

HUMANIZING ECONOMICS

Market Readiness Gaps Analysis

PREPARED FOR MUNICIPALITY DISTRICT OF
SHELBURNE



Acknowledgements

ASBB Economics would like to extend its sincere appreciation to all individuals and organizations who contributed their time, insights, and expertise to this project.

We would like to thank the residents, business owners, community organizations, industry representatives, and stakeholders who participated in surveys, consultations, interviews, and engagement sessions. Their perspectives were invaluable in identifying local strengths, challenges, opportunities, and priorities for future growth and development.

We also acknowledge the contributions of representatives from municipal, provincial, and regional organizations, including economic development partners, government agencies, and community leaders, whose knowledge and expertise helped inform this assessment.

The engagement, collaboration, and commitment demonstrated throughout this process have provided a strong foundation for understanding community needs and identifying opportunities that will support sustainable economic and community development in the years ahead.

Background

- Existing market gaps in services and businesses
- Opportunities for community and economic development
- The readiness of municipally owned lands for future investment
- Residents' priorities for sustainable and long-term economic growth

The Municipality of the District of Shelburne is undertaking a structured community engagement to better understand local perspectives on economic opportunities, service gaps, and future growth priorities. Your input will help inform future municipal planning, economic development initiatives, and decision-making.

This session is designed to gather practical, experience-based insights on what is working well, what is missing, and where the Municipality should focus its efforts over the coming years.

Business Survey Summary

Businesses see Shelburne as highly livable and distinctive, with future growth dependent on workforce capacity, investment readiness, and targeted service expansion.

STRENGTHS

Quality of life, natural scenery, community trust, and small-town character were consistently identified as core competitive advantages.

Waterfront assets, heritage, beaches, safety, and a welcoming community underpin Shelburne's attraction story.

BARRIERS

Workforce and skilled labour shortages, housing affordability, childcare access, transportation, and funding were raised as growth constraints.

Participants also noted taxation, limited amenities, aging demographics, and resistance to change.

OPPORTUNITIES

Tourism, healthcare and senior services, housing, remote work, recreation, renewable energy, local retail, arts, and light industry emerged as growth areas.

These opportunities build on Shelburne's lifestyle appeal and underused market potential.

PRIORITIES

Youth retention, workforce development, destination branding, investment readiness, and protecting community identity were identified as strategic priorities.

The common thread is balanced growth that creates jobs while preserving place-based character.

SOURCE: ASBB PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY GROUPS SURVEYS; BUSINESS CONSULTATION AND SWOT THEMES

Community Survey Summary

Residents value Shelburne’s natural setting and community life, while identifying practical service gaps, local spending leakage, and clear priorities for future growth.

34 community survey responses informing market and investment readiness themes

85.3% regularly travel outside Shelburne to access services and amenities

90%+ are open to participating in community planning and discussions

WHAT RESIDENTS VALUE

Natural beauty, quiet lifestyles, and community atmosphere are the strongest foundations for retention and attraction.

SERVICE GAPS

Healthcare, grocery, retail, banking, transportation, childcare awareness, and trades access create daily-life constraints.

GROWTH AREAS

Tourism, technology and remote work, and marine industries are viewed as key sectors with future potential.

PRIORITIES

Services and infrastructure, jobs, and housing are the clearest outcomes residents want future development to prioritize.

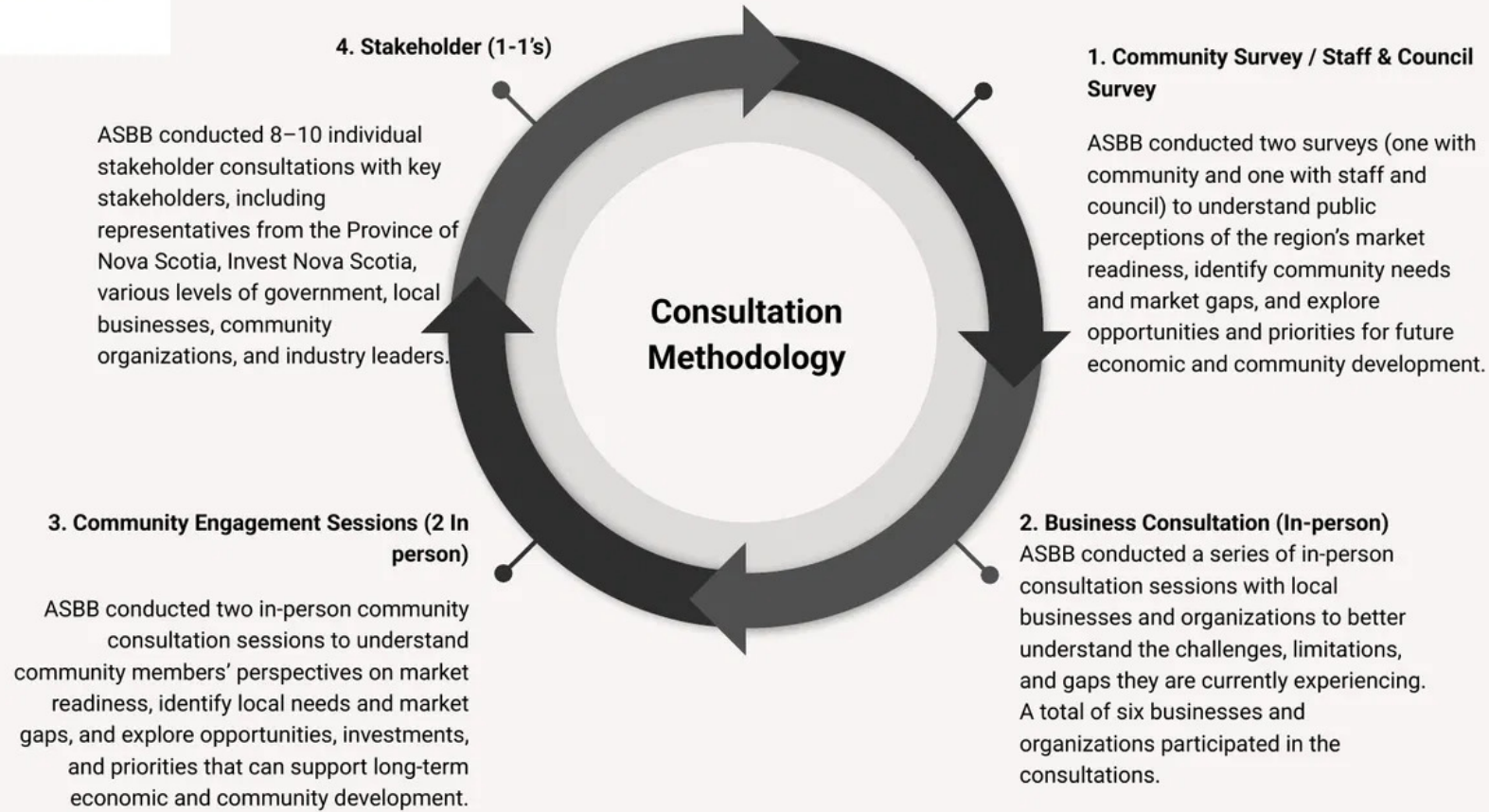
SOURCE: COMMUNITY MARKET & INVESTMENT READINESS SURVEY; TOTAL RESPONSES: 34

SURVEY CONTEXT

Limitations of the survey



Consultation Methodology



COMMUNITY SURVEY

Community Market & Investment Readiness Survey

34 RESPONSES



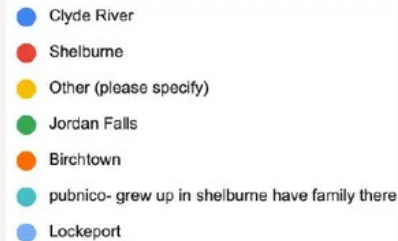
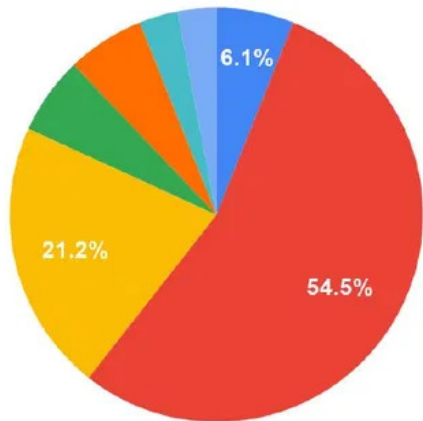
What we heard report

Most respondents are long-term residents and are from Shelburne

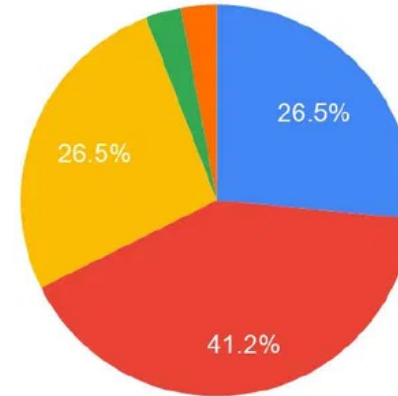
Shelburne makes up the largest share of respondents

Many respondents have lived in the area for over 10 years

1. About You: Which community do you live in?



2. How long have you lived in this area?



Most survey respondents reside in Shelburne (54.5%), with most having lived there for 11 years or more (67.7%). This shows that many responses come from people who know the community well.

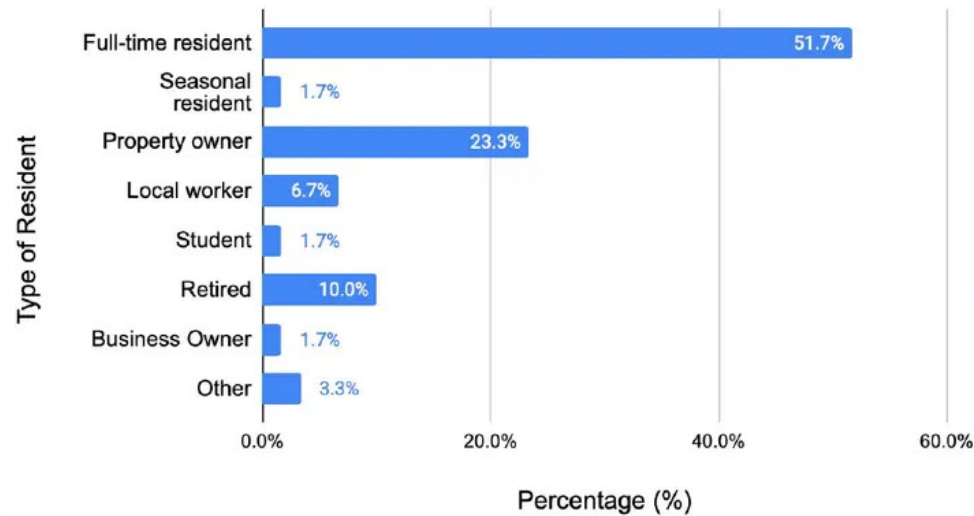
What we heard report

Most respondents are full-time residents and adults aged 25–64

Most respondents are full-time residents

Most respondents are adults aged 25–64

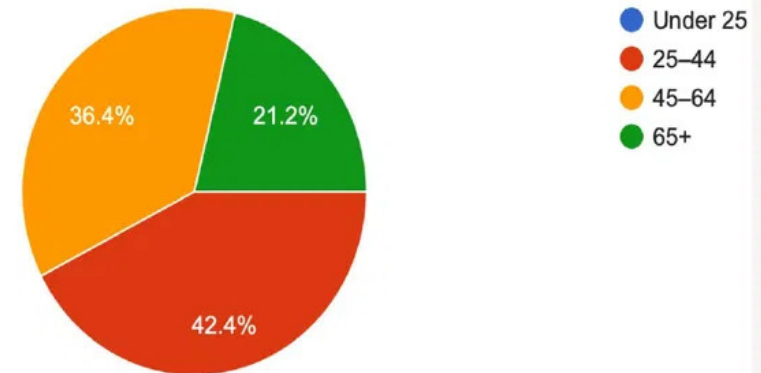
3. Your relationship to the community:



About 21.7% are full-time residents, and 23.3% being property owners. Only a small number are seasonal or business owners.

4. Age group (optional):

33 responses



The largest group is age 25–44 (42.4%), followed by 45–64 (36.4%). This shows strong input from working-age residents.

