

A MITAGS ACCELERATE PROJECT

# GETTING TO WORK

EXPLORING LABOUR  
MARKET DYNAMICS  
IN SAUGEEN SHORES,  
ONTARIO

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# GETTING TO WORK

The 'Getting to Work' research initiative was completed as a six-month Mitacs Accelerate Internship, funded by Bruce Power and the University of Guelph, and directed by the Town of Saugeen Shores. The project was also supported by an Advisory Committee with membership from the Town of Saugeen Shores Chamber of Commerce, the Four County Labour Market Planning Board, and leading experts in rural research.

Thank you to the funding partners and Advisory Committee members, including:

- Ryan Gibson, Associate Professor & Libro Professor in Regional Economic Development, School of Environmental Design & Rural Development, University of Guelph
- Heather Hyde, Economic Development Officer, Town of Saugeen Shores
- John Peevers, Director of Corporate Communications, Bruce Power
- Gemma Mendez-Smith, Executive Director, Four County Labour Market Planning Board
- Kimberley Inniss-Petersen, Executive Director, Saugeen Shores Chamber of Commerce
- Karen Foster, Associate Professor & Canada Research Chair in Sustainable Rural Futures for Atlantic Canada, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Dalhousie University



# GETTING TO WORK: INVESTIGATING LABOUR MARKET DYNAMICS IN SAUGEEN SHORES, ONTARIO

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To learn more about the *Getting to Work* research initiative, please visit [www.ruraldev.ca/getting-to-work](http://www.ruraldev.ca/getting-to-work).

## DISCLAIMER:

This summary report presents a high-level overview of areas of interest to key stakeholders and should be read as a broad exploration of existing research on rural labour markets as well as the specific challenges and opportunities faced in the unique circumstances of the Town of Saugeen Shores, Ontario. It should be considered as contextual background for the broader *Getting to Work: Investigating Labour Market Challenges in Saugeen Shores, Ontario* research initiative.

The information included here is a summary of current knowledge about contributing factors to labour market dynamics in Saugeen Shores, Ontario. The knowledge base informing this summary is changing rapidly due to the emerging impacts and implications of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). The state of knowledge will evolve as additional investigation and research is conducted, so continuous review of reputable sources is advised. This summary report will be updated on a regular basis throughout the duration of the *Getting to Work* research initiative.

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# GETTING TO WORK:

## INVESTIGATING LABOUR MARKET DYNAMICS IN SAUGEEN SHORES, ONTARIO

### KEY MESSAGES + CONSIDERATIONS

#### Opportunities

- Saugeen Shores is viewed as an attractive place to live and work
- Growth of nuclear energy sector and associated businesses creates opportunities for leveraging that growth to invest in physical (roads, broadband, green infrastructure) and social (housing, recreation, childcare, social services) infrastructure
- Strong investment by local stakeholders in addressing challenges collaboratively

#### Challenges & Concerns

- Saugeen Shores is experiencing uneven economic growth, producing challenges in the affordability of living in the community, unequal access to opportunities, and tension between 'haves' and 'have nots'
- Rapid growth and investment in the nuclear energy sector has produced a perceived 'single focus' local economy and labour force
- Lack of clarity and direction in terms of 'what to do' to solve perceptions of growing inequality, foster community cohesion, and how to acknowledge, integrate, and address the needs of different stakeholders

#### Considerations for Saugeen Shores Leadership

- Economic Diversification:
  - The current and future social and economic well-being of Saugeen Shores is strongly connected to the sustainability and ongoing operation of Bruce Power and the ecosystem of nuclear energy businesses and services. To address the vulnerability of a 'single sector' economy, and its spillover effects to the local labour force, the Town should consider strategies for fostering and supporting a diversified local economy.
- Investments in Infrastructure:
  - The Town should look to partner with local businesses and institutions to invest dividends of growth into key physical and social infrastructure, including attainable housing, childcare, training partnerships, green infrastructure, recreational and community amenities, and broadband. The Town should consider policies that formalize these investments to ensure equity is included as a core consideration across these initiatives.
- Creating a 'Saugeen Shores' Model of Economic Development:
  - Growth has limits. Saugeen Shores has a unique opportunity to leverage its strengths to invest in addressing its challenges. This may require reconsidering economic development plans to consider broader community and social development challenges during a time of rapid change. Addressing local labour market challenges requires a suite of actions that go beyond business attraction, retention, and growth, and consider the social and environmental factors and values that are most important to the community.

