OSU Extension; Event Planners | M | |

OCIC Visioning Survey Results

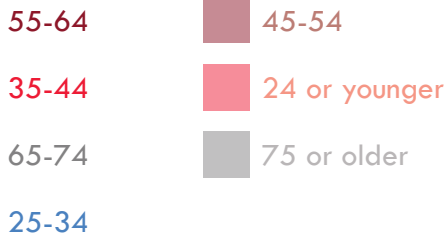
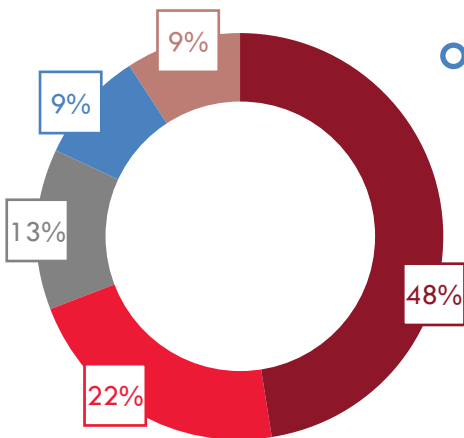


Respondent Demographics

I represent the following community or organization type...



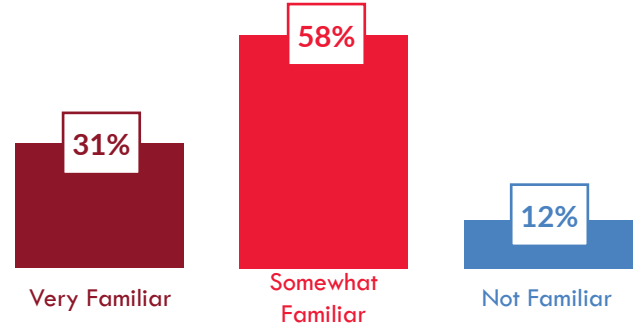
Age



Survey Questions

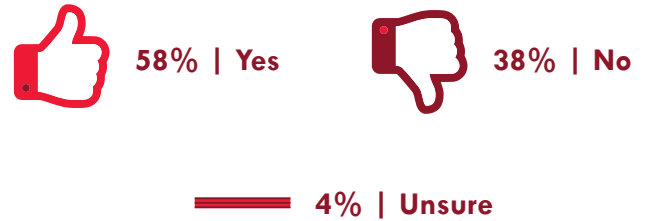
1.

How familiar are you with the types of services the Regional Growth Partnership provides?



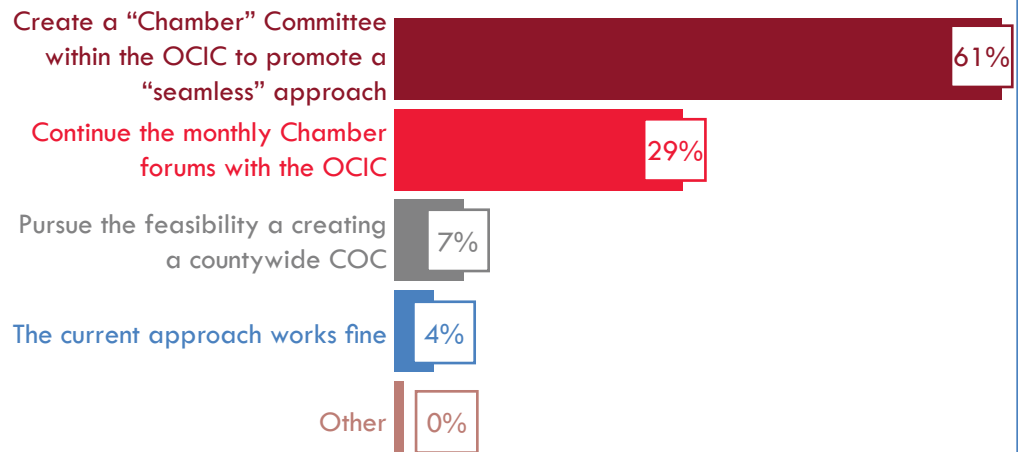
2.

In your opinion, does Ottawa County have enough land and sites readily available to promote business attraction and business retention?