Workforce & Income Profile

Survey respondents show strong workforce participation, alongside a broad mix of reported household income levels across the community.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

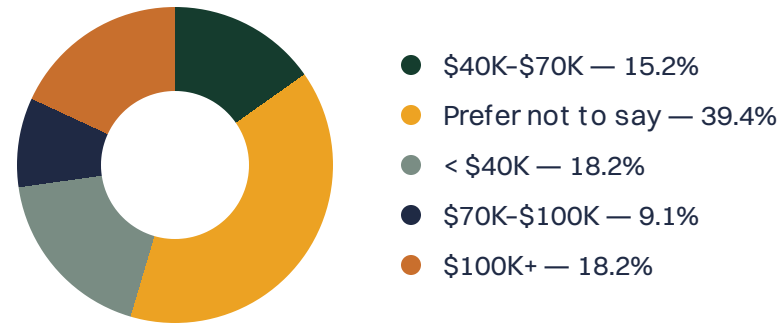
Most respondents are working full time or self-employed



Nearly two-thirds are active in the workforce, led by self-employment and full-time work. Retirees also form a meaningful respondent group.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Respondents reflect a wide range of income levels



Income responses indicate economic diversity, with representation above \$100K and below \$40K, while many respondents preferred not to disclose.

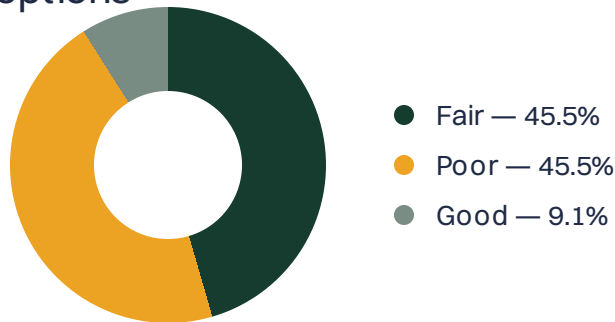
SOURCE: COMMUNITY MARKET & INVESTMENT READINESS SURVEY, EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND APPROXIMATE HOUSEHOLD INCOME RESPONSES

Food & Healthcare Access

Residents identified practical access gaps, with food options viewed as mixed and healthcare access emerging as a significant community concern.

FOOD SERVICES

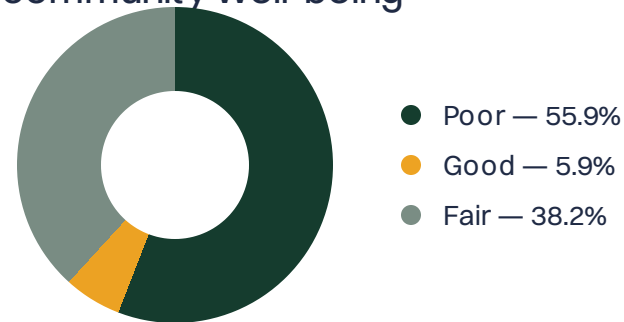
Respondents have mixed access to local food options



Access to food services is evenly split, with 45.5% rating options as fair and another 45.5% rating them as poor; only 9.1% rated access as good.

HEALTHCARE ACCESS

Improving healthcare access can support community well-being



Healthcare is the more acute access gap, with 55.9% rating access as poor and 38.2% rating it as fair; only 5.9% rated access as good.

SOURCE: COMMUNITY MARKET & INVESTMENT READINESS SURVEY, LOCAL FOOD SERVICES AND HEALTHCARE ACCESS RESPONSES

Childcare & Trades Access

Survey responses point to awareness and access gaps, with childcare knowledge uneven and trades or home repair services difficult for many residents to access.

CHILDCARE SERVICES

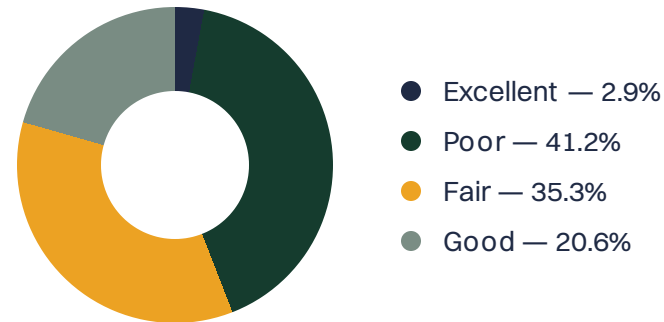
Awareness is a key barrier for family services



The largest share selected “Don’t know,” suggesting services may exist but are not consistently visible or understood by residents.

TRADES & HOME REPAIR

Residents report difficulty accessing trade services



More than three-quarters rated access as poor or fair, indicating a practical service gap for trades and home repair needs.

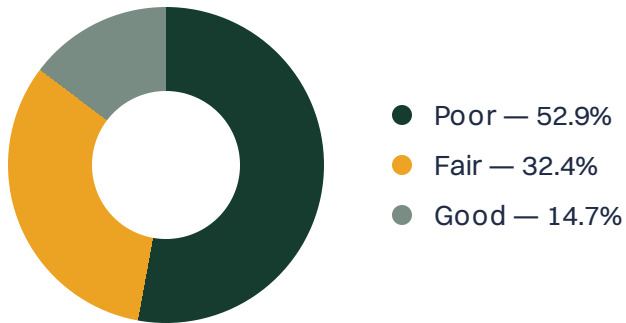
SOURCE: COMMUNITY MARKET & INVESTMENT READINESS SURVEY, CHILDCARE AND TRADES ACCESS RESPONSES

Financial & Retail Access

Respondents identified everyday service gaps, with financial services and local retail access both receiving substantial poor or fair ratings.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

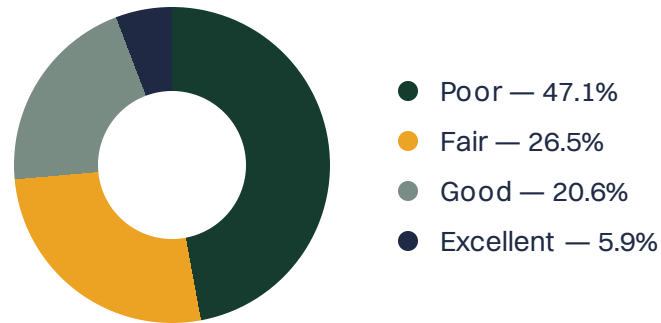
Banking access is a prominent local service gap



More than half rated financial access as poor, while nearly one-third rated it as fair, indicating limited access to banks, ATMs, or credit unions.

RETAIL & SHOPPING

Retail access is also viewed as limited



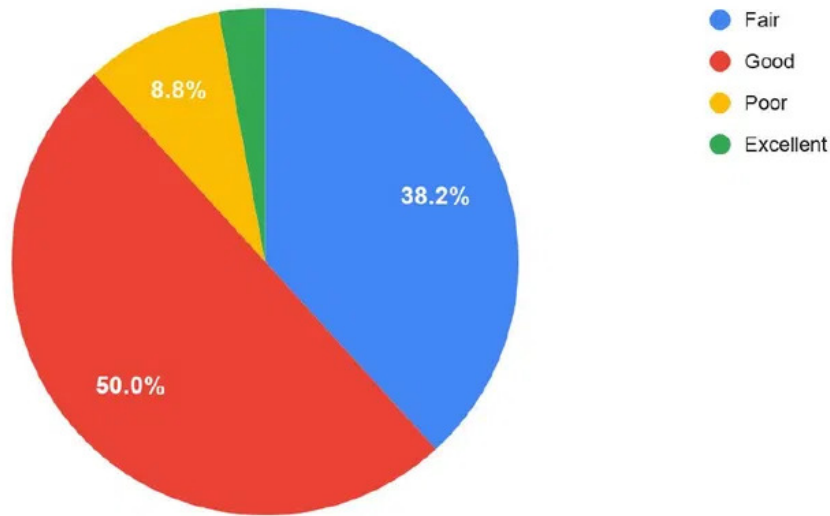
Nearly three-quarters rated retail access as poor or fair, suggesting room to strengthen local clothing, hardware, and general retail options.

SOURCE: COMMUNITY MARKET & INVESTMENT READINESS SURVEY, FINANCIAL SERVICES AND RETAIL ACCESS RESPONSES

Tourism and food and beverage services meet respondents' needs

Tourism and recreation services are well-rated by respondents

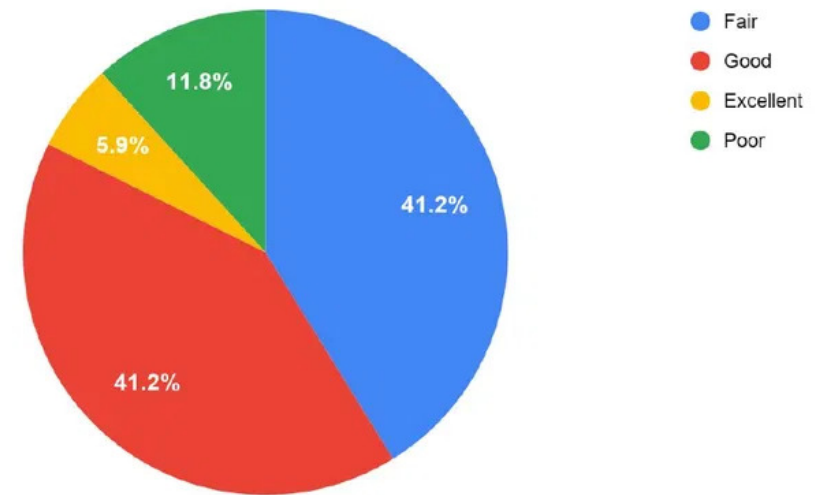
7F. Community Services & Economic Gaps: How would you rate access to the following local services? [Tourism & Recreation (e.g. parks, beaches, museums, local attractions)]



Half of the survey respondents (50.0%) rated access to tourism and recreation services as good, while 38.2% said access is fair.

Food and beverage services meet respondents' needs but could be improved

7G. Community Services & Economic Gaps: How would you rate access to the following local services? [Restaurants & Cafés (e.g., dine-in, take-out, coffee shops)]

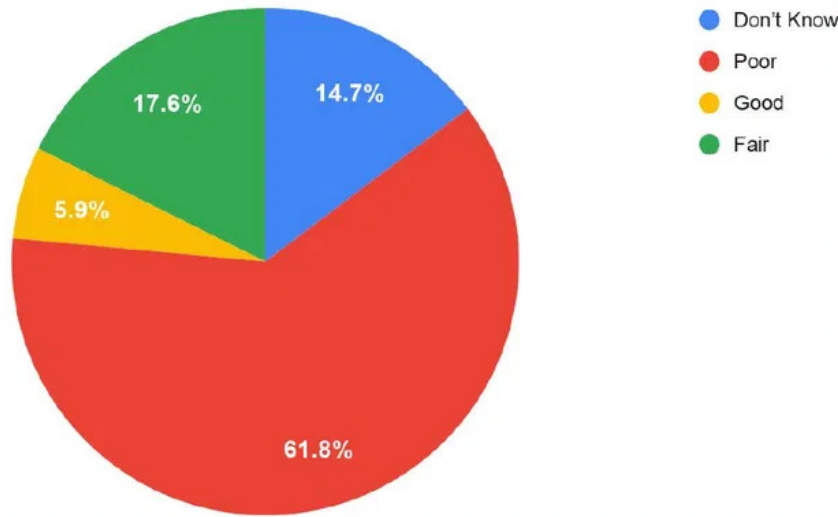


About 41.2% of survey respondents rated food and beverage services as fair, and another 41.2% reported they are 'good'.

There is room to improve transportation & internet connection

Most respondents reported facing challenges regarding transportation access

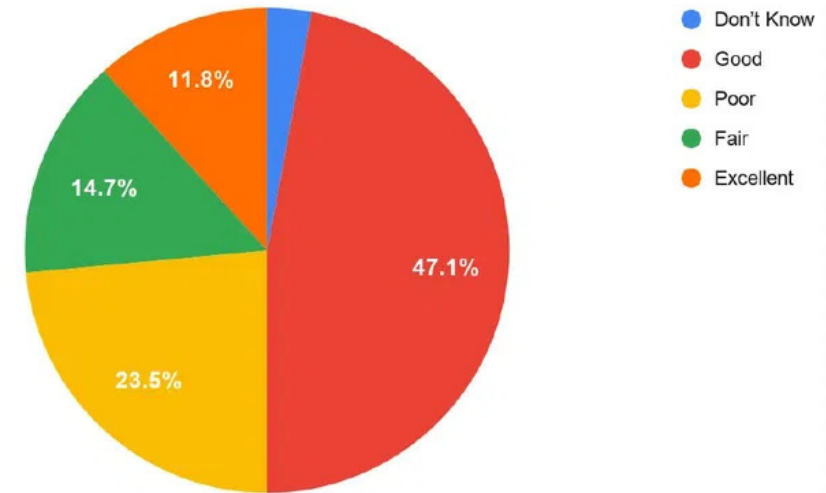
7H. Community Services & Economic Gaps: How would you rate access to the following local services? [Public Transportation & Mobility (e.g., local transit, taxis, accessibility for non-drivers)]



Most respondents (61.8%) rated transportation access as poor, while 17.6% said access is 'fair'. Almost a quarter (14.7%) reported being unsure.

