



20
24



Economic Development,
Tourism & Cultural Initiatives Department

YEAR IN REVIEW



Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives



STAFF PHOTO: Joe Muto, Kevin Dekok, Natalie Walker, Ray Petro, Mike Mansfield, Glenn Brown, Rob Dallaway, Lindsay House, Jillian Page, Chelsey Tobin, Bruce Jacobson, Amber Kane, Connor Webb, Kara Davey, Kara Potter, Betty Jo Cox, Stacey Kursikowski, Tara Tran, Leigh Ann Ditchburn, Mae Legg. (Not all staff members are pictured)

City of Brantford **Economic Development, Tourism & Cultural Initiatives**

Economic Development

AdvantageBrantford.ca

Tourism

DiscoverBrantford.ca

Business Resource Centre

BusinessResourceCentre.ca

Sanderson Centre

SandersonCentre.ca

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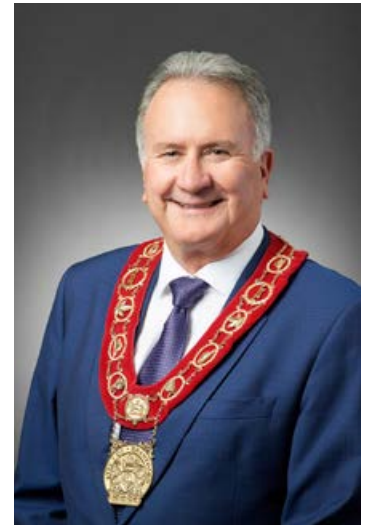
A few words about 2024

In 2024 the City of Brantford experienced strong economic growth driven by significant business investments, strategic municipal investments, and a growing tourism sector.

We welcomed several new businesses to Brantford, particularly in the fields of advanced manufacturing, food and beverage production, and warehousing and distribution. These investments not only brought quality jobs to our residents but also reaffirmed Brantford's growing reputation as a city of opportunity and a trusted destination for investment.

On the municipal front, the City of Brantford's first multi-year budget (2024-2027) reflected a bold commitment to enhancing public services and infrastructure. Key investments included improvements to housing and expansion of transit infrastructure.

We also built new partnerships with those who believe in Brantford's future. NHL player Zach Hyman and family, purchased the Brantford Bulldogs OHL team and made a commitment to the team staying in Brantford. Additionally, Costco Canada finished building one of its largest retail locations in Ontario to serve Brantford's growing community.



Mayor Kevin Davis

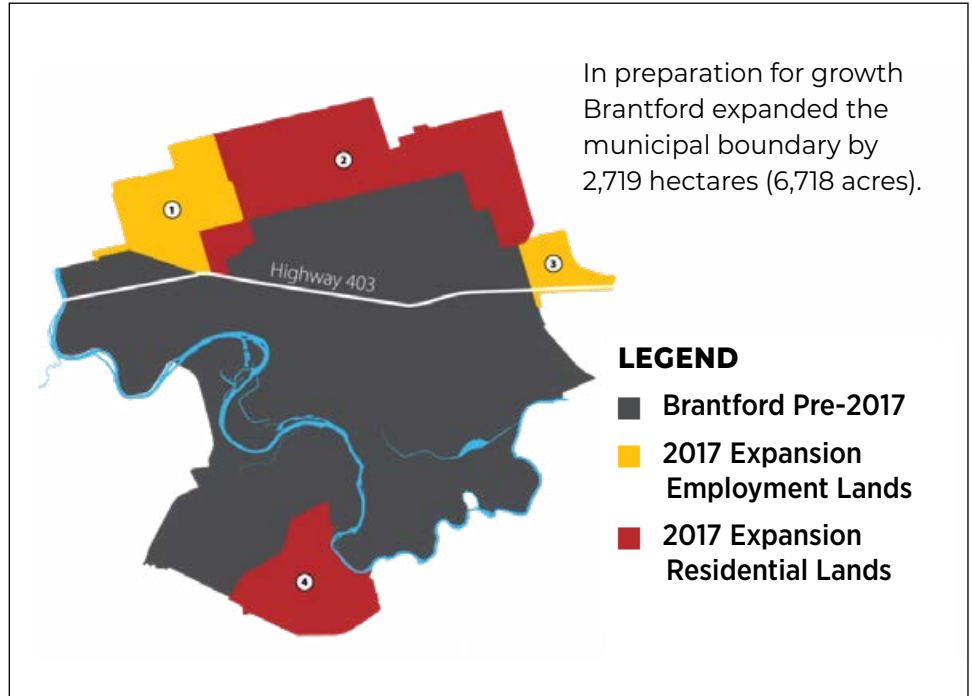
Within these pages, you'll find a snapshot of the successful economic year that we achieved alongside partners, stakeholders, and community organizations.