# GETTING TO WORK:

## INVESTIGATING LABOUR MARKET DYNAMICS IN SAUGEEN SHORES, ONTARIO

### BACKGROUND

Prior to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Saugeen Shores was the fastest growing community in Bruce County, experiencing an 8.3% increase in population since 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2016), and receiving recognition as one of Canada's Top 25 Best Places to Live by MoneySense, ranking 14th in the national list in 2018 and 6th in the Ontario list of Best Places to Live (MoneySense, 2018). Notably, in this same ranking process, Saugeen Shores ranked within the overall Top 10 in the category of Wealth and Economy. As such, the current economic reality in Saugeen Shores directly challenges broader narratives about rural decline - and the community ranks ahead of major cities like Toronto, Newmarket, and Whitby in terms of quality of life.

As a growing rural community, Saugeen Shores represents an interesting and dynamic case study for examining the implications of rapid change. As rural communities have faced decades of dramatic change, including out-migration of young people and skilled labour (Corbett, 2005; MacDonald, Sinclair, and Walsh, 2013), economic restructuring (Halseth and Ryser, 2006), and an uneven investment in infrastructure focused on moving resources out of rural regions (Epp & Whitson, 2006; Markey & Heisler, 2011), Saugeen Shores presents an interesting counter-example as a rapidly growing community that has been heavily invested in by both the private and public sector. At the same time, local business leaders have expressed the same concerns as many other places about being able to recruit and retain the right people to help them drive successful economic development (Langlois, 2019). Further, like the rest of the world, the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) has undoubtedly had significant impacts on the local economy in Saugeen Shores, the full weight of which it will take time to fully experience and understand.

Questions about the disconnect between a community that, prior to the pandemic, appeared to be thriving while many of its local businesses claimed they could not effectively recruit and retain the right people provides a critical point for investigating the implications of this misalignment for economic development. This is an important issue for rural and small-town communities across Canada and around the world, as Hayter, Barnes, and Bradshaw (2003) suggest the global economy cannot afford to ignore the size and importance of the economies and wealth of the Canadian periphery, and healthy labour market dynamics form a critical component of supporting local economic development. However, persistent data gaps make addressing these issues at the local level challenging, if not impossible - and the focus of existing labour force research on quantitative analysis leaves employers, employees, and governments without adequate information or recommendations about how they might identify and address the opportunities and challenges they face in real time to create strong, place-based economies that meet the needs of both employers and workers

## GETTING TO WORK: ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The 'Getting to Work' research initiative builds on community conversations about challenges in the local labour force in Saugeen Shores that started coalescing formally in 2019. Through a partnership with Bruce Power, the Town of Saugeen Shores, and the University of Guelph, funding for a Mitacs Accelerate internship was secured to support more in-depth research on these challenges and potential strategies for addressing them.