Internet access was reported to be good by most respondents, with many wanting improvements

7I. Community Services & Economic Gaps: How would you rate access to the following local services? [Internet & Connectivity (e.g. Broadband access, mobile coverage, public wifi)]

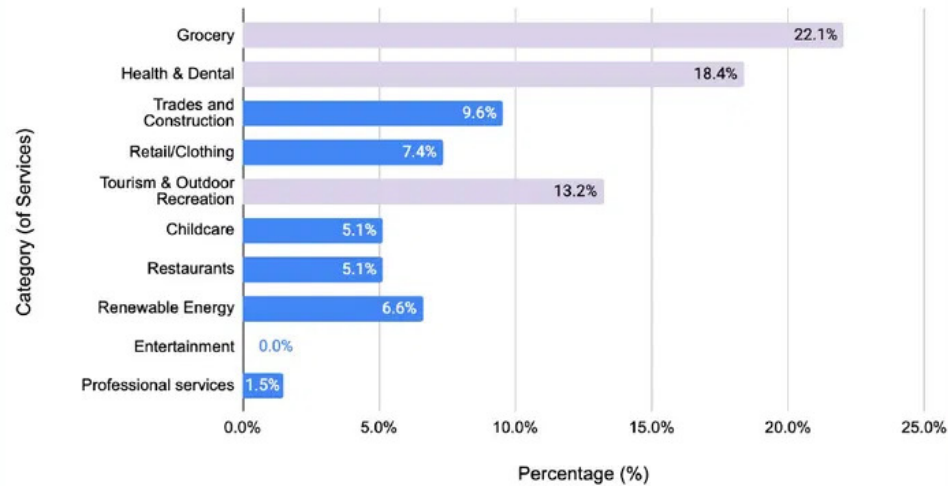


Almost half of the survey participants (47.1%) rated internet access as good. A significant amount of respondents (23.5%) reported it as poor. Another 14.7% said access is 'fair'.

A gap in local services shows room to reduce travel out of the region

Respondents reported wanting to see an expansion of grocery stores, health and dental services and recreation

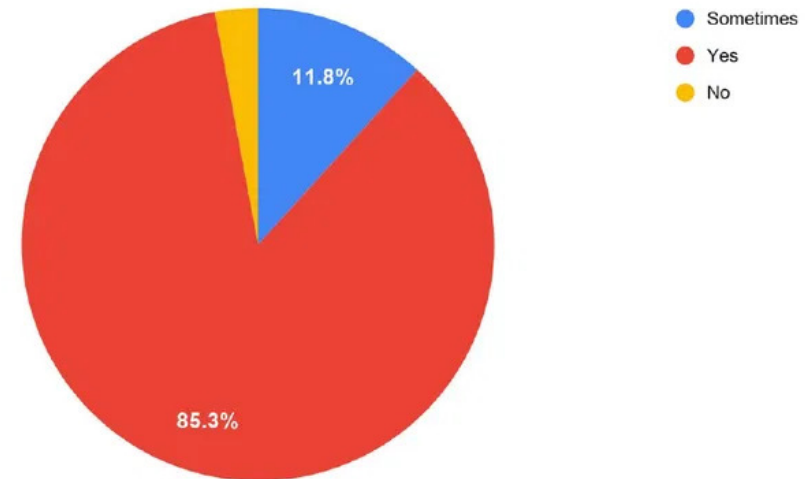
8. Which types of businesses or services would you most like to see expanded locally? (Select up to 5)



The most requested services are grocery stores (22.1%) and health & dental services (18.4%). Another key priority for respondents was tourism & recreation (13.2%).

Respondents reported frequently travelling outside the region to access services

9. Do you regularly travel outside Shelburne County for shopping, health, or recreation?

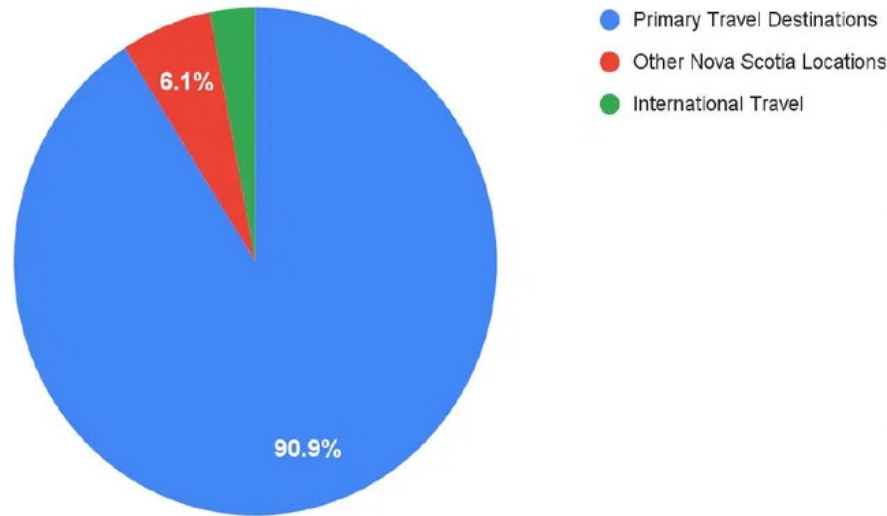


A large majority of survey participants (85.3%) reported travelling outside Shelburne regularly to access services, while only 11.8% participants reported travelling sometimes.

Respondents responses reveal there is spending leakage

Most respondents travel within the region to meet their needs

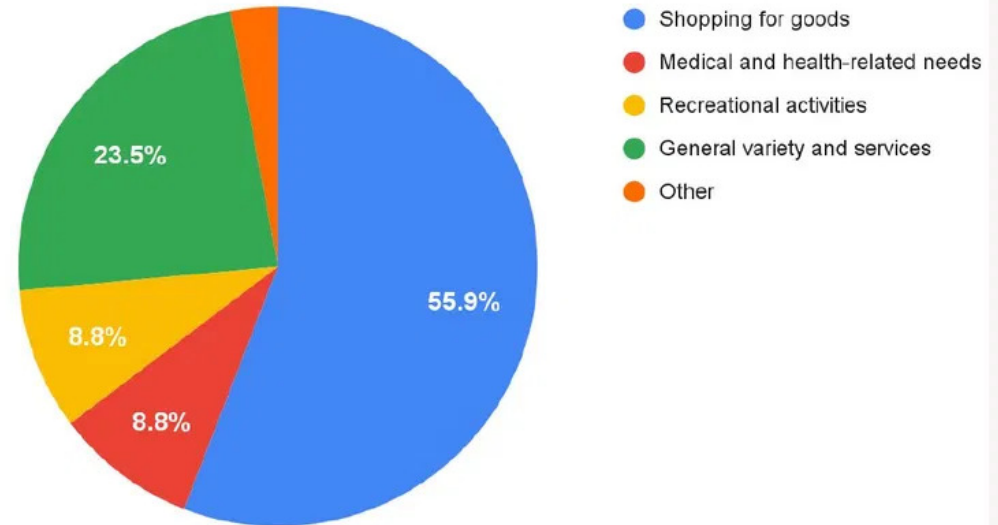
10. If you travel outside Shelburne County: Where do you travel?



A large majority of survey participants (90.9%) travel to nearby primary travel destinations, while only 6.1% travel to other Nova Scotia locations.

Shopping and access to increased variety of services are the main reasons for travel

11. If you travel outside Shelburne County: Why do you travel?"



The main reason respondents travel is to shop for goods (55.9%), followed by wanting more variety and increased access to services (23.5%).

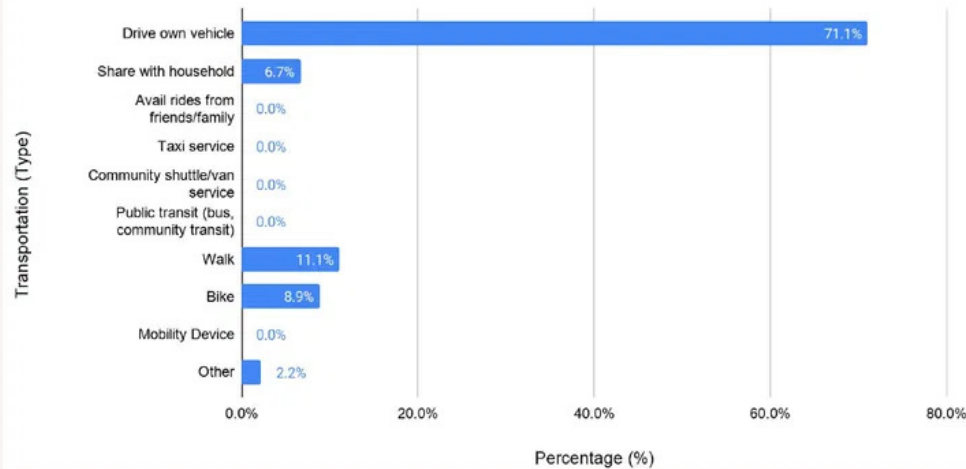
What we heard report

Respondents reported heavy reliance on private vehicles as well as limited jobs as a hindrance to economic growth

Most residents rely on personal vehicles for daily mobility

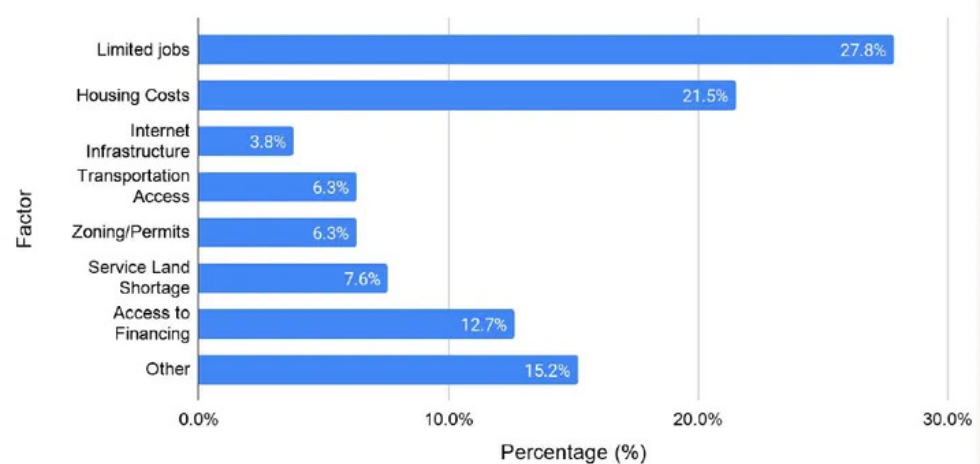
Addressing jobs and housing can support future growth

12. How do you usually travel for your daily needs (work, shopping, appointments, services)? (Choose all that apply)



A large majority of participants (71.1%) report using their own vehicle for daily needs like work and shopping. Smaller groups combine driving with walking, biking, or sharing vehicles.

13. In your view, what are the top barriers to economic growth in your community?



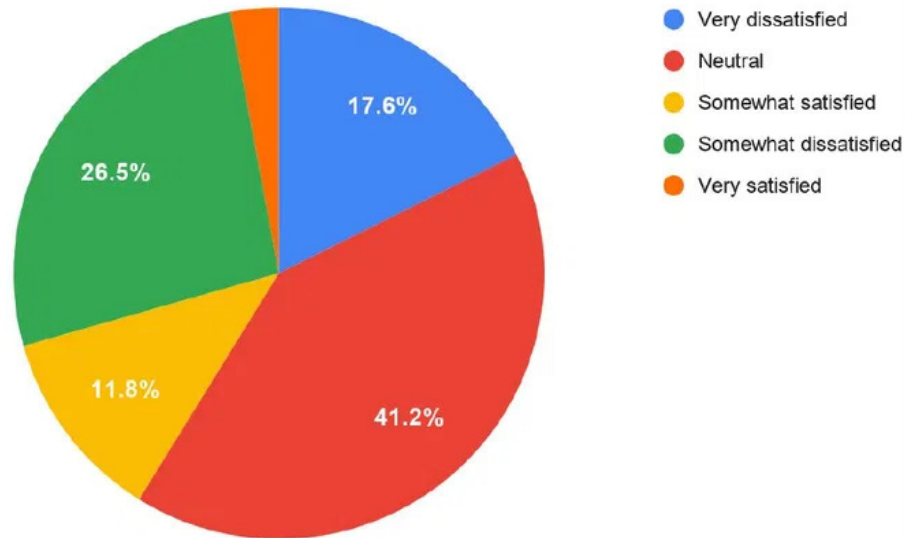
The top challenge respondents reported facing is limited jobs (27.8%), followed by housing costs (21.5%), as well as accessing financing (12.7%).