Brantford is Growing Fast

Over the next 8 years, the population of Brantford is expected to grow by 15,000 people, and again by 50,000 by 2051. That is why Brantford is identified as a “Large and fast-growing municipality” by the Ontario government.

Population (Projected)	Year
104,688	2021
(120,000)	2032
(165,000)	2051



Hectares (gross)	New Land
739	New Employment Areas
1,980	New Residential Areas
2,719	Total Expansion Lands

Ready for Growth

City of Brantford Council has approved several municipal projects in 2024:

- Brantford Transit Moving Forward Plan (will extend annual service hours from 86,300 to 204,700)
- Sports and Entertainment Centre (5,000+ seat multi-use facility)
- New Southwest Community Park with cricket, soccer, pickle ball, playground and splash pad
- New Library Branch and Elementary School in West Brant
- New 40 long term care beds added to John Noble Home
- New shelter spaces and family-sized affordable housing units on West Street
- Healthy Kids Action Plan 2024-2028
- Economic Development Strategy 2024-2031 (details on page 19)

Brantford's economy is diverse and resilient

Employment Statistics	
5.4% 2024 average unemployment rate in Brantford (compared to 7.0% provincial rate)	77,000 Local workforce
2,800 acres serviced employment area	986 acres New industrial lands with easy access to Hwy 403
1,001,000 sq.ft Vacant industrial space	188 employers have 50 or more staff

TOP 6 SECTORS (by number of jobs)

Rank	Industry	2024 Jobs	2023 Median Annual Wage
1	Sales and Services	15,810	\$38,873
2	Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	10,294	\$52,364
3	Business, finance and administration	8,876	\$58,622
4	Education, law and social, community and government services	6,646	\$77,483
5	Manufacturing and utilities	6,391	\$54,348
6	Health occupations	4,655	\$61,915

(Source: https://www.advantagebrantford.ca/en/invest-and-grow/labour-force.aspx?_mid_=151445#Local-job-counts-and-wages-by-NOC)