The internship took place from July to December 2020 and was supervised by Dr. Ryan Gibson (University of Guelph) and Heather Hyde (Town of Saugeen Shores), with additional input and direction from an Advisory Committee and key stakeholders. The Advisory Committee also included:

- John Peevers, Director - Corporate Communications, [Bruce Power](#)
- Heather Hyde, Economic Development Officer, [Town of Saugeen Shores](#)
- Karen Foster, PhD, Associate Professor; Canada Research Chair in Sustainable Rural Futures for Atlantic Canada - Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University
- Gemma Mendez-Smith, Executive Director, Four County Market Labour Board
- Kimberley Inniss-Petersen, Executive Director, [Saugeen Shores Chamber of Commerce](#)

The project aimed to:

- to build an understanding of methods for assessing the impact of local labour market dynamics on rural economic development in Saugeen Shores, Ontario
- to develop a comprehensive case study of the implications of the labour market dynamics for economic development in Saugeen Shores, Ontario
- to identify the opportunities and challenges to economic development for local stakeholders, including labour force development, business planning, cluster development, and infrastructure requirements, created by current labour market dynamics in a rapidly growing rural/small community
- to build recommendations and identify opportunities for place-based rural policy and investment initiatives that support rural economic development through addressing local labour market challenge

This project differs from existing labour market research locally and regionally as it highlights qualitative data about the experiences of employers, employees, and people looking for work in Saugeen Shores. Acquired through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, this qualitative data offers critical insights into the stories and experiences that may not be captured in statistics or quantitative data.

## DATA COLLECTION

From September through November, 23 interviews (ranging in length from approximately 30 minutes to as long as 90 minutes) were completed with stakeholders in the local labour market. This included:

- 10 employers and/or entrepreneurs
- 6 individuals looking for work in the area
- 7 individuals currently employed in the area

Of these, 14 women were interviewed, and 9 men. Interviewees lived and/or worked across the different communities within the municipality. While some participants did not identify specifically the community within Saugeen Shores they most closely identified with, others shared experiences across the different communities within the municipality. Each community was represented approximately as follows:

- 13 participants identified as having close ties to Port Elgin
- 4 participants identified as having close ties to Southampton
- 2 participants identified as having close ties to Saugeen Township
- 7 participants identified as having close ties to Saugeen Shores (no community specified) and communities within the region

Some interviewees lived outside of the area and commuted in to Saugeen Shores for work or were looking to return to the area for work. Similarly, some participants worked for employers that are located outside of Saugeen Shores, but which have significant influence on the local labour market.

While interviewees were not asked their age, interviews were completed with individuals across the full spectrum of labour participation, including young professionals, those mid-career, new entrants to the labour market, second or third career entrepreneurs, family business owners, and individuals close to retirement.

Interviews were conducted with employers, employees, and those seeking entry to the labour market across a broad range of sectors, including:

- Nuclear Energy & Utilities
- Retail
- Health
- Public Administration
- Agriculture
- Construction/Trades
- Entrepreneurship/Small Business
- Hospitality/Food Services
- Financial Services
- Social/Community Services

Participants were recruited through social media (through the Town of Saugeen Shores page, as well as local community groups), direct outreach via the Saugeen Shores Chamber of Commerce, and promotion via targeted media releases and local media outlets. They were asked to complete a confidential screening questionnaire to determine their eligibility (aged 18 and over, currently an employer/employee/looking for work in Saugeen Shores, and comfortable completing an interview in English).

## WHAT DID WE HEAR FROM PARTICIPANTS?

Whether they were an employer, employee, or looking for work, every participant noted a mixed range of opportunities and challenges in the local labour market in Saugeen Shores; their responses were neither entirely critical nor given through rose-coloured glasses. Some issues identified by participants were specific to the needs of employers or employees/those looking for work, and other issues were specific to particular sectors, but the majority of the opportunities and challenges identified by participants were perceived as cross-cutting issues that affected everyone in the community as a whole – and that the responsibility for addressing these issues was in the hands of all players in the local labour market.

To this end, nearly all participants noted that it was not the sole responsibility of the municipality or a single employer or organization to address every challenge or issue facing employers, employees, or those looking for work in Saugeen Shores. Instead, participants emphasized the importance of both local and regional collaboration among all players in the local economy as critical for developing responses to current and future challenges in the labour market.