What we heard report

Respondents report mixed satisfaction with current opportunities but see potential for growth of certain sectors

Respondents see room to improve local job and business opportunities

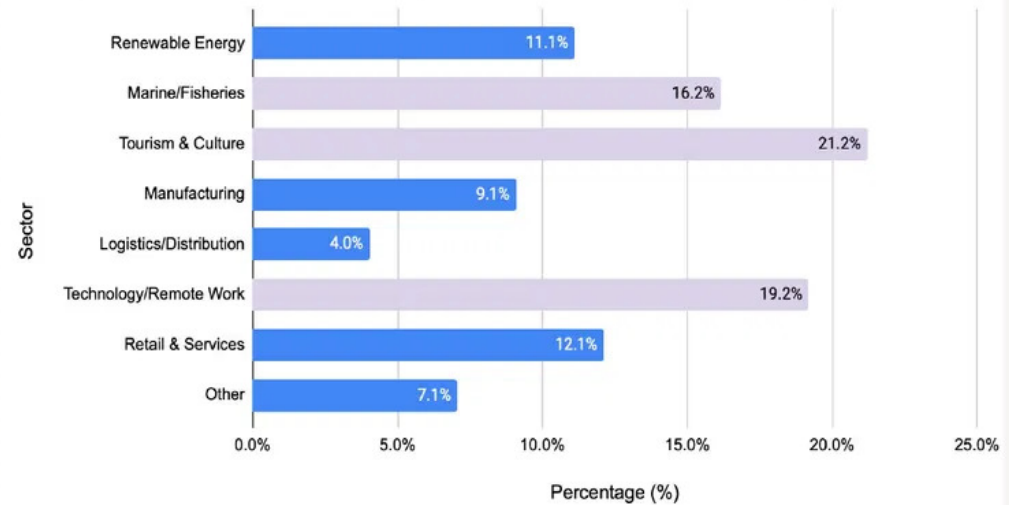
14. How satisfied are you with the job and business opportunities available in Shelburne today?



About 41.2% of respondents feel neutral about job and business opportunities, while 26.5% somewhat dissatisfied and 17.6% are very dissatisfied.

Tourism, technology, and marine industries are seen as key growth drivers

15. In your opinion, which sectors hold the greatest future potential for Shelburne's growth?

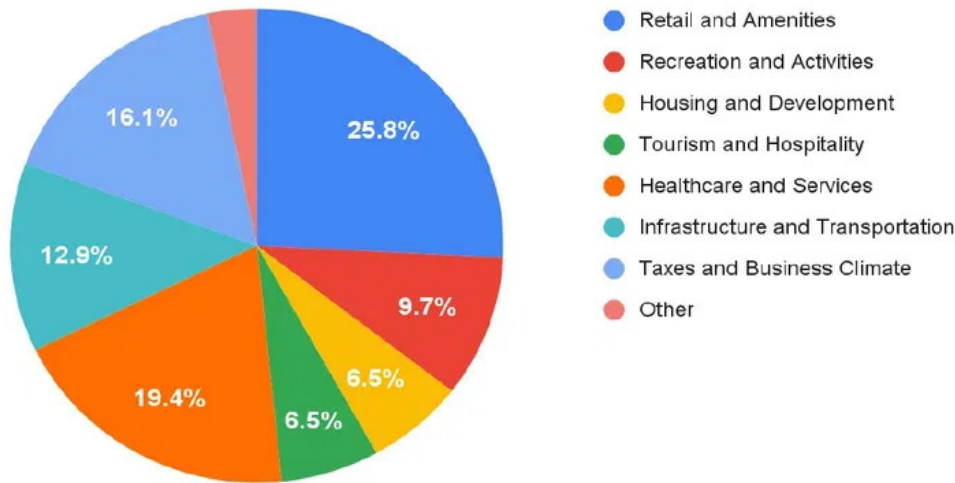


Respondents see the biggest potential in tourism & culture (21.2%), followed by technology & remote work (19.2%) and marine & fisheries (16.2%).

Respondents reported key missing facilities as well as wanting to see increased visibility of Shelburne to key stakeholders

Residents identified clear priorities for future community development

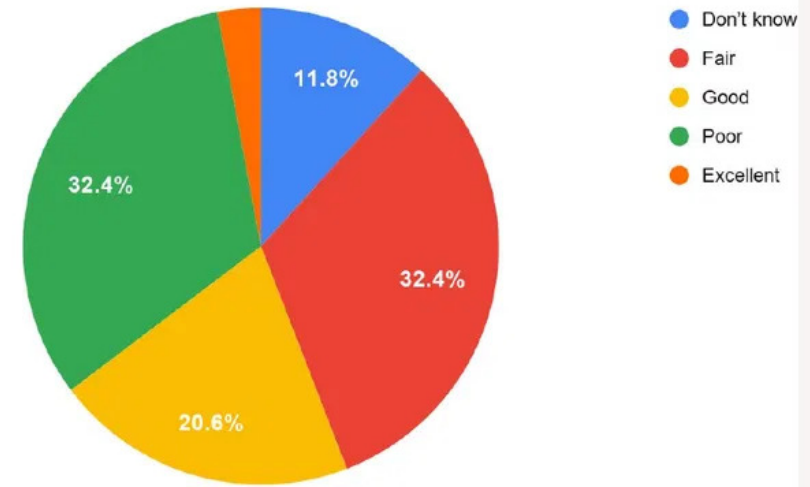
16. In your opinion, what services, amenities, or opportunities are missing in the Municipality of Shelburne, and what would you like to see happen in the future?



The main identified needs are retail and amenities (25.8%) and healthcare and services (19.4%). Other important areas include taxes and business climate (16.1%).

Improving marketing and visibility can help attract more investment and visitors

17. Marketing, Image & Investor Relations: How would you rate Shelburne's visibility to potential investors or tourists?



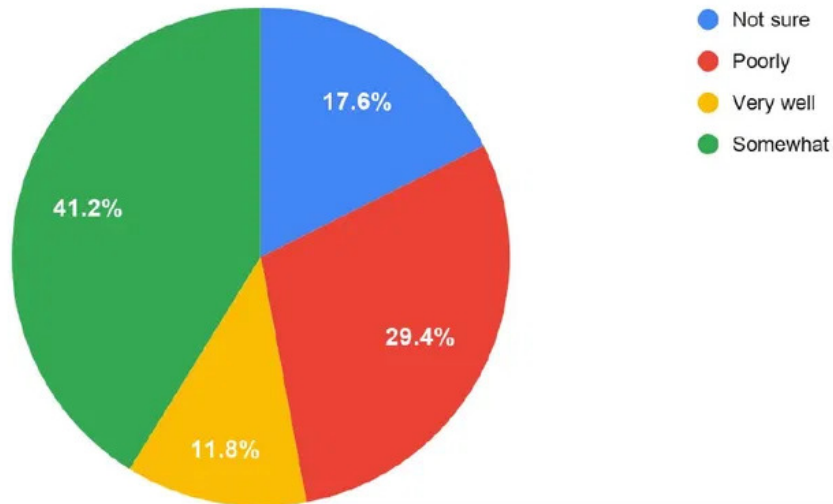
About 32.4% rated visibility as fair, while another 32.4% said poor. Around 20.6% rated it good.

What we heard report

Respondents would like to see Shelburne promoting its strengths through digital and community-based channels

Respondents report promotion of Shelburne’s strengths can be improved

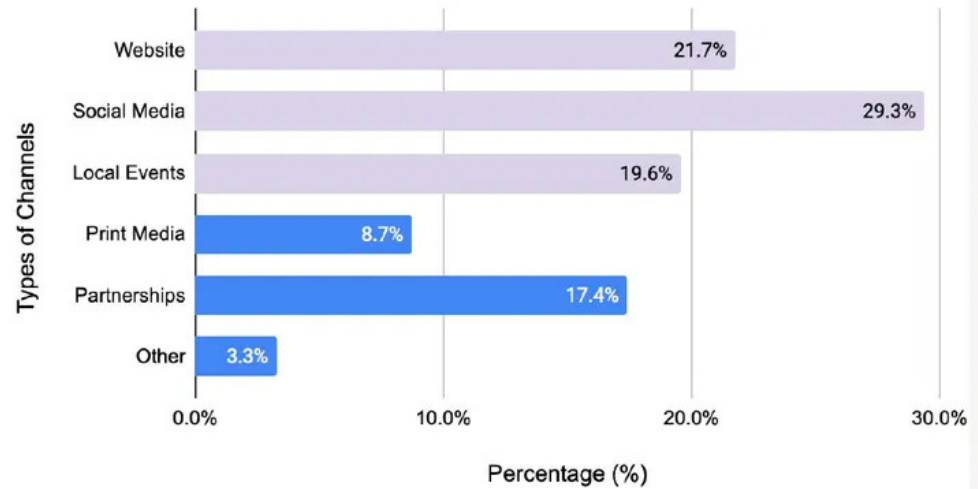
18. How well do you think Shelburne promotes its strengths to attract new businesses or visitors?



About 41.2% of survey participants reported promotion of Shelburne’s strengths is only somewhat effective, and another significant block (29.4%) said it is done poorly.

Respondents see digital and community-based channels as the most effective tools

19. What communication channels do you think would be most effective for promoting Shelburne’s opportunities?



Respondents reported the most effective channel is social media (29.3%), followed by websites (21.7%) and local events (19.6%).

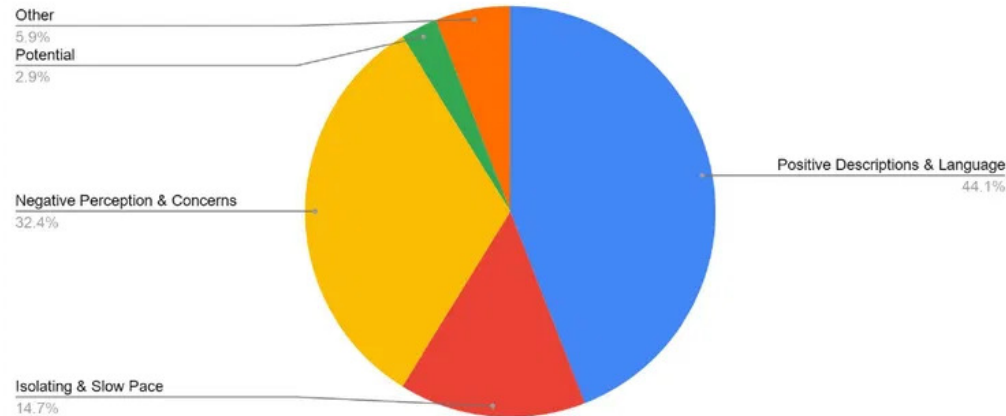
What we heard report

Respondents reveal mixed perception of Shelburne to outsiders and branding isn't encompassing of its potential

Shelburne has a mixed external reputation to outsiders

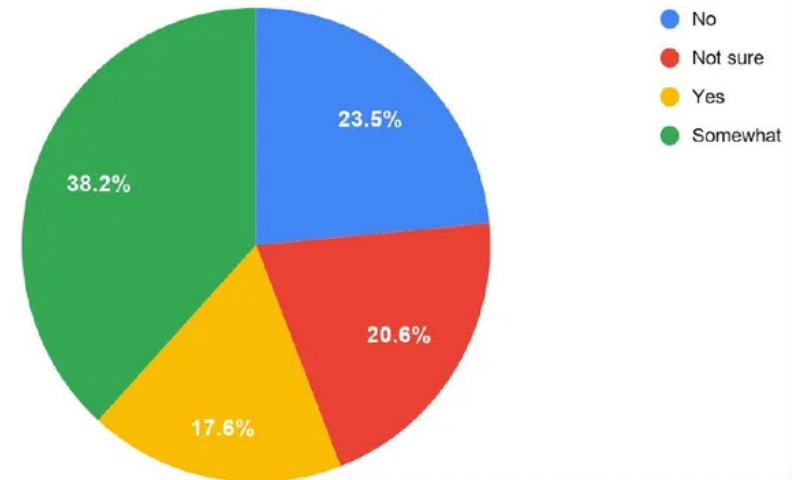
Respondents reveal Shelburne's branding doesn't fully reflect Shelburne's potential

20. What three words would best describe Shelburne's reputation to outsiders (e.g., "friendly," "remote," "innovative")?



Most responses (44.1%) describe Shelburne in a positive way, showing a strong base of good perception. However, 32.4% reflect concerns or negative perceptions, and 14.7% mention isolation or the slow pace.