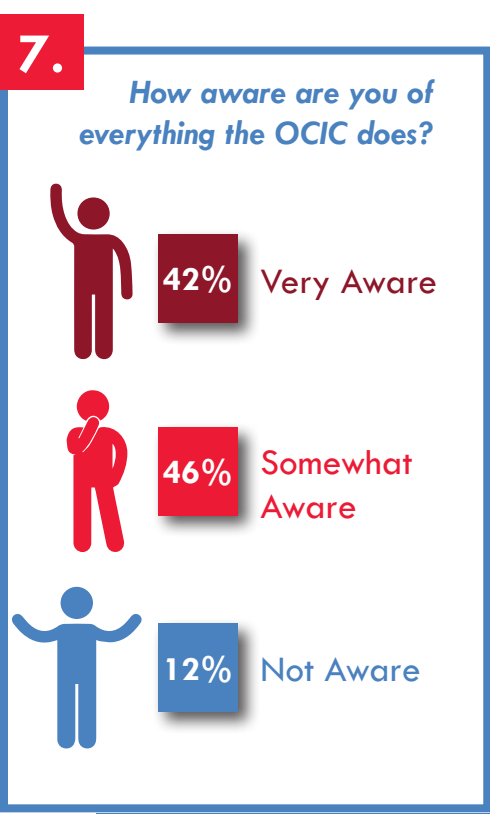
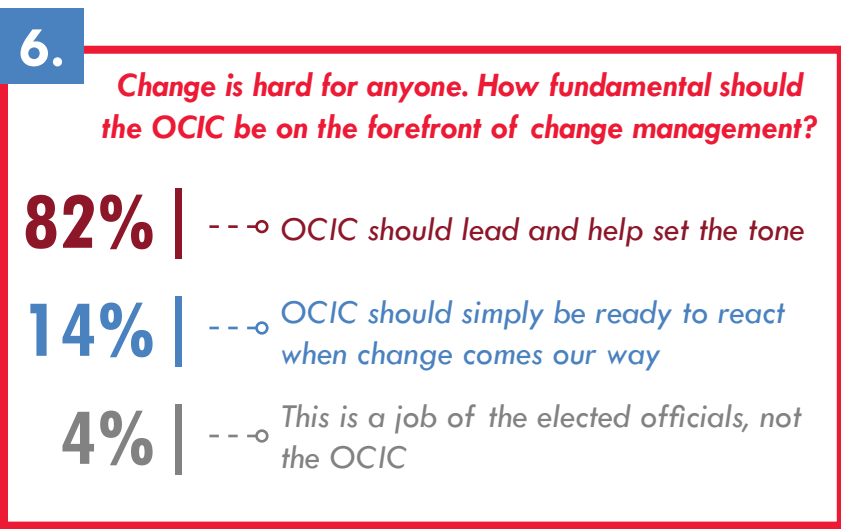
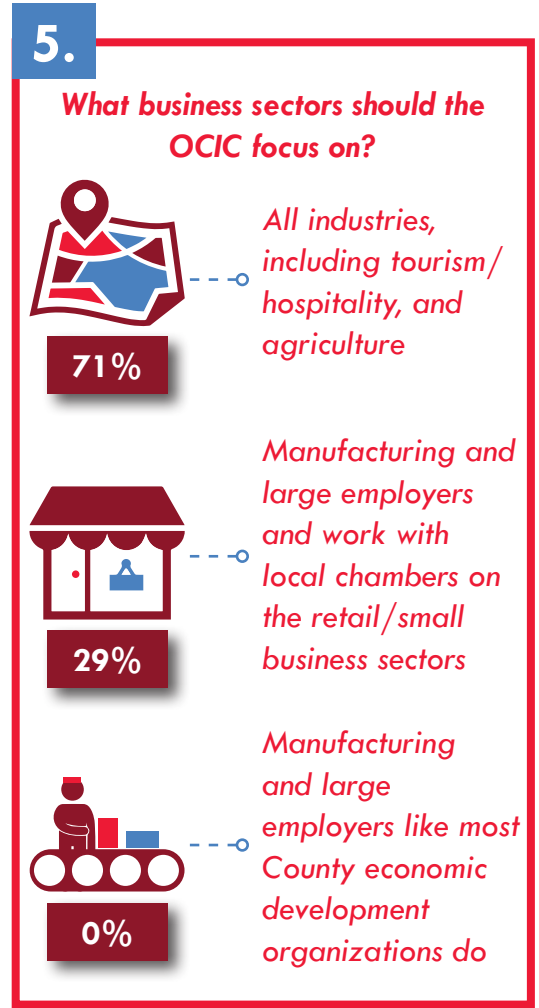
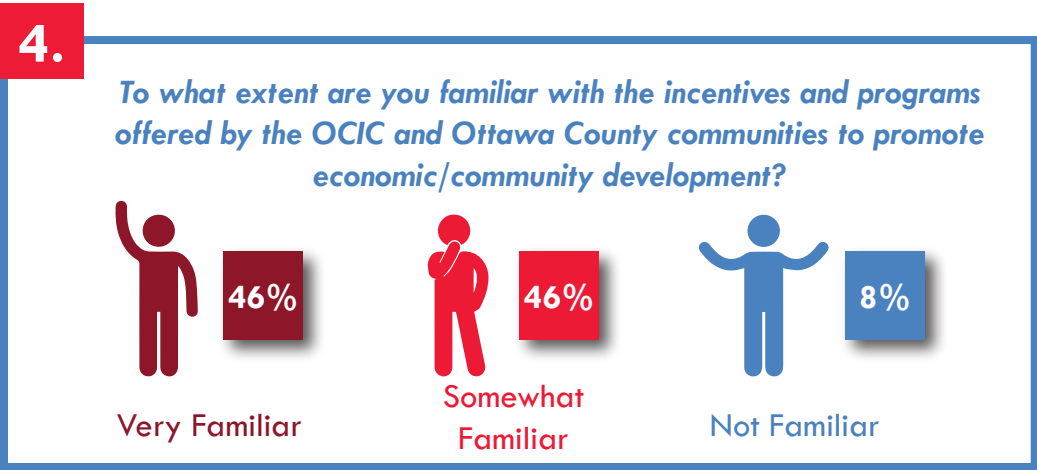
3.