Interestingly, regardless of sector, position, or location within/connection to Saugeen Shores, all participants highlighted similar challenges and opportunities. The key challenge for everyone was **addressing inequality in a divided economy**, which many indicated needed to be tackled through **transparent conversations** that acknowledge the challenges of living and working in Saugeen Shores, **commitments from all players to address issues of affordability and access** to opportunities by moving **strategy into action**.

### **For employers, the top concerns were:**

- **Recruiting and retaining staff in a competitive environment against employers that may be able to offer significantly higher compensation, benefits, and/or security**
- **Recruiting and retaining staff with the necessary 'soft' skills required to be an effective employee (showing up on time, communication, commitment, customer service, 'work hardening', team work, etc.)**
- **A lack of social and community amenities (like arenas, nightlife, or cultural events) that appeal to a broad range of people (i.e. young professionals want different amenities from young families or retirees).**
- **Challenges in recruiting and retaining youth to in-demand career paths.**
- **The need for more collaborative/coordinated efforts among networks, organizations, and institutions to support businesses, employees, and the local economy**

Many employers acknowledged that competing with large, high paying employers in the area was difficult for smaller businesses and did not blame staff for taking opportunities that offered higher pay, benefits, or more security. Employers within the nuclear and professional services sectors also expressed concerns about supporting other sectors. To address this, some employers committed to paying a 'living wage' (instead of minimum wage) geared to

local economic factors, others offered flexible work arrangements so that employees could pursue multiple employment opportunities (for example, working as a teacher or in retail while also working at a restaurant). Others focused on investing in employees through training and opportunities to advance (for example, support for becoming a franchise owner). However, several employers noted the difficulty of recruiting or retaining employees with the 'soft skills' (or 'work hardening') required to perform well on the job (echoing findings from research completed by organizations like the Four County Labour Market Planning Board). While some were working with local agencies and institutions (such as VPI Working Solutions, local high schools, and post-secondary institutions), many relied on recommendations and their own interviewing process to find and vet employees, a process of trial and error that they noted could be time consuming and challenging. Finally, employers emphasized that their connections to local networks (such as the Chamber of Commerce, Business Improvement Associations, and their respective professional associations, where applicable) were valuable, they would like to see more cohesion and collaboration among these networks to come up with joint solutions and 'one-window' services for connecting employers to potential employees, investing in support services, and leveraging opportunities to address challenges in the local economy.

**For employees and those looking for work, the top concerns were:**

- **The (un)affordability of living and working in the area due to the acuity of the perceived divide between individuals working high-paying jobs associated with the energy sector and those working in other sectors in the local economy**
- **A lack of transparency about employment opportunities and how to access them**
- **Concerns about large numbers of people commuting into the area but not living/investing in the community permanently displacing people who would like to live and work locally.**
- **Connecting new entrants, youth, and people changing careers mid-life to opportunities.**
- **The need for greater coordination and collaboration among employers, organizations, and institutions in the local economy to highlight current opportunities and create a 'one-window' service specific to Saugeen Shores**

Participants who were currently employed or looking for work in the area consistently emphasized that the presence of a major employer like Bruce Power offers both great opportunities and significant challenges. All participants expressed their deep affection for and connection to Saugeen Shores, with many having family or personal ties to the area, and an interest in accessing the opportunities made available through the growing nuclear energy sector in the region. However, the qualities that attracted people to the area (or kept them in the area) were matched with significant frustration about dynamics they perceived to be under the surface. These dynamics included a perceived lack of well-paying, secure positions *outside* the nuclear energy sector, a perceived inability for 'outsiders' or people without established social and professional networks in the area to access employment opportunities, and a deepening divide between the 'haves' and 'have nots' in the local economy. Good jobs (i.e. jobs that pay a living wage, offer benefits and security) are not

perceived as being available to everyone. These concerns are connected to issues of affordability, particularly housing and childcare. Participants highlighted the need for different types of housing to meet the needs of people at different life stages. They also highlighted concerns about the availability of childcare spaces, the affordability of those spaces, and the location of childcare centres in different communities within Saugeen Shores. Participants viewed childcare as a critical investment for supporting women's participation in the labour force. While some participants were aware of initiatives already underway to address the issue of attainable housing, many were not or were unsure what would come out of this process. Similarly, many participants were unaware or unsure of specific actions that could be taken by any one player (i.e. the Town, Bruce Power, the Chamber); instead, they emphasized the importance of employers and local institutions coordinating their efforts, looking beyond their own individual demands, and collaborating on solutions to support people working or looking for work in the area.

## CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIC TO THE TOWN OF SAUGEEN SHORES LEADERSHIP

Below, we have highlighted issues and ideas that may be of specific interest to leadership at the Town of Saugeen Shores as Town Council and Staff seek to support the needs and aspirations of local employers, workers, and people looking for work in the area:

### Issues

- For participants, supporting the local labour market was clearly about more than just the number of available jobs. Addressing the challenges in labour force dynamics requires addressing the entire suite of socio-economic challenges arising in Saugeen Shores as it experiences both the benefits and challenges of growth. If the challenges that uneven growth produces - such as access to a broad range of employment opportunities, affordable housing and childcare, social support networks, and other quality of life needs - are not acknowledged and transparently addressed, they stand to alienate community members and undo any benefits of economic growth.
- The rise of professional organizations and businesses associated with the nuclear sector is positive, but some participants felt that these businesses were pushing retail and food services businesses out of the downtown; as pressure on non-nuclear sectors of the economy increased and businesses close, some noted that those locations were often then occupied by professional services. While this may be beneficial for those businesses, there was concern that the features that make for a vibrant and attractive main-street (places to shop, eat, visit, etc.) - for both year-round residents and visitors alike - would disappear, creating a hollowing-out effect. Participants noted that this could have consequences not only for the footprint of the downtown, but also serves as a physical cover/indication of similar concerns in the type of work (and worker) that would be available in the community in the future. Participants were all keenly aware that the health and function of the local economy was closely tied to the sustainability and ongoing operation of Bruce Power.

- Participants from Saugeen Township noted that they often felt left out of broader discussions about Saugeen Shores, indicating the ongoing challenge of addressing cohesion (even more than 20-years after amalgamation). Part of this issue is the perception of a disconnect between the region’s agricultural heritage and the dominance of other sectors (most significantly, nuclear energy and tourism). Issues connected to land management, conservation, and what it means to be a municipality that encompasses both rural and small-urban environments create tension between development pressures and maintaining key social, economic, and environmental qualities of the distinct communities within Saugeen Shores.

## Ideas

- Economic diversification must be addressed as a critical priority for the Town of Saugeen Shores. Participants noted the need to recognize and support a broad range of businesses and community activities, including actions that complement the nuclear energy sector. Most critical, however, are actions and strategies that recognize and address the needs of local economic actors *outside* of the nuclear energy sector. Fostering and supporting a wide variety of economic activities was recommended as critical to the current and future social and economic well-being of Saugeen Shores.
- Both employers and employees/those looking for work noted the following ideas/opportunities for investment as being particular items for the Town to consider:
  - Attainable, affordable, and diversified housing.
  - Greater availability and more affordable childcare
  - Investment in both physical and social infrastructure, including recreation centres, civic initiatives, broadband, roads, and transportation.
- As the Town continues to pursue its economic and community development goals, participants noted that initiatives should be targeted to people in different stages of life and different positions in their careers, as well as those working in different sectors or types of businesses. Working with existing networks (i.e. the Chamber, BIA, VPI, 4CLMB, major employers, etc.) is important and participants noted that the Town should and could take on greater leadership at developing ‘one-window’ approaches that allow people to access information about opportunities through a single source that they can then customize according to their needs. This could take multiple forms:
  - Matchmaking between employers seeking to fill complementary positions to job-share or support spousal hiring/supports for newcomers relocating to the area
  - Facilitating or supporting a contemporary ‘welcome wagon’ approach that encourages and invites new entrants/re-entrants to the local labour market to invest and remain in the community
  - Creating or supporting a localized job portal that is specific to Saugeen Shores
  - Supporting coordination and collaboration between educational partners to encourage different career pathways for local youth, including succession planning initiatives with local businesses

- Working with local businesses and partners and funding bodies to co-fund community amenities and services, including processes that commit revenues from growth to investing in social and civic infrastructure that address the multiple emerging divides in the community
- Saugeen Shores has the unique opportunity to pursue its own model of economic development. Many participants highlighted the tension between the region's past and future and the difficulty of balancing the pressures of rapid urbanization and development against the qualities that make the region unique and attractive. Managing this tension may require investment in leveraging existing and new assets for broader social and economic development. For example, the Nuclear Innovation Institute was mentioned by some participants as an area of opportunity, but they were unsure of its purpose or benefit to members of the community outside the existing Bruce Power network. In this case, the Town and partners in initiatives like the NII should consider embedding social and economic priorities into the activities of these organizations/initiatives that support economic diversification, educational and training opportunities, benefits to non-nuclear employers and employees, and contributions to social and economic amenities in the region. Bruce Power was recognized for its community investment and leadership, and pursuing these opportunities to leverage that investment further in working towards the goals of access, affordability, and diversification would support the goals of both the Town and key local stakeholders (like Bruce Power).

## A NOTE ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Participants were asked if the COVID-19 pandemic had fundamentally changed their perceptions of the local labour market. Consistently, participants noted that the pandemic had exacerbated existing challenges (rather than creating entirely new issues) or sped-up changes or challenges they had expected to face at some point in their careers or businesses.

For employers, the pandemic most significantly and negatively impacted those in the service, retail, and hospitality sectors. The 'lost' summer season is particularly concerning for businesses in these sectors that rely heavily on seasonal tourism. For employees and those looking for work, the pandemic's impact on childcare, interviewing for positions, and accessing supports were the most significant impacts. However, nearly all participants indicated that they believed that they themselves, their businesses, and the Town of Saugeen Shores would weather the pandemic. Many cited the ability to work from home, working in sectors that remained in high-demand, and actions taken by their employers to support continued (if altered) operations. Some participants noted new opportunities arose as a result of the pandemic and newly implemented flexibility on the part of employers.

While the pandemic continues to affect everyone differently, and the second wave of virus transmission will bring new challenges, the key lessons to take away from these experiences is that flexibility and people-centred employment practices appear to be important factors in both employee retention and business continuity.

## ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN THE TOWN OF SAUGEEN SHORES

The Town of Saugeen shores has [actively engaged in planning and reporting exercises](#) designed to direct the energy of the both the Town as a corporation and its members in the community toward key strategic priorities. Reports, studies, and plans relevant to the local labour market have been prepared both in-house and by external consultants, and include, but are not limited to (listed in order of date of creation):

- [Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#) (no date)
- [Community Improvement Plans](#) (no date)
- [Business Retention & Expansion Report](#) (2012)
- [Official Plan](#) (2014)
- [Corporate Strategic Plan](#) (2017)
- [Development Charges Incentive Program](#) (2018)
- [Economic Development Strategic Plan](#) (2018)
- [Tourism Strategy](#) (2019)
- [Saugeen Shores Strong: Economic Recovery Strategy](#) (2020)
- [Transportation Master Plan](#) (in process)

Across these strategic plans, some core themes begin to emerge:

- The Town of Saugeen Shores represents two distinct communities (with strong identities that have continued post-amalgamation): Southampton, Port Elgin and Saugeen Township. While interconnected, each community has its own unique context, requiring specific treatment through economic development and labour market strategies.
- The Town heavily emphasizes services and experiential-based economic development, including tourism, visitor services, tourism business supports, and as supportive material in attracting and retaining businesses not associated with the tourism sector.
- This emphasis on tourism is connected to dramatic increases in local populations during the summer seasons, as seasonal residents and visitors move into the local area.
- Changes in the dynamics of the local economy are a noted concern, with the dominance of Bruce Power as a major employer, magnet for supporting businesses to join the local ecosystem, and significant investor in regional community development initiatives being considered tremendous assets. However, the tightly woven connections between Bruce Power and the local social and economic fabric in Saugeen Shores means that the plant's sustainability and success play an outsize role and efforts are needed to diversify the local economy.
- The distribution of the local economy between the service sector (strongly associated with minimum and lower paying jobs) and high-paying jobs in the nuclear innovation ecosystem and second/seasonal property owners, is believed to be leading to significant

income disparity, producing downstream impacts on access to housing, transportation, and necessities of life.

- Regional context is important for supporting meaningful labour market development. For example, while Bruce Power is not actually located in the municipality, the Town of Saugeen Shores is the community of choice for Bruce Power employees. Strategies for supporting local labour market development must be sensitive to how they interact and impact regional dynamics, as well as respond to emerging trends, opportunities, and challenges in the region that may not be under the direct influence or control of the Town itself.
- These core themes require significant investment in enabling infrastructure and services in order to maintain its current strong value proposition. These include both physical and social infrastructure, such as: health care services, educational opportunities (K-12, post-secondary, and reskilling/retraining opportunities), housing stock (particularly affordable housing), transportation services, connectivity, and green infrastructure/environmental services.
- Many of the key opportunities identified in the current economic development strategies have been significantly impacted by COVID-19, particularly tourism and the requirement for digital infrastructure to support remote work, education, and service delivery. Priorities will need to be readjusted based on emerging evidence in real time, a difficult proposition for public and private sector alike.

The themes that previously emerged through these core strategic documents should be reviewed in terms of their impact on the local labour market dynamics in the current context. Since the services sector (including retail, food, and hospitality services) have been significantly impacted by the COVID-10 pandemic and the tourism sector in general has been majorly reshaped by the public health measures required to reduce the transmission of the virus, considerable attention should be devoted to reviewing and re-considering previous strategic initiatives to ensure appropriate supports are in place. Further, because these sectors tend to be gendered, with the majority of job losses occurring in women-dominated sectors (Desjardins, D., Freestone, C., Powell, 2020), interventions should consider targeted socio-economic interventions that reflect these disproportionately affected demographics. Finally, 'disaster gentrification' may become both an opportunity and a threat to the community, as remote workers consider living and working full time in smaller towns and rural communities throughout the pandemic and into the future (and the disparity in the types of workers who will be able to consider this option) (Weeden, 2020).

## APPENDIX 1: QUESTION GUIDE

### **Getting to Work: Interview Question Guide - Employers** **Pre-Interview Screening Questions: <http://bit.ly/GettingToWork2020>**

1. Describe your community and your role in your community.
2. What are the most exciting opportunities you see for supporting your labour force demands in both the short term and long term? What are you most surprised or excited about? What are you doing to take advantage of these opportunities as an employer?
  - *Potential follow-up: Has COVID-19 changed this?*
3. What are the most significant challenges confronting your ability to meet your labour force demands in both the short term and long term? What are you most worried about? How are you looking to address these challenges as an employer?
  - *Potential follow-up: Has COVID-19 changed this?*
4. Are there certain kinds of skills, to your knowledge, that are in high demand in your sector? What are they, and do many local workers have them?
  - *Potential follow-up: Do certain kinds of people face any additional barriers in getting good jobs? Does everyone have access to good employment opportunities?*
5. Do you think these challenges/opportunities are different in [your community] than communities in the area? Other communities in Ontario or Canada? Why? Or why not?
6. Do you collaborate with other businesses or organizations in finding employees or retaining employees? Who and why/why not?
  - *Potential follow up questions: How important are these relationships to supporting you in meeting your needs? Are these new relationships? Why did you start working together? If not collaborating, are there organizations you wish you could or want to work with?*
7. If nothing were to change about the available jobs, workers, and the overall economy in the area, what do you think will happen to your business? What do you think will happen in your community? Why?
  - *Potential follow up questions: Are things going in the right direction? The wrong direction? Short term/long term?*
8. What type of workers are you looking to attract? Do you currently have vacancies that are hard to fill? Are there any industries or occupations that routinely face labour shortages in the area? Why?

- *Potential follow up questions: Do you imagine a particular type of person? What skills do they have/do you need? What barriers are preventing you from finding these types of employees?*
9. Are there groups of people who are underutilized in the labour market?
- *Potential follow up questions: Are there people who might be suited for local jobs but need additional support or training? Are there groups who face additional barriers to labour market participation? How might they be supported?*
10. Do you have any ideas for programs or policies that would help support your business in managing your work force? Are you currently aware of or working on any interesting initiatives related to improving access to employment?
- *Potential follow up questions: Are these things infrastructure-related? Housing? Transportation? Broadband? Other factors (Spouses? Education? Childcare? Care support?) What is the role of the Town in addressing these things?*
11. Are there any other pieces of information you would like to share about working/seeking work/managing your workforce in Saugeen Shores?

**Getting to Work: Interview Question Guide - Employees**  
**Pre-Interview Screening Questions: <http://bit.ly/GettingToWork2020>**

1. Describe your community and your role in your community.
2. Who are the major employers in the area? Are there any industries or occupations that are easier or harder to find employment in locally? What are they?
  - *Potential follow up questions: How secure are these jobs? Are they seasonal? Recurring lay-offs? What makes these employment opportunities easier/harder to access?*
3. What are the most exciting opportunities that are coming up for you as you seek meaningful employment in the community? What are you most surprised or excited about?
  - *Potential follow-up: Has COVID-19 changed this?*
4. What are the most significant challenges you're facing as you seek meaningful employment in the community?
  - *Potential follow-up: Has COVID-19 changed this?*
5. Are there certain kinds of skills, to your knowledge, that make it easier to get good jobs in your community? What are they? Do you have them? Do you think most local workers have them?

- *Potential follow-up: Do certain kinds of people face any additional barriers in getting good jobs? Does everyone have access to good jobs in your community?*
6. Do you think these challenges/opportunities are different in [your community] than communities in the area? Other communities in Ontario or Canada? Why? Or why not?
  7. How do you think the various opportunities and challenges we've discussed so far affect people currently employed or looking for work in the area?
    - *Potential follow up questions: How do you think employers are addressing these opportunities and challenges? How are workers/people looking for work are addressing these opportunities and challenges?*
  8. Are you or have you working with any organizations or individuals to help you find meaningful employment? Are there agencies that help people find work or institutions that help train people for jobs? Who are they? Why/why not are you working with these organizations?
    - *Potential follow up questions: How important are these relationships to supporting you in meeting your needs? Are these new relationships? Why did you start working together? If not, what are the factors keeping you from doing so? Are there organizations you wish you could or want to work with? Is ongoing training important for retaining your job?*
  9. If nothing were to change about the available jobs, workers, and the overall economy in the area, what would that mean for your employment goals? What do you think will happen in your community? Why?
    - *Potential follow up questions: Are things going in the right direction? The wrong direction? Short term/long term?*
  10. What do people in Saugeen Shores need to be able to live good lives in the community, find good jobs, and commit to them? Do people need different things at different stages of life? Who do you think should be responsible for meeting these needs? Do you have any ideas for helping realize these goals?
    - *Potential follow up questions: Are these things infrastructure-related? Housing? Transportation? Broadband? Other factors (Spouses? Education? Childcare? Care support?) What is the role of the Town in addressing these things?*
  11. Are there any other pieces of information you would like to share about working/seeking work/managing your workforce in Saugeen Shores?

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