21. Do you think Shelburne's branding and marketing materials reflect its potential as a place to invest or do business?

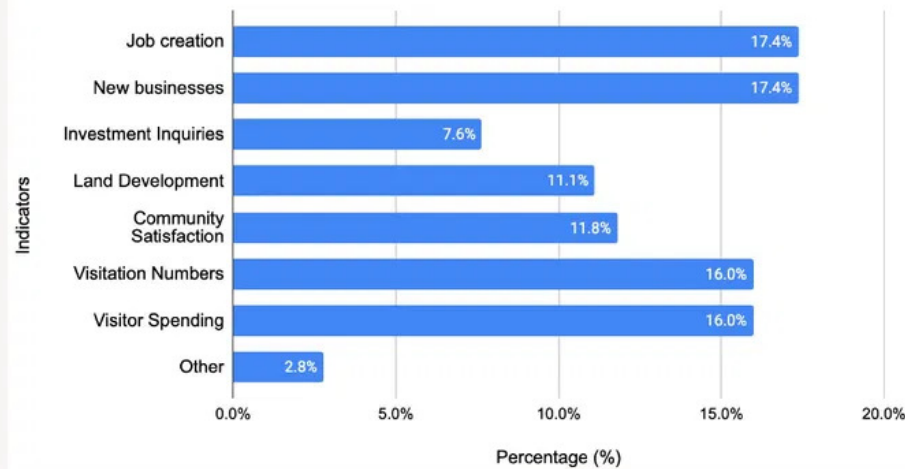


Of the survey respondents, 38.2% said Shelburne's branding somewhat reflects Shelburne's potential, while 23.5% said no.

Respondents have clear priorities for measuring growth and many report uncertainty about the state of the economy

Respondents would like to see jobs, business growth, and tourism as key success metrics

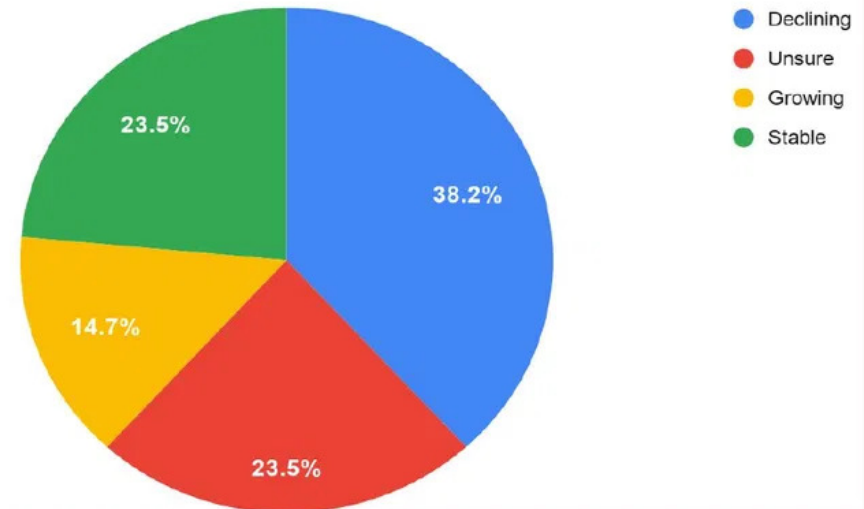
22. What indicators do you believe should be tracked to measure Shelburne's progress on economic development?



The top metrics respondents would like to see tracked, to Shelburne's progress on economic development, are job creation (17.4%) and new emerging businesses (17.4%). This is followed by visitor numbers (16.0%) and visitor spending (16.0%).

Respondents describe the economy as declining or stable, with many unsure

23. Community Vision & Quality of Life: How would you describe Shelburne's economy today?



When asked about how respondents would describe Shelburne's economy, almost half (38.2%) reported it as declining or 23.5% as declining, and a significant amount as unsure about how the economy is doing (23.5%)

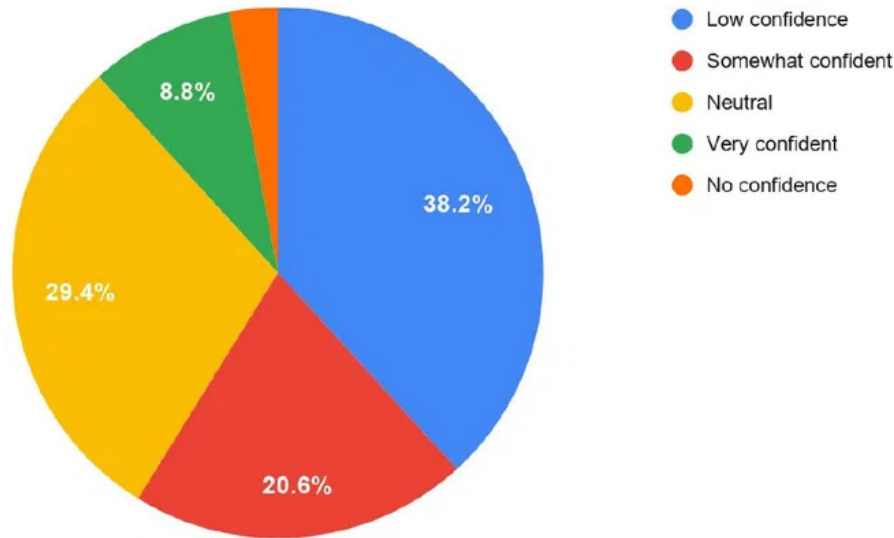
What we heard report

Clear Priorities for Community Development While Building Confidence in Long-Term

Growth
Respondents have mixed feelings about Shelburne's economic future

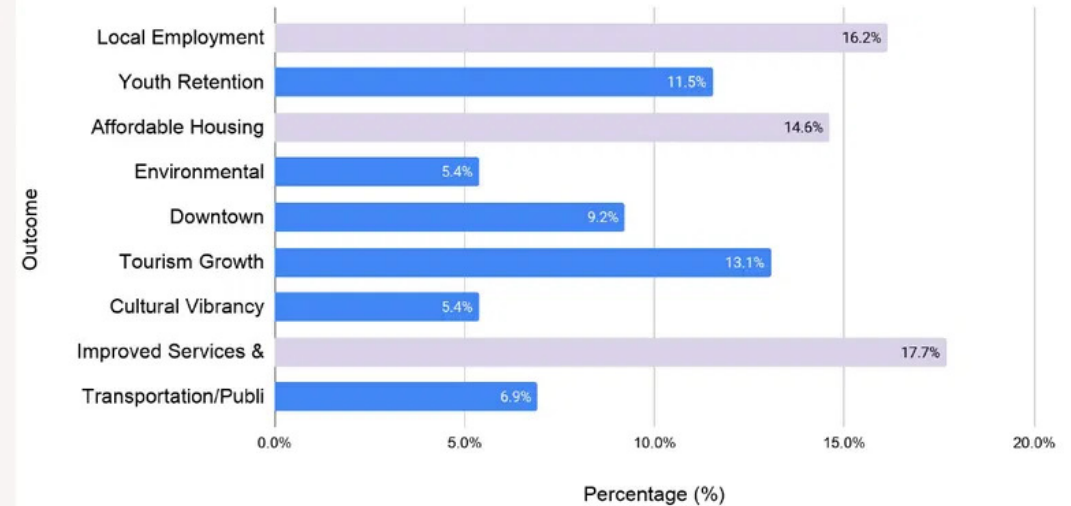
Respondents would like to prioritize services, jobs, and housing for future growth

24. How confident are you in Shelburne's long-term (4-5 years) economic future?



About 38.2% have low confidence in Shelburne's long-term economic future, while 29.4% feel neutral and a somewhat smaller group of respondents (20.6%) are somewhat confident.

25. Which community outcomes should future development prioritize? (Select up to 4)



For respondents, the main outcomes they feel future development should prioritize are improving services and infrastructure (17.7%), boosting local employment (16.2%) as well as having more affordable housing (14.6%). Overall more self-sufficiency by the community.

What we heard report

Respondents strongly value Shelburne's natural beauty and sense of community

26. What do you value most about living in Shelburne?



Respondents really value Shelburne's natural beauty and their quiet lifestyles. The sense of community, hospitality and honesty also came up frequently

Respondents would like to see economic growth and better services to enhance daily life

27. What changes or investments would most improve your quality of life here?



Respondents would like to see more economic growth and business support, as well as an improvement of day-to-day life through investment in infrastructure, multi-use recreation centre and things Shelburne already has.

They would also like to see an improvement in home purchasing, more affordable housing, accessing mortgages and financing.

What we heard report

Respondents see a lot of potential for Shelburne, and value the strong community ties

28. If you could describe your vision for Shelburne in three words, what would they be?



When asked to describe their vision for Shelburne, the key themes respondents mentioned were:

- Hospitable and welcoming
- Potential (although unrealised in some cases)
- Peaceful, friendly, and well connected.

They also noted that it in some regards, it needs to embrace change, should be updated and expanded.

Municipal Lands & Investment Readiness Survey

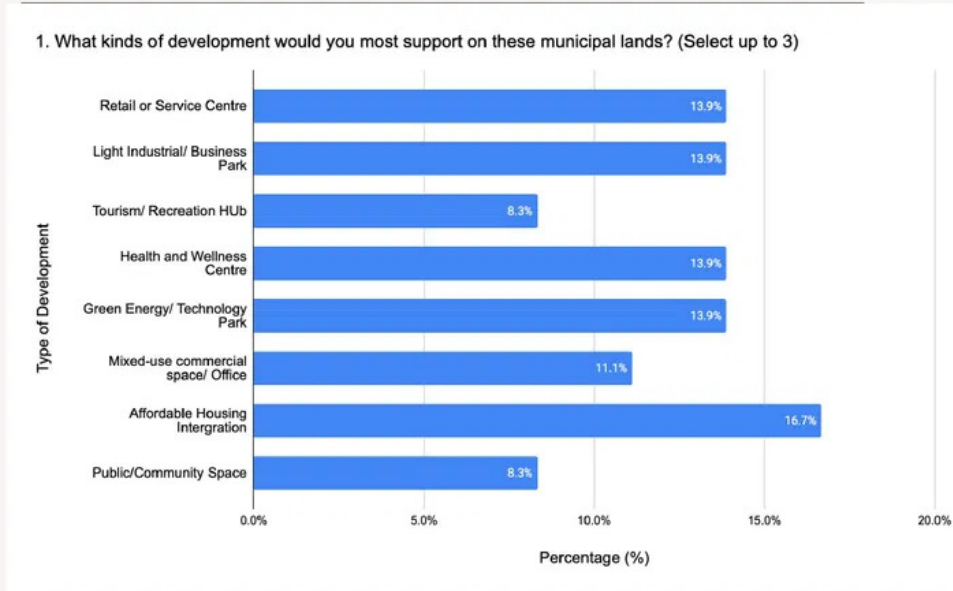
MUNICIPAL STAFF AND COUNCIL

8 RESPONSES



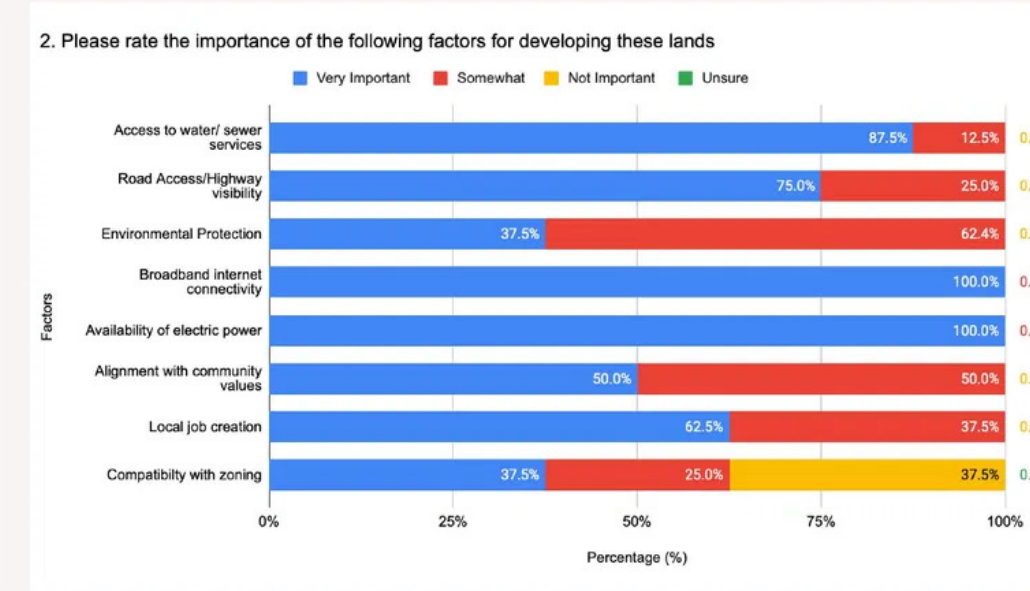
Balanced Development Priorities Emphasize Housing, Economic Growth, and Community Uses

Staff support a mix of housing, business, and community-focused development



Respondents would like to see more affordable housing (16.7%) as well as more retail stores (16.7%), health centres (16.7%), green energy parks (16.7%) as well as business parks being built (16.7%).

Infrastructure and connectivity are key priorities for successful development



Factors such as access to broadband internet, the availability of electric power as well as access to water and sewage are seen as very important by all respondents.

Respondents identify strong anchor assets and a need to strengthen investment readiness

Tourism, healthcare, and fishing are the core economic anchors according to respondents

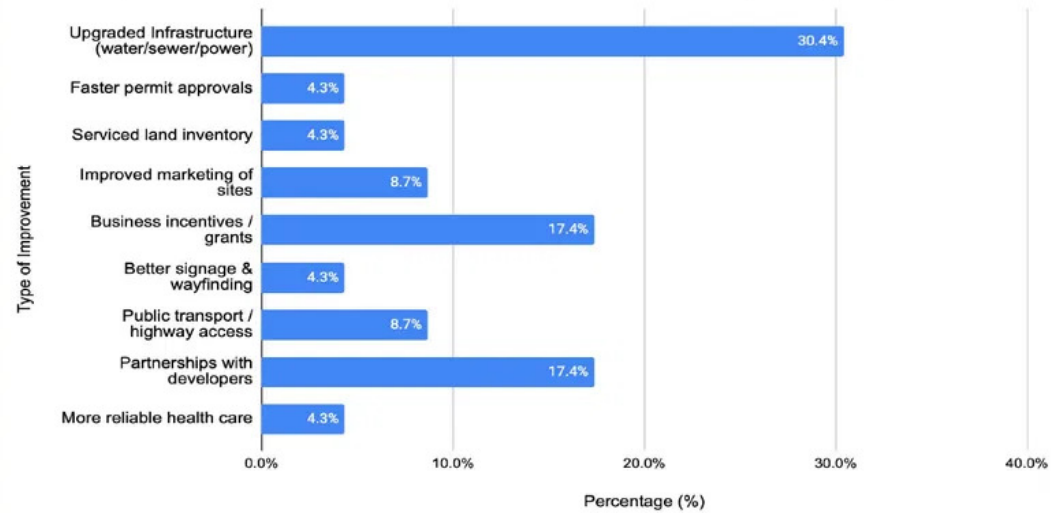
What are the main “anchor” businesses, institutions, or attractions that currently draw people to Shelburne (i.e., a major employer or service that consistently attracts people to the community)?

<p>Tourism: Multiple responses identified tourism, including waterfront attractions, restaurants, and small shops, as a main draw to Shelburne.</p>
<p>Healthcare/Hospital: Roseway Hospital and healthcare services were mentioned as key institutions.</p>
<p>Fishing Industry: Fishing industry-related services were cited as a significant anchor.</p>
<p>Remote Work: Lots of remote working was noted as a factor drawing people to the area.</p>
<p>Need for Industry and Commercial Entity: One response highlighted the need for industry or commercial entities to create jobs, attract big box businesses, improve grocery and building material options, and establish winter recreational centers to make the town more appealing for residents.</p>

Respondents identified tourism (waterfront, restaurants, shops) as a major draw to the area. Healthcare services, especially the hospital, are also important anchors. The fishing industry remains a key part of the local economy.

Respondents would like to see infrastructure upgrades and partnerships to attract investment

3. What improvements would most enhance local investment readiness? (Select up to 3)



Respondents would like to see upgraded infrastructure (30.4%), and business incentives/grants (17.4%) and partnerships with developers (17.4%) the most, as this would be top priority for them for enhancing local investment readiness

Respondents would like to see improved investment potential through infrastructure, workforce and

Infrastructure, workforce, and a supportive business environment are key drivers

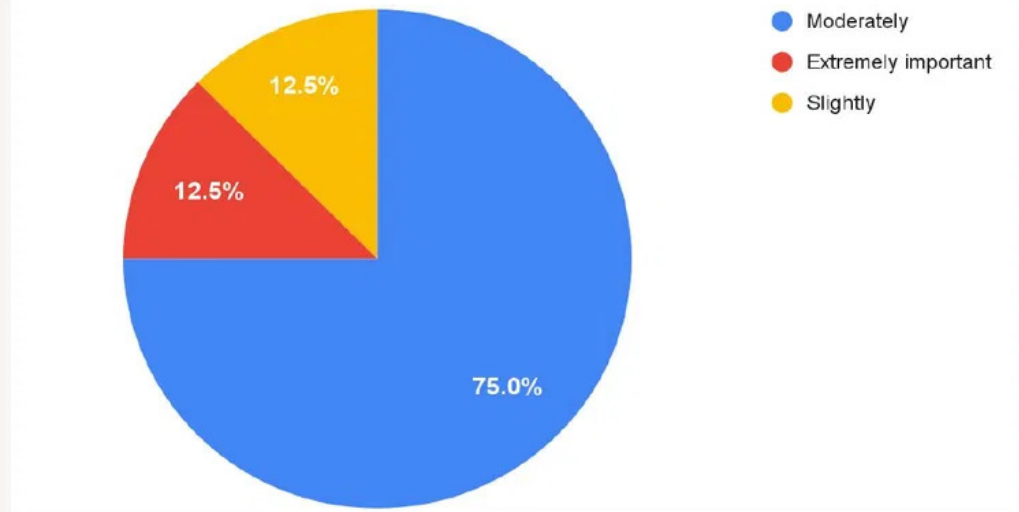
4. From a community perspective, what would make Shelburne an ideal place for investors or new businesses?

<p>Infrastructure and Services: Investors would be attracted by access to reliable services and amenities.</p>
<p>Community and Resources: The local people, available resources, location, landscape, and community support are seen as assets.</p>
<p>Economic Opportunity: The wide-open market with little competition offers a strong opportunity, and a welcomed presence is essential.</p>
<p>Governmental Environment: There needs to be more collaboration between municipal units and less governmental red tape.</p>
<p>Housing and Workforce: Increased housing development is necessary to support the workforce for any potential new businesses.</p>

The responding staff highlighted strong infrastructure and reliable services as essential in attracting investors. The community’s people, location, and natural assets are also seen as important strengths. There is a potential due to low competition and open market space.

Sustainability should take more of a precedence for new development

5. How important is it to ensure new development is environmentally sustainable (Ex: Green industrial parks, renewable energy zones, or eco-tourism development)?

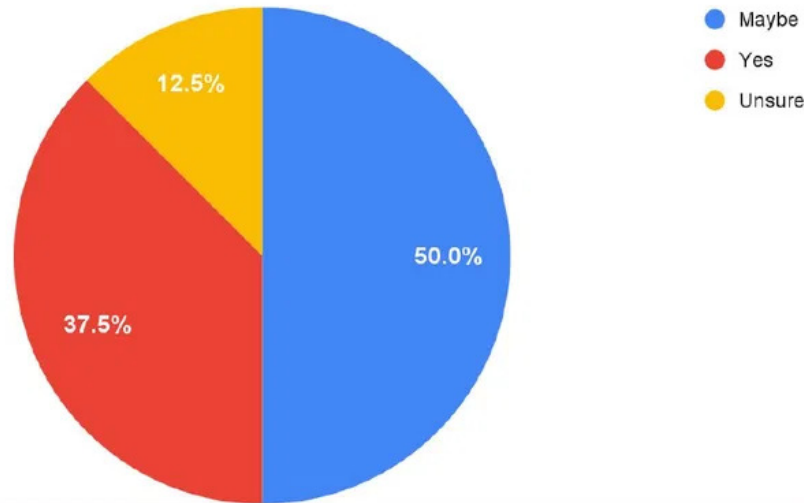


Most respondents (75%) reported sustainability is moderately important, while 12.5% said extremely important.

Respondents support for public-private partnerships rooted in transparency and accountability

Broad Support for Public-Private Partnerships with Emphasis on Transparency and Accountability

6. Would you support the Municipality partnering with private developers for mixed-use or commercial projects on municipal lands?



Half of the survey respondents (50%) said 'maybe', while 37.5% said 'yes' to partnering with private developers indicating a general openness to partnerships, especially if done in the right way.

Clear processes, trust, and due diligence are essential for successful partnerships

7. Please explain your response to the previous question (Why or why not support the partnership with private developers?)

Positive experience/Support: Past positive experiences with private development lead to support, with the condition that support processes are offered transparently to both large and small-scale developers.

Conditions/Caveats: Support depends on the developers' reputation, the location and type of business operation, and the intent and relationship of the partnership.

Need for Due Diligence: Thorough background checks on interested developers are necessary, as some past developers lacked a real intention of developing.

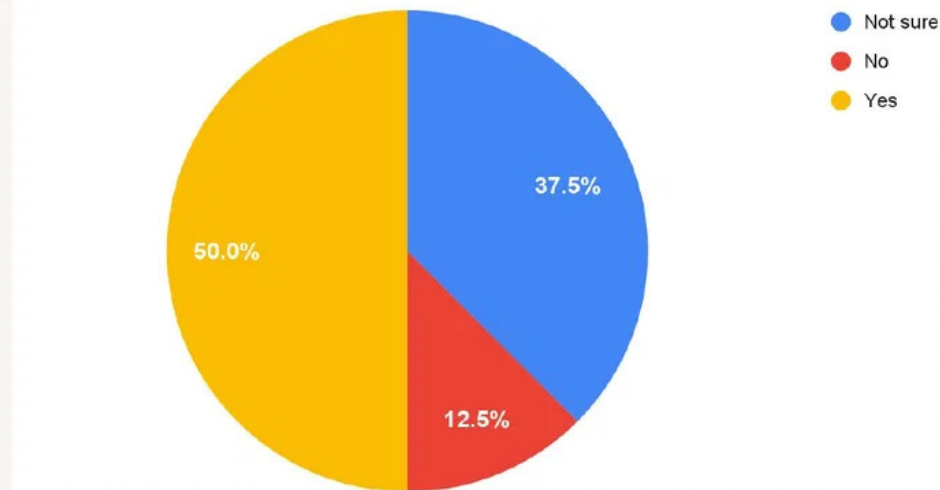
Incentives: A tax incentive for year one, phasing out to zero by year five, was suggested.

Many respondents support partnerships based on positive past experiences, but want fair and transparent processes. They emphasize the need to consider developer reputation, project type, and community fit. There is also a strong need for proper background checks to ensure developers follow through.

Respondents are aware of municipal plans and view permitting process positively

Many respondents reported being unaware of current municipal plans to promote business growth

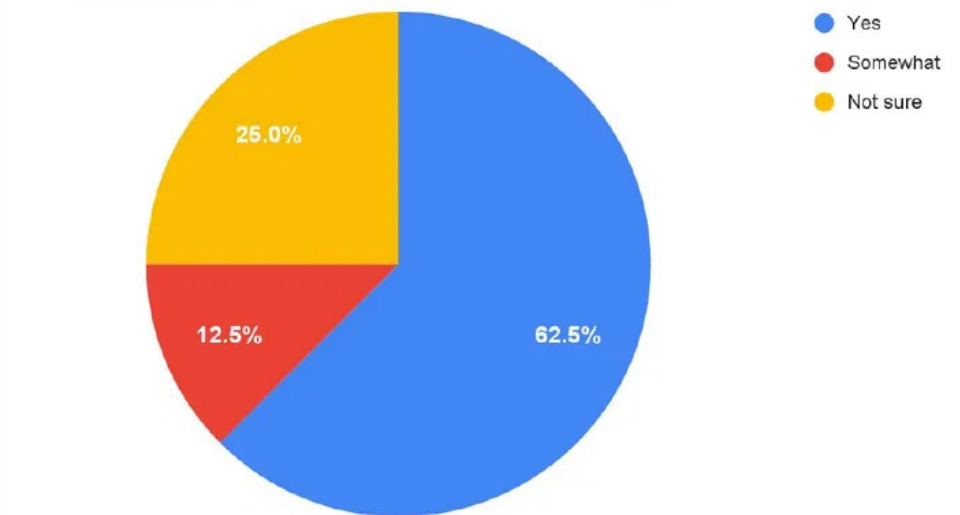
8. Are you aware of any current community or municipal plans that promote business or investment growth (e.g., Official Community Plan, land use strategy)?