Ottawa County Stakeholders indicated a desire to create an effective approach with local chambers to help retail and small businesses? What do you feel is the best method to promote this approach?



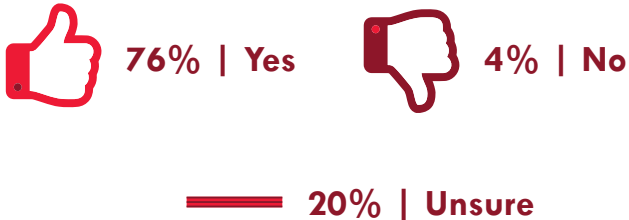
86%

of respondents have lived in Ottawa County for longer than 21 years

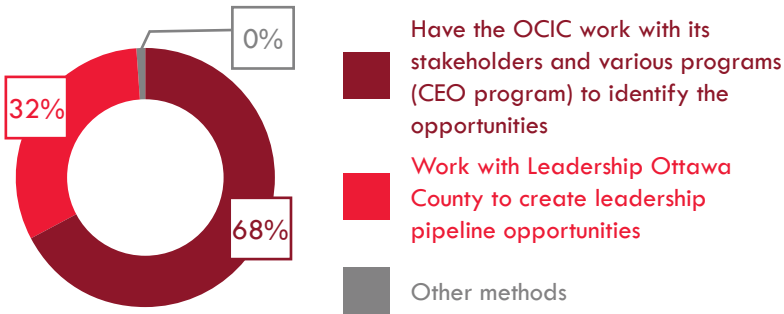




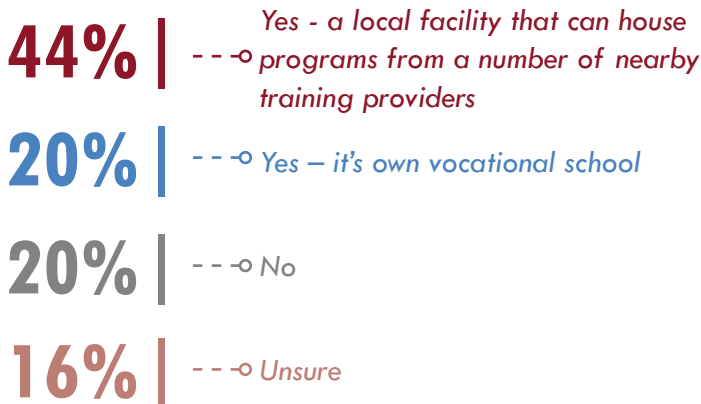
9. OCIC Stakeholders indicated a desire for a comprehensive community development approach to Econ. Dev. but doing so may require additional resources. Should the OCIC pursue a staffing and funding plan to pursue the type of approach?