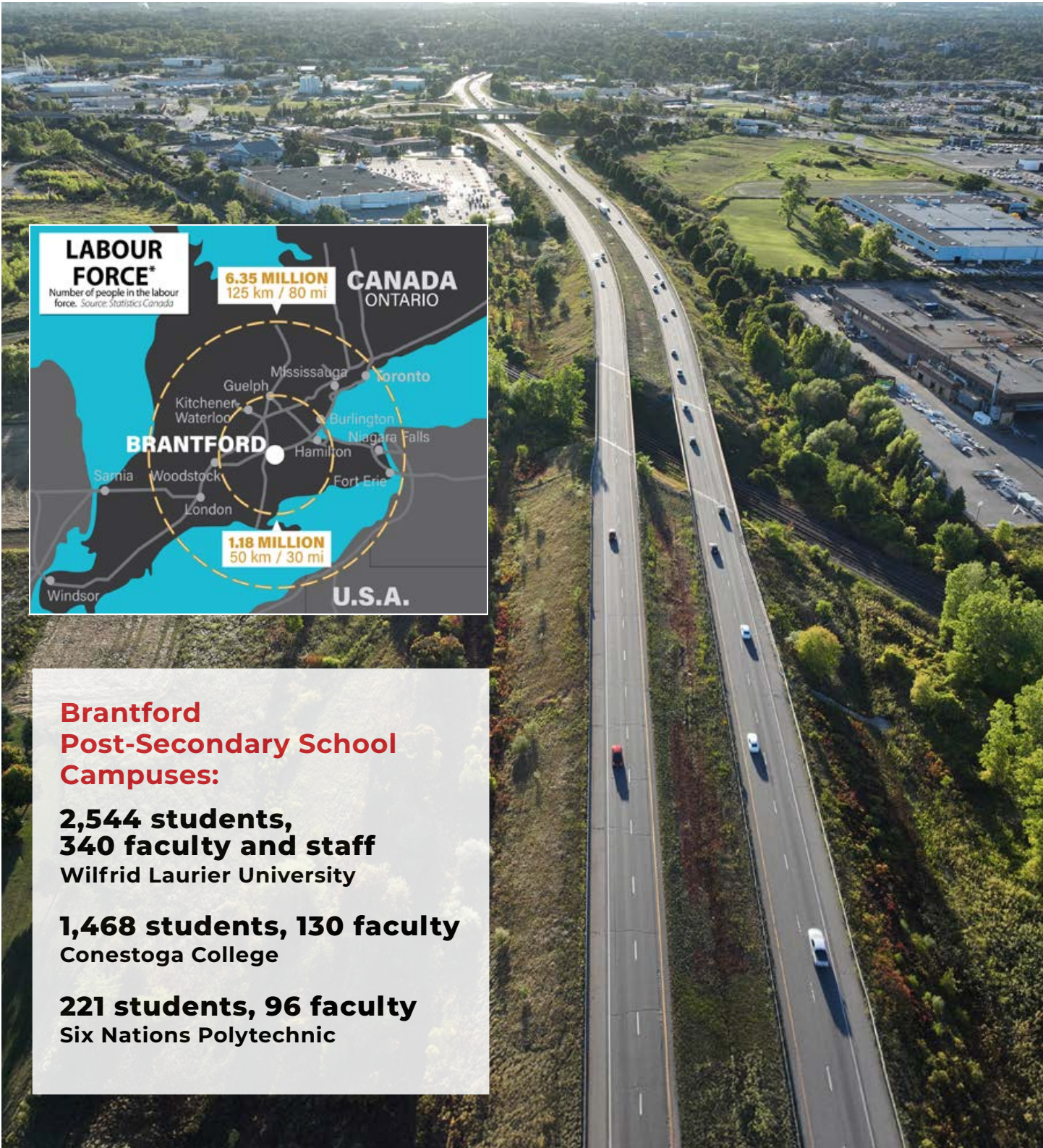
BRANTFORD MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

The municipally-owned airport is used for private and corporate air travel, plane storage, maintenance, and flight training through the Brantford Flying Club. The airport also serves charter flights for the following organizations: W. Ross McDonald School for the Blind, Hope Air Medical Transport, Ministry of Natural Resources animal tracking, pipeline maintenance and utility inspections.



37

new T-hangars under construction.



Brantford Post-Secondary School Campuses:

2,544 students, 340 faculty and staff
Wilfrid Laurier University

1,468 students, 130 faculty
Conestoga College

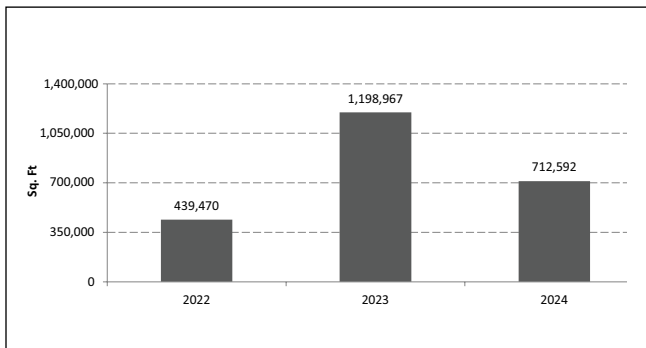
221 students, 96 faculty
Six Nations Polytechnic