Half of the respondents (50%) said they are aware of municipal plans that support business and investment. However, there is a lot of uncertainty, as 37.5% are not sure.

Permitting processes are generally seen as efficient and transparent

9. Do you believe municipal permitting and approvals are efficient and transparent?

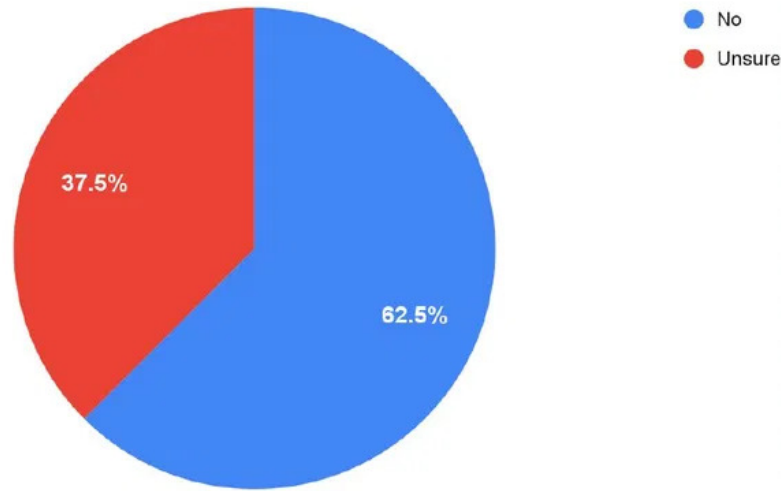


Most respondents (62.5%) believe permitting and approvals are efficient and transparent, while a quarter reported being unsure.

Respondents report mixed awareness of serviced land and municipal communication

Respondents are aware of serviced land availability, with some uncertainty which can be addressed

10. Do you feel Shelburne has adequate serviced land (water, sewer, power) to attract new business investment?

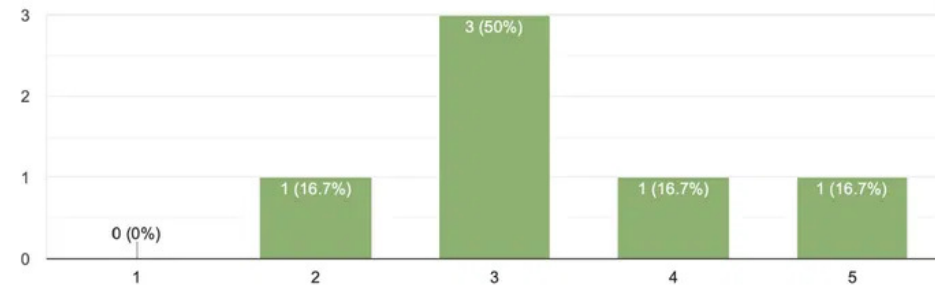


Most respondents (62.5%) believe Shelburne has adequately serviced land (water, sewer, power) to attract new business investment. However, a major portion 37.5% said they are unsure.

Respondents rate municipal communication as average

11. How would you rate municipal communication about investment or business opportunities?

6 responses



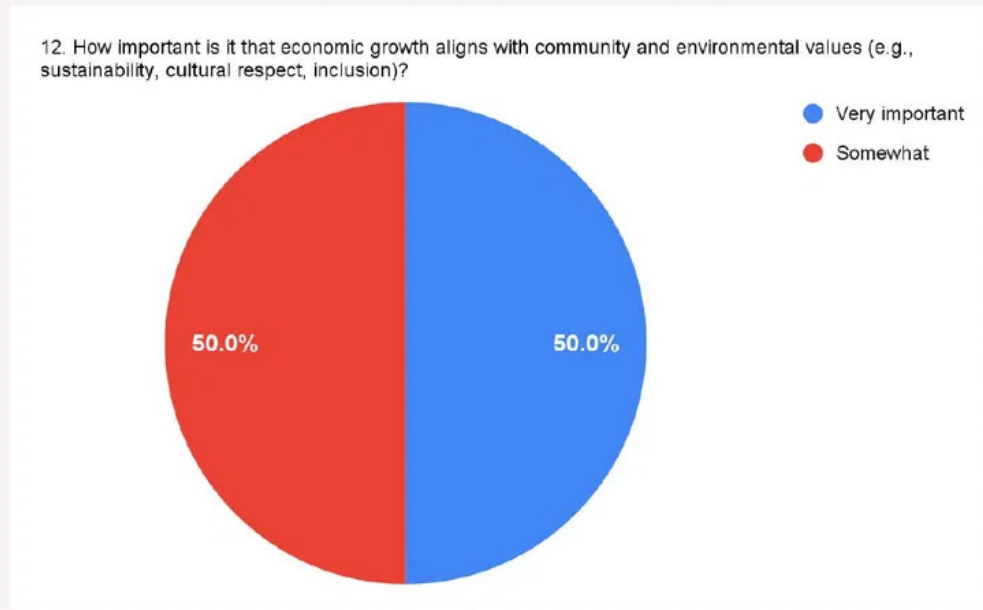
Average rating (3.33)



The average rating for municipal communication is 3.33 out of 5, showing a moderate level of satisfaction. Half of the respondents (50%) rated it at 3, while fewer gave higher ratings.

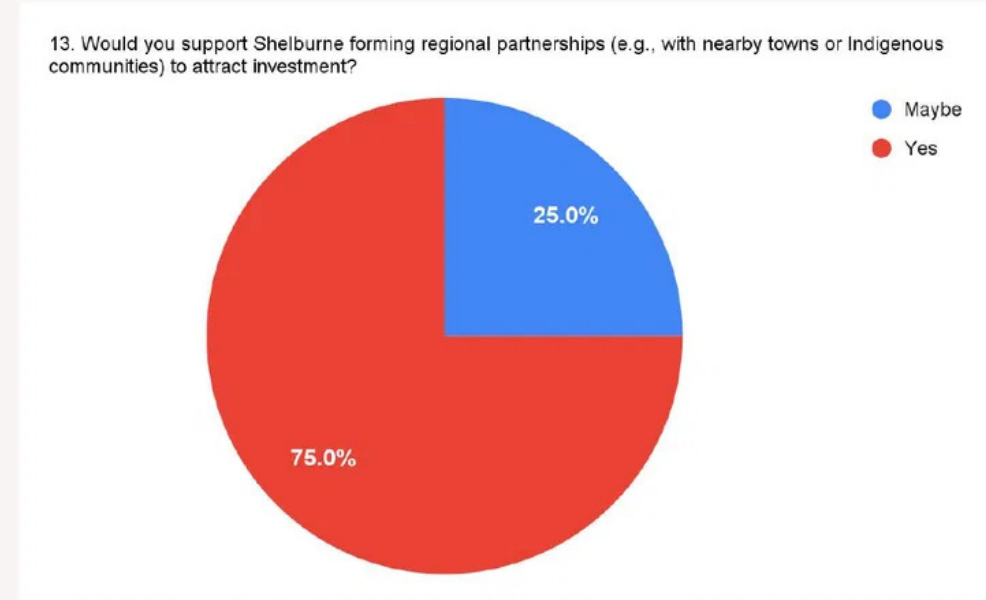
Respondents align on values-based growth and support for regional collaboration

Mixed priorities for economic growth that aligns with community and environmental values among respondents



All respondents agree that economic growth should align with community and environmental values. Half (50%) said it is very important, and the other half (50%) said it is somewhat important.

Respondents support regional collaboration to attract investment

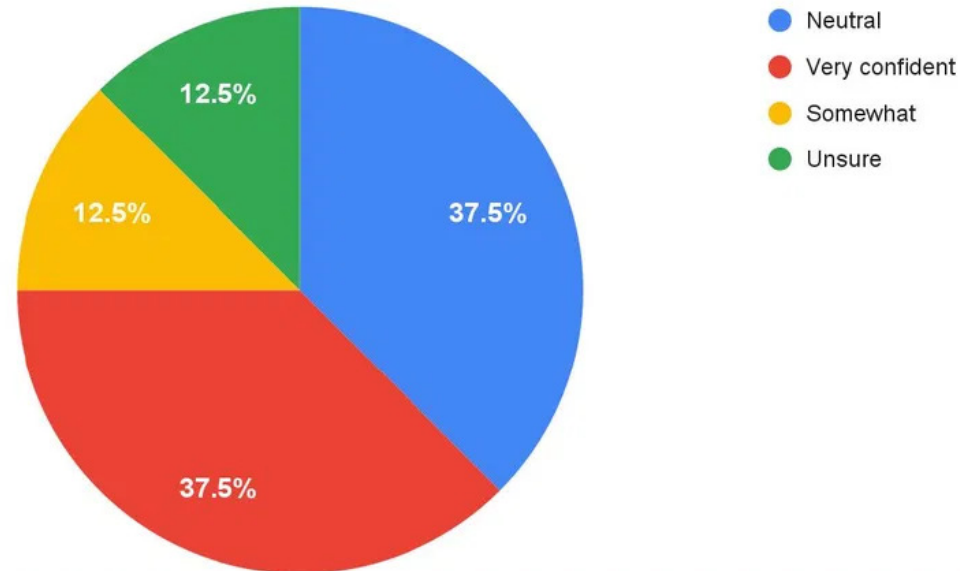


Most respondents (75%) support forming regional partnerships to attract investment. The remaining 25% said maybe.

Balanced Confidence in Project Capacity with Strong Interest in Continued Engagement

Respondents are generally confident in delivering major development projects

14. How confident are you in the community's capacity to manage large projects (e.g., business park, tourism hub)?



Confidence levels amongst respondents are mixed. About 37.5% feel very confident about managing large projects, while another 37.5% feel neutral

Shelburne Business SWOT Analysis:

Strengths

- People relocate for the slower pace
- Scenic
- Beaches
- Places to explore
- Historic areas
- Growth potential
- Safe environment
- Welcoming
- Businesses offer variety
- Good family area
- Nice town
- Small/ picturesque
- Location - between 2 major centres
- Sense of community
- Weather
- Volunteer base
- Socially ethical community

Opportunities

- Develop tourism in the area
- Roseway Manor expansion
- Healthcare
- New Vision Homes expansion
- More recreation facilities → closest recreation is in Bridgewater; travel
- More employment opportunities
- Wind turbine, light industry development/assembly
- Retail; Bike repair shop, book shop
- Obstacle course
- Waterfront
- Historic district
- Homes
- Finding skilled construction workers
- Taxes - tax rates
- Professional Services
- Skilled Labour
- Funding
- Fewer amenities
- Small population
- Weak economy
- Negative mindset of town people
- Childcare facilities
- Room for growth
- Book club, art activities
- Outdoor opportunities
- Senior community

Weaknesses: What currently prevents business/industry growth?

- Access to highway 103
- Public transportation, lack of capacity
- Lack of childcare availability
- Lack of affordable housing - affects employment opportunities
- Aging population
- Waning interests
- Finding skilled construction workers
- Taxes - tax rates
- Professional Services
- Skilled Labour
- Funding
- Fewer amenities
- Small population
- Weak economy
- Negative mindset of town people

Threats: What must we absolutely prevent from happening?

- Global economic factors slowing investment
- Youth moving away for opportunities elsewhere and not coming back after university
- Public transportation
- Small town mentality
- Tax increases
- Fear of losing historic district funding.
- Need to protect historic integrity of the district with bylaws.

Business Themes

Businesses identified several key themes through consultations and their SWOT analysis.

SWOT Category	Theme	Explanation	Example
Strengths	Quality of Life & Lifestyle	Businesses and residents identified Shelburne's slower pace of life, safety, and family-friendly environment as major strengths that help attract people seeking a different lifestyle.	Slower pace of life, safe environment, family living, small-town atmosphere, friendly people, welcoming businesses, slower pace lifestyle, friendly people, good family living
Strengths	Natural & Scenic Assets	The area's natural beauty and outdoor environment were consistently identified as key strengths and differentiators.	Beaches, raw nature, scenic views, places to explore, weather, historic area, beaches, scenic landscapes, raw nature, places to explore
Strengths	Community & Social Capital	Participants described Shelburne as having a strong, engaged, and welcoming community with active volunteerism.	Involved community, volunteer base, socially ethical community, solid community, concerned about growth, volunteerism, socially ethical community
Strengths	Growth Potential	Businesses identified significant room for future growth and development within the region.	Growth potential, room for growth, niche town, opportunity, room for growth, opportunity for future development
Strengths	Location & Character	Shelburne's location and unique small-town identity were viewed as competitive advantages.	Historic area, picturesque town, location between major centres, niche town, picturesque small-town identity, between two major centres

Source: ASBB Public and Community Groups Surveys

Business Themes

Businesses identified several key themes through consultations and their SWOT analysis.