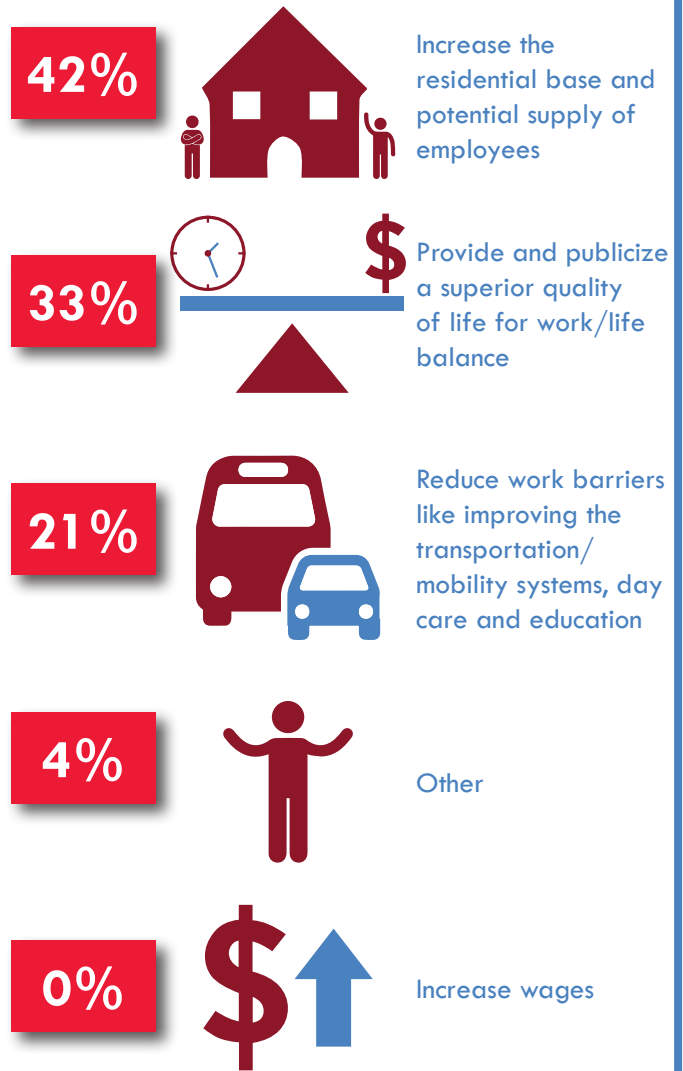
11. It appears there's a need to get young leaders into the pipeline to serve on committees and boards in Ottawa County. What's the best way of doing this?



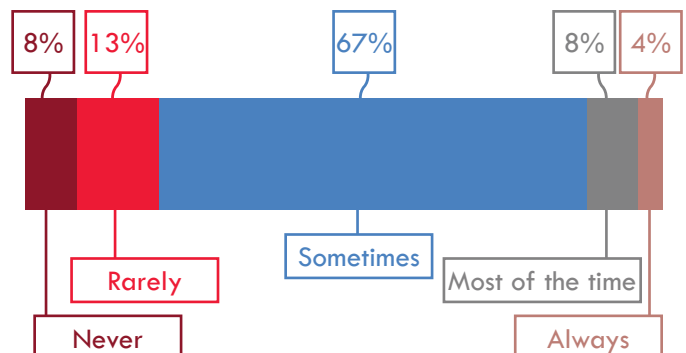
13. Ottawa County currently sends its high school students to vocational facilities outside of the county (Vanguard, EHOVE, and Penta). Should the OCIC and its stakeholders pursue the feasibility of developing its own complimentary program or satellite facility?