Building Construction Activity

Building Construction Activity

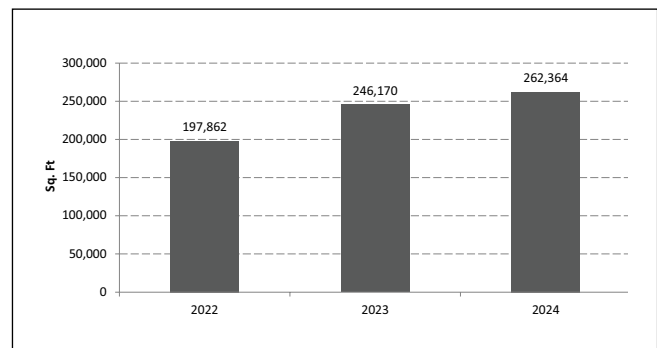
The total Building Permit construction value for the City of Brantford in 2024 was \$590 million - the highest value recorded to date - illustrating robust economic investment. The 2024 total is an increase of 8% over the total value for 2023 (\$550 million).

Industrial Sq. ft. – New or Expanded Space (2022-2024)



New or expanded industrial floor space (sq. ft) based on building permits (Excludes renovations or other capital investments to existing space)

Commercial Sq. ft. - New or Expanded Space (2022-2024)



New or expanded commercial floor space (sq. ft) (Excludes predominately residential mixed-use, or other capital investments to existing space)



Grand Opening of Costco Wholesale, 175 Roy Blvd.

On November 8, 2024, the 161,000 square foot retail warehouse and associated gas bar opened. The collective effort of current and past City Councils, City staff, and provincial agencies resulted in the construction of one of the largest Costco retail warehouses in Southwestern Ontario that employs 220 full-time staff.

Business Investment Highlights

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

Brantford continues to attract small, medium, and large-scale industrial development providing diverse employment opportunities and investment.



1 GoTRG

470 Hardy Road **(56 employees)**

2 Tenaxx

151 Garden Ave **(30 employees)**

3 Vision Truck

167 Garden Ave. **(22 employees)**

4 Rubber Source

22 Morton Ave. E. **(4 employees)**

5 GoodTimes Brand Inc. Warehouse

80 Morton Ave. E. **(2 employees)**

6 Koolatron

27 Catharine Ave. **(58,015 sq.ft)**

7 Ingenia Polymers

565 Greenwich St. **(28,488 sq.ft)**

8 Grissin Bon

43 Roy Blvd **(27,114 sq.ft)**

9 Mott Manufacturing

452 Hardy Road. **(14,885 sq.ft)**

10 Uniqpol

21 Middleton St. **(11,892 sq.ft)**

Getting to know Brantford's Employers



A full list of employers can be viewed at [AdvantageBrantford.ca/IndustrialDirectory](https://www.advantagebrantford.ca/IndustrialDirectory)

Each year City Council representatives meet with the executives at local companies. This program was revamped in 2024 to enhance the channels through which companies can share their news, business insights, and questions and concerns with Council and City staff.



Vision Truck opened 51,900 sq. ft. in the City's Braneida Business Park



City representatives tour Vision Truck's new facility



Broadway Manufacturing demonstrates part of the advanced engineering process for milling machine parts used by other companies.

Economic Development staff are always available to engage with industrial employers and informal visits may be arranged. Contact staff through email at advantage@brantford.ca

Ingenia Polymer Corporation cut the ribbon on a new office and 28,488 sq.ft. warehouse expansion at their Canadian plant, 565 Greenwich Street, Brantford. The firm has 8 manufacturing sites worldwide. They are adding two new lines in 2025 which will create 10-12 new manufacturing jobs in Brantford.



Boosting Local Entrepreneurs

The Brantford-Brant Business Resource Centre (BRC) assists in the creation and growth of small businesses in the City of Brantford, County of Brant, and surrounding communities. For over 20 years, the BRC has offered free business advice and hosted workshops with expert advisors. Entrepreneurs can schedule a consultation, sign up for workshops, and apply for grant programs to help start a business or grow their business. For more information visit Brantford.ca/BRC.

BRC Statistics	
682 business consultations	204 new jobs created
36 training events and workshops	836 people attended
187 business registrations	166 small businesses started

Student Biz fosters entrepreneurship among high school students who can participate in a hands-on learning experience while earning two high school co-op credits. The program is delivered in partnership with the Grand Erie District School Board and the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board.

27 Student Biz businesses started

12 Summer Company businesses started

22 Students earned co-op credits

\$36K Provincial grants awarded



With the help of the Summer Company program, 16-year-old Madison Nantais grew Brantford Lawn Clippers to 55 customers. Her company continues to operate beyond the 2024 program.

starter company PLUS

Starter Company Plus is designed to support entrepreneurs (18 years and over) looking to start, expand, or purchase a business. Approved participants attend six business workshops and receive unlimited one-on-one guidance with experienced business advisors and local mentors. All participants are invited to pitch their business to a grant committee for a chance to be awarded up to \$5,000.

84 participants approved

10 businesses started

28 jobs created

\$80K grants disbursed

6 businesses expanded

500+ Community referrals

In 2024 this program marked 10 years of success stories! These are some of the businesses where you can support the local economy.

10 years in business

Bare Your Beauty (Skincare and Wellness Services) 155 Brant Ave. bareurbeauty.com

8 years in business

Kids Can Speak (Speech and Language Services) 198 Brant Ave. brantford-kidscanspeak.com

ROLE (Basketball Skills Specialist and Holistic Development) roleplayers.ca

Fitness Reset (Pelvic Floor Fitness Specialist) fitnessresetinfo.com

Infinum Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (Martial Arts Training) 125 Sherwood Dr. Unit 34 infinumbjj.com

Branches of Life (Private Home Healthcare) branchesoflife.ca

7 years in business

Lionhead Electric Inc. (Electrician) lionheadelectric.com

Our Kitchen Brantford Commercial Kitchen for Small Businesses, 20 Roy Blvd. Unit 34 ourkitchenbrantford.ca

Elle and Lui Events Wedding and Celebrations Planning, elleetluievents.com

Senshi Academy of Martial Arts Martial Arts Training, 111 Sherwood Dr. Unit 39

Bathtub Bakery Craft Soap, Skin Care and Candles bathtubbakery.ca

4 years in business

From Scratch Bistro (Café and Bakery) 42 George St. fromscratchcafebistro.com

2 years in business

Altitude Coffee Roasters (Café and Coffee Distributer) 174 Brant Ave. altitudecoffee.ca/#cafe

Brantford on the Big Screen

Local film activity grew again in 2024. Residents will see Brantford as the backdrop in several large budget productions and commercials, such as the shows Reacher, Mayday and Murdoch Mysteries, and the Nissan car commercial.

Film Statistics	
Film projects	13
Active filming	39
Estimated cast and crew on filmsets	850
Film Inquiries	68
Community donations	\$4,000
Hotel room nights for film crews	1,800



The Brantford Municipal Airport is bookable as a film location.



TV series Murdoch Mysteries regularly films in Brantford.

Welcome to the Brantford Bulldogs



Fans are now officially cheering on the Brantford Bulldogs as their hometown Ontario Hockey League team. New team owners, led by the Hyman family (including NHL player Zack Hyman), will keep the Bulldogs playing in Brantford for the long term. The newly renovated Civic Centre will be home ice until a new 5,300 seat Sports and Entertainment Centre is built.

The Bulldogs Foundation uses proceeds from 50/50 tickets sold at home games and other fundraising initiatives to support local charities:

\$41, 614 Brant Food For Thought

\$24,382 Brantford Community Hockey Take a Shot Program

\$5,000 Arnold Anderson Sport Fund

\$27,443 Thrive Group Support Services

\$6,650 Other



Stuart and Spencer Hyman and Mayor Kevin Davis during the press conference announcing the Hyman Family as the new owners of the Bulldogs

Come Around to a New Downtown

The downtown revitalization project will transform downtown Brantford into a destination, improving how downtown Brantford looks, feels, and functions.

NEW underground infrastructure will increase the capacity to support future development in the downtown.

NEW wider sidewalks, new lighting and street furniture, new bike lanes and reconstructed roadways will modernize these main streets to become attractive and safe for everyone.

Construction of Phase 1:

- Will commence in Summer 2025
- Will include Brant Avenue from Dalhousie Street to Colborne Street, and Icomm Drive from Colborne Street to Clarence Street South

Replacing the existing infrastructure will require digging 4.5 storeys (40 to 50 feet) underground!

Some of the underground infrastructure was installed 100 years ago!

Before and during construction, the Downtown Revitalization Ambassador is dedicated to:

- Meeting all affected businesses and providing timely construction updates
- Providing residents, commuters, and visitors with information about road closures and detours

Visit www.Brantford.ca/NewDowntown and learn more about this exciting transformation.



View from Colborne Street in front of Harmony Square, looking east



View from the corner of Dalhousie Street at Market Street, looking west

Discover Brantford

In 2024, the Discover Brantford team took an inside out approach to tourism: encouraging residents to re-discover their hometown and for new residents to become tourists without leaving home. Brantford's largest segment of tourists is the 'Visiting Friends and Relatives' market, and with significant population growth occurring, the "resident first" focus taps into a large and accessible market.

Discover Brantford Statistics

81	Sport Tourism Events = \$6.1M in Economic Impact
291	Corporate Events = \$3.4M in Economic Impact
+22%	increase in website visitors on discoverbrantford.ca
2M	digital ad impressions
45K	Visitor Guides distributed
51,375	passports sold for International Villages

150th anniversary of the invention of the telephone

Over 650 residents and visitors joined the City of Brantford to celebrate the legacy of Dr. Alexander Graham Bell and the 150th anniversary of the invention of the telephone with a series of free, family-friendly events that took place from Friday, July 26 to Sunday, July 28, 2024. A new exhibit, "Life on the line: The Evolution of the Bell Telephone", opened at the Bell Homestead National Historic Site to mark this special occasion.



\$600K reinvested into the community from the Municipal Accommodation Tax

On March 1, 2024, the City of Brantford implemented a Municipal Accommodation Tax collected by all hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts, including those sold online (Airbnb, VRBO, etc.). In its first year, the Municipal Accommodation Tax grossed \$616,976.49 which will all be reinvested in the community to further enhance Brantford as a destination for visitors.

Spotlight on Local Attractions

Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts

The 1,125 seat theatre is hosting an increasing number of shows and events, and growing attendance that rivals pre-Covid levels. In addition to musical, theatrical, and children's performances that are making stops in Brantford, the theatre is frequently rented out for commercial uses, dance and other competitions, and charitable shows, which is attracting new audiences within Brantford and all over Ontario. Join us for the 2025-2026 season, which will be announced June 10. Learn more at www.SandersonCentre.ca



Sanderson Centre 2016

Brantford Farmers' Market

The Brantford Farmers' Market is a 177-year-old institution in downtown Brantford. Local butchers and cheese mongers are a staple at the market, along with 24 other indoor stalls selling fresh produce, baked goods, arts and crafts and specialty retail. During the summer months, more stalls are opened outdoors, and shoppers can enjoy Trail Mix events, which includes music and entertainment on select dates.

The market is an excellent way to support the local economy.



Two holiday market events at the Farmers' Market included Santa Claus and a scavenger hunt for kids.

Open on Fridays and Saturdays

Home-grown Arts and Culture

Public Art

2024 was the year of murals! Three new murals commissioned by the City added colour and vibrancy to public spaces while celebrating historic events and cultural icons in Brantford. In 2024, Wilfrid Laurier also commissioned the “Forever Golden” mural celebrating 25 years of the Brantford campus.



The Pages of the Grand River, Blaze Wiradharna



A star over Brantford: A tribute to Phil Hartman, DRIFT Mural Co.



Community Peace Mural, Yasaman Mehrsa



Forever Golden, community paint-by-numbers mural by Stephanie Scott

Trail Mix

The third year of the Trail Mix program continued to amplify Brantford's local musicians. Trail users scanned the QR codes posted on the kilometre markets between Hardy Road and River Road and listened to 30 new original songs performed by 24 local artists.

Culture Days on the Trails

On September 21, Culture Days on the Trails welcomed over 860 visitors to stroll 1.5km of our beautiful trails while enjoying 12 mini performances of live music, dance, painting and more.



Local artists are encouraged to add their contact information to the City's Artist Database to receive direct communication about future paid opportunities. Sign up at Brantford.ca/ArtistDatabase.

Economic Development Strategy 2024-2031

The new Economic Development Strategy was approved by Brantford City Council to guide economic and tourism investments over the next seven years, which will be a period of rapid growth and development.

Goal 1: Transform downtown into a “destination” that residents are proud of.

Goal 2: Be investment ready and business friendly by creating a business-first climate.

Goal 3: Integrate economic development (including small business), real estate and tourism with critical City initiatives, including transit and active transportation planning.

Goal 4: Recognize the Creative Industries sector as a significant economic and social pillar of the economy.

Goal 5: Work with the local post-secondary institutions to provide more employment opportunities to support local business.

Goal 6: Improve partnerships to build a more cohesive business community.

Goal 7: Build tourism for the people of Brantford first.

Goal 8: Increase the resilience of Brantford’s economy from the impact of external influences such as international trade conflicts.



Conceptual Rendering of Downtown Entertainment Area

Revamped mission statements were also established for the Brantford Municipal Airport and the Brantford Farmers’ Market to kick-start a renewed focus on these city-owned assets.

Brantford Municipal Airport

Mission: To provide private, corporate, and emergency service users with a one-stop hub for small aircraft aviation services, amenities, and flight training.

Brantford Farmers’ Market

Mission: A meeting place for the community to find local, fresh, award-winning products

Learn more about the 2024-2031 Economic Development Strategy

[AdvantageBrantford.ca/EcDevStrategy](https://www.advantagebrantford.ca/EcDevStrategy)

Looking Ahead to 2025

There's a lot of economic activity to look forward to in 2025:

- Brantford Beats & Eats, the first annual signature summer event on August 2, 2025 featuring free family-friendly entertainment, and a concert at the Sanderson Centre.
- The Brantford Red Sox Inter-County Baseball team was purchased by Terry Smith, a former NFL player and reported inspiration for the TV show "Ted Lasso". Brantford Red Sox games played at Cockshutt Park will be free to attend throughout the 2025 season.
- Doors Open Along the Grand River on May 10, 2025 include a behind-the-scenes look at 15 unique heritage buildings and sites across Brantford, County of Brant and Six Nations.
- Planning for the new Headwaters Employment Lands (approximately 1,400 acres) to begin.
- A new Downtown Entertainment District will be created to recognize existing attractions such as the Sanderson Centre, Harmony Square, Elements Casino, and the future new Sports and Entertainment Centre.
- Designs for the proposed new Sports and Entertainment Centre (SEC) are underway. This multi-use venue could serve as a major anchor tenant within the Downtown to host higher profile sports, entertainment, concerts, and trade shows. Learn more: www.Brantford.ca/SEC
- The City's new Trade and Procurement Working Group will assess risks, identify solutions, develop strategic actions and collaborate with local businesses to strengthen Brantford's economic resilience.