SWOT Category	Theme	Explanation	Example
Threats	Youth Out Migration	Businesses expressed concern that young people are leaving the area for education and career opportunities and may not return.	Youth moving away after university
Threats	Economic Uncertainty	Global economic conditions and investment slowdowns were identified as risks to future growth.	Global economic factors slowing investment
Threats	Taxation & Cost Pressures	Rising taxes and operating costs were identified as concerns for businesses and residents.	Tax increases
Threats	Loss of Heritage & Community Character	Participants emphasized the importance of protecting Shelburne's historic identity and district integrity.	Protect historic district funding and bylaws
Threats	Transportation & Accessibility	Transportation limitations were identified as a barrier to accessibility and future growth.	Public transportation concerns
Threats	Community Mindset & Resistance to Change	Some businesses identified concerns around resistance to growth or new ideas.	Small-town mentality

Source: ASBB Public and Community Groups Surveys

Business Themes

Businesses identified several key themes through consultations and their SWOT analysis.

SWOT Category	Theme	Explanation	Example
Strategic Priorities	Youth Retention & Workforce Development	Retaining young people and building local career opportunities emerged as a key long-term priority.	Education, career opportunities, local business growth
Strategic Priorities	Tourism & Destination Branding	Businesses see an opportunity to strengthen Shelburne’s identity as a tourism and lifestyle destination.	Historic district, beaches, lifestyle marketing
Strategic Priorities	Investment Readiness	Maintaining a competitive environment for investment was identified as important for future growth.	Tax competitiveness, development readiness
Strategic Priorities	Protecting Community Identity	Balancing growth while preserving community character was seen as an important consideration.	Historic preservation, community values

Source: ASBB Public and Community Groups Surveys

Business Themes

Businesses identified several key themes through consultations and their SWOT analysis.

Source: ASBB Public and Community Groups Surveys

SWOT Category	Theme	Explanation	Example
Weaknesses	Workforce & Labour Shortages	Businesses identified labour shortages and difficulty finding trained workers as one of the largest barriers to growth and expansion.	Lack of trained employees, skilled labour shortages, difficulty finding construction workers
Weaknesses	Housing Availability & Affordability	Limited housing availability and affordability were identified as major issues impacting workforce attraction and retention.	Affordable housing shortages, housing affecting employment opportunities
Weaknesses	Childcare Availability	Businesses noted that limited childcare availability creates challenges for workforce participation.	Lack of childcare availability
Weaknesses	Infrastructure & Transportation	Transportation access and infrastructure limitations were identified as barriers for residents, workers, and businesses.	Public transportation limitations, Highway 103 access concerns
Weaknesses	Small Population & Aging Demographics	Participants expressed concern about the small population base and aging demographic trends within the community.	Small population, aging population, waning interests
Weaknesses	Business Environment & Funding	Businesses identified taxation, funding access, and limited professional services as barriers to growth.	Taxes, tax rates, funding limitations, lack of professional services
Weaknesses	Community Mindset & Resistance	Some respondents identified negative attitudes or resistance to change as barriers to future growth.	Public resistance, negative mindset of townspeople
Weaknesses	Limited Amenities & Services	Businesses noted that limited amenities and services reduce the area's competitiveness and attractiveness.	Fewer amenities

Business Themes

Businesses identified several key themes through consultations and their SWOT analysis.

Source: ASBB Public and Community Groups Surveys

SWOT Category	Theme	Explanation	Example
Opportunities	Tourism & Visitor Economy	Businesses identified tourism as one of the largest growth opportunities for Shelburne, particularly through recreation, events, and waterfront experiences.	Tourism growth, lodging, waterfront development, more events, historic district, outdoor recreation
Opportunities	Healthcare & Senior Services	Healthcare expansion and senior-focused services were identified as major future growth opportunities.	Healthcare services, Roseway Manor expansion, senior living community
Opportunities	Housing & Residential Development	Participants identified significant demand for new housing and residential development.	Tiny homes, homes, New Vision Homes expansion
Opportunities	Remote Work & Lifestyle Attraction	Businesses recognized that Shelburne's lifestyle and natural environment create opportunities to attract remote workers.	Remote work opportunities, lifestyle relocation
Opportunities	Recreation & Community Amenities	Additional recreation and community facilities were identified as opportunities to improve quality of life and attract residents.	Pool, indoor training facilities, obstacle course, recreation facilities
Opportunities	Renewable Energy & Green Industry	Renewable energy development was identified as a possible future industry for the region.	Wind turbine development and assembly
Opportunities	Retail & Local Services	Businesses identified opportunities for additional local retail and service offerings.	Bike repair shop, bookstore/café concept, retail expansion
Opportunities	Arts, Culture & Community Identity	Arts, culture, and community-focused experiences were viewed as opportunities to strengthen Shelburne's identity and visitor appeal.	Arts, community events, borrow/fix-it community ethos
Opportunities	Light Industry & Employment Growth	Participants identified opportunities to expand light industry and create additional employment opportunities.	Light industry, employment creation, population growth

Community Consultations Results

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Public Engagement Themes



Consultation Methodology

Source: ASBB Public and Community Groups Surveys

Category	Theme	Description	Example
Assets	Natural & Waterfront Assets	Shelburne’s coastline, harbour, trails, and natural scenery were repeatedly identified as some of the community’s strongest advantages and key assets for future growth and attraction. Strong natural environment and waterfront positioning.	Natural harbour, beaches, trails, ocean-to-forest scenery, climate, waterfront character
Assets	Community & Lifestyle	Residents highlighted Shelburne’s welcoming atmosphere, safety, and quality of life as important strengths that could help attract families, workers, and new residents. Community strengths that support attraction and retention.	Safe community, strong sense of community, authentic lifestyle, open spaces
Assets	Cultural & Heritage Assets	Local history, heritage and cultural features, particularly Birchtown and the community’s marine roots, were seen as important features that help differentiate Shelburne from other regions.	Birchtown history, marine heritage
Assets	Location & Access	Stakeholders viewed Highway 103 access and Shelburne’s regional location as valuable for tourism, transportation, and future business development. Geographic and transportation advantages.	Highway 103 access, regional positioning
Asset	Existing Marine Industry	The area’s existing marine-related businesses and waterfront experience provide a strong foundation for future marine and blue economy growth. Existing knowledge and infrastructure related to marine sectors.	Boat shops, marine skills, harbour access

Gaps and Needs: Core Needs

Source: ASBB Public and Community Groups Surveys

Category	Theme	Description	Example
Gaps	Tourism & Hospitality	Participants identified significant gaps in tourism infrastructure and visitor amenities that may limit Shelburne’s ability to attract and retain visitors. Missing tourism infrastructure and visitor amenities.	Limited hotels, lack of conference facilities, limited nightlife and attractions
Gaps	Healthcare Services	Healthcare access and specialized medical services were consistently identified as areas where residents feel additional services are needed. Limited access to healthcare and specialized services.	Dialysis, chemo, imaging, labour/delivery, addictions support
Gaps	Housing	A lack of affordable and available housing was seen as a growing issue that could affect population growth and workforce attraction. Need for more housing options and affordability.	Affordable housing, safe housing shortages
Gaps	Retail & Services	Residents identified several missing retail stores and services that currently require people to travel outside the area. Missing local services and commercial amenities.	Banking, butcher, groceries, music store, furniture/appliances
Gaps	Infrastructure	Infrastructure limitations were identified as a barrier to growth and future development readiness. Infrastructure limitations affecting growth.	Sewer/water, power infrastructure, derelict buildings
Gaps	Workforce & Skills	Participants expressed concerns about labour shortages and limited local training opportunities for future industries. Shortages in labour and training opportunities.	Skilled trades shortages, limited local training

Gaps and Needs: Core Needs

Source: ASBB Public and Community Groups Surveys

Category	Theme	Description	Example
Opportunities	Tourism Development	Stakeholders see strong potential to grow Shelburne as a tourism destination by building on its natural beauty, waterfront, and cultural assets. Potential to grow tourism and destination appeal.	Natural harbour, beaches, trails, ocean-to-forest scenery, climate, waterfront character
Opportunities	Marine & Blue Economy	The marine sector was viewed as one of the community's largest economic opportunities due to the harbour and existing marine experience. Expansion opportunities tied to waterfront and marine industries.	Safe community, strong sense of community, authentic lifestyle, open spaces
Opportunities	Renewable Energy	Residents identified opportunities to expand renewable energy and sustainability initiatives while creating local employment. Potential growth in renewable and sustainable energy sectors. Opportunities in emerging industries and remote work attraction.	Birchtown history, marine heritage
Opportunities	Innovation & Technology	Emerging sectors such as technology and innovation were viewed as opportunities to attract younger workers and diversify the economy. Opportunities in emerging industries and remote work attraction.	Highway 103 access, regional positioning
Opportunities	Manufacturing & Industrial	Industrial and manufacturing opportunities were identified as potential areas for long-term economic growth and employment. Potential industrial and manufacturing growth sectors.	Boat shops, marine skills, harbour access
Opportunities	Agriculture & Food Security	Local food production and sustainability initiatives were identified as opportunities to improve resilience and economic diversification.	Hydroponic agriculture, food security initiatives
Opportunities	Investment Attraction	Many respondents emphasized the importance of attracting new investors, businesses, and redevelopment opportunities to the area. Ability to attract new investors and development.	Strategic land acquisition, tax incentives, redevelopment projects

Gaps and Needs: Core Needs

Source: ASBB Public and Community Groups Surveys

Category	Theme	Description	Example
Barriers	Infrastructure Readiness	Current infrastructure challenges may limit Shelburne's ability to support larger-scale development and investment opportunities. Physical infrastructure challenges limiting investment.	Aging infrastructure, limited serviced land, waterfront upgrades needed
Barriers	Housing Availability	Housing shortages were identified as a major challenge affecting workforce attraction and community growth. Housing shortages affecting growth and workforce attraction.	Limited affordable and workforce housing
Barriers	Workforce Retention	Keeping young people and skilled workers in the community was identified as an ongoing challenge. Challenges retaining youth and skilled workers.	Outmigration, limited local education opportunities
Barriers	Healthcare Access	Limited healthcare services may impact quality of life and make it more difficult to attract residents and workers. Healthcare limitations impacting quality of life and attraction.	Limited specialized healthcare services
Barriers	Community Appearance	The condition of some buildings and underused properties was identified as negatively affecting community image and investment readiness. Visual and physical issues impacting perception.	Derelict buildings, underused properties
Barriers	Economic Scale	Some participants noted concerns about the balance between the local labour force, tax base, and future growth ambitions. Small market size and labour limitations.	Tax base vs available labour concerns

Gaps and Needs: Core Needs

Source: ASBB Public and Community Groups Surveys

Category	Theme	Description	Example
Priorities	Tourism Strategy	Respondents identified tourism development as a key priority area for future economic growth and community promotion. Develop a coordinated tourism and destination development strategy.	Branding, events, waterfront promotion, accommodations
Priorities	Waterfront Redevelopment	Improving and activating the waterfront was consistently identified as an important economic and tourism priority. Improve and activate waterfront and harbour areas.	Government wharf upgrades, marine tourism infrastructure
Priorities	Housing Development	Increasing housing supply was identified as a necessary step to support population and workforce growth. Expand affordable and workforce housing supply.	Housing partnerships, development incentives
Priorities	Healthcare Expansion	Improving healthcare access and services was viewed as important for both residents and future attraction efforts. Improve healthcare access and services.	Hospital services, healthcare recruitment
Priorities	Business & Investment Attraction	Creating a more investment-ready environment was seen as important for attracting new businesses and supporting economic growth. Strengthen business attraction and support.	Tax incentives, business directories, strategic land development
Priorities	Workforce Development	Participants highlighted the importance of building local skills and training opportunities to support future industries. Improve training and retention programs.	Scholarships, skilled trades, marine and healthcare training
Priorities	Community Branding & Promotion	Respondents felt Shelburne would benefit from stronger branding, marketing, and promotion efforts to better communicate its strengths. Create stronger marketing and identity initiatives.	Promo videos, destination messaging, welcome campaigns

SHELBURNE: WHAT WE HEARD

Thank You

Prepared for the Municipality of the District of Shelburne.

asbbeconomicsandresearch.ca