10. What's the most effective way to reduce the workforce problem?



12. In your opinion, what percent of the time has a government organization been effective at solving economic, market-based problems?





14.

Aside from the immediate issue of workforce shortages and skills, what's the single largest issue facing Ottawa County in the future?



32%

A culture unwilling to change



28%

A lack of residential housing



28%

Changing demographics



8%

Transportation network / Accessibility issues



4%

Water quality issues (Lake Erie)



0%

High cost of living

15.

Should the OCIC get more involved in helping to revitalize and redevelop blighted, condemned and vacant properties?



56% | Yes



20% | No

24% | Unsure

16.

Is the Internet infrastructure suitable enough to attract and retain businesses and residents in Ottawa County?

42% | --o Yes, but only in our developed areas

35% | --o No, Internet service is spotty and unsatisfactory

12% | --o Yes, our service is good in most places

12% | --o Unsure

17.

If an affordable, preventable health care model could be developed in Ottawa County, how effective would it be as a selling point in helping to attract and retain businesses and residents in Ottawa County?



32%

Very Effective



20%

Fairly Effective



36%

Not Effective



12%

Unsure

Ottawa Community Improvement Corporation Strategic Plan Survey

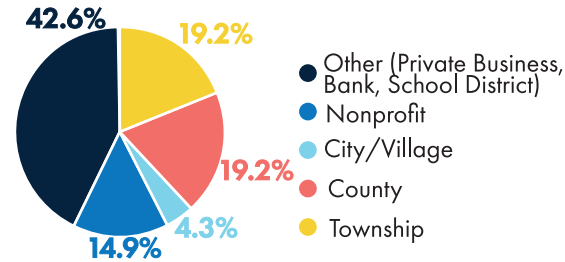
Top 3 Improvement Areas



Top 3 OCIC Priorities



Response Rate

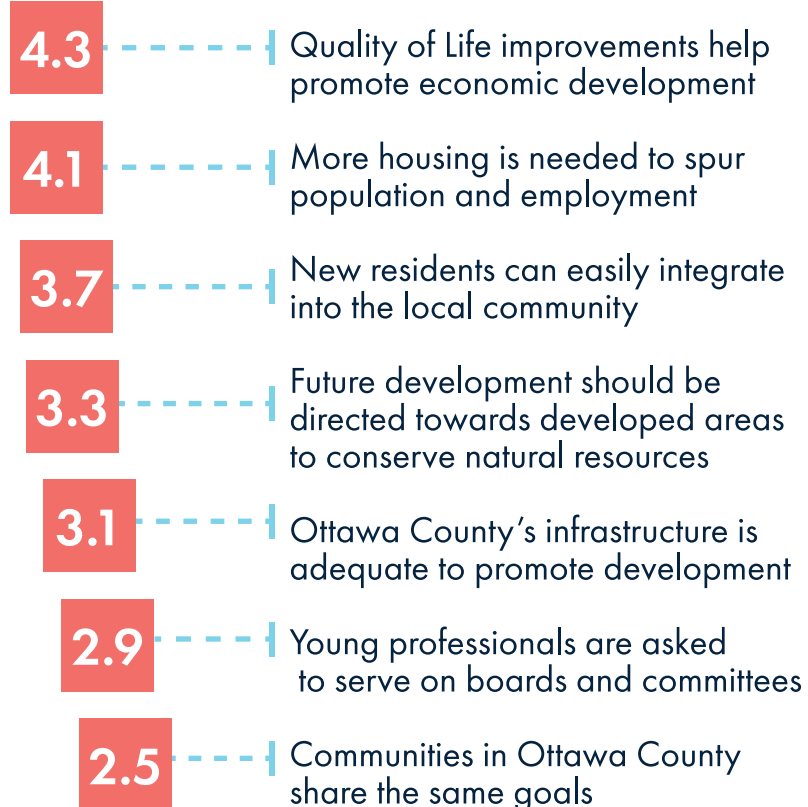


Top 3 biggest challenges facing Ottawa County and hindering it from achieving optimal development?



"Ottawa County has great schools, communities are safe, but we need to build on that and promote to be attractive to young families and businesses."

Rate your opinion on the following statements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree):



Positive and Negative changes to the community over the last 10-20 years:



