



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

**November 4, 2024 –
Delegation to Municipality of
Thames Centre**

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Team Members



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*Youth Workforce Education
Coordinator*



Kelly Hunt

*Economic Development and
Tourism Coordinator*

Strategic Priorities



Strategic Objective 1:

Invest in people and places via rural revitalization

Strategic Objective 2:

Entice talented workers and entrepreneurs to relocate here

Strategic Objective 3:

Attract investment in technology-based manufacturing, food production, and agriculture technology

Strategic Objective 4:

Advocate for investment readiness and implement improvements in business development services



Tourism Investment Tool-Kit

PURPOSE

- Encourage tourism investment.
- Attract new tourism businesses that support and align with municipal values and market demand.
- Identify sites for new tourism development.
- Provide best practices and guidelines for land use planning.

PROGRESS

- Worked with CBRE Tourism Consulting Team.
- Consultants toured various businesses in County.
- Held a Stakeholder as well as a Municipal roundtable in Spring 2024.

FINAL REPORTS

- Reports completed and presented to County Council on June 25th.
- Reports include a public-facing tool-kit and gap analysis for internal use.
- Invited by Ministry to pitch properties to several qualified investors at Dragon's Den event in November.

Commercial Investment Attraction

Overview

- Economic diversification and competitiveness by implementing a comprehensive action plan focused on commercial investment in Middlesex County.

Outcomes

- Increase in number of commercial businesses in Middlesex County.
- Increase in net commercial tax assessment as well as percent share of total tax assessment.

Funding

- Provincial application for 50% of the project expenses was successful.

Timeline

- RFQ released June 18th, contract awarded with the project timeframe set for July 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025.
- Market/gap analysis completed
- Action Plan Completed. Lead generation to commence in Winter 2024/25





Industrial Familiarization (FAM) Tours

- Organized tours for staff, elected officials, and business leaders.
- Organized in partnership with interested local municipalities and Ec. Dev. Committees.

Community Improvement Plan Partnership -2024

- In 2023, we had **5** municipalities reimbursed for a total of **\$26,058** across **14** projects. This is up from the \$18,000 reimbursed in 2022. Development of seventh CIP in Thames Centre took place with 50% funding pledged from the County.
- Funding is available for 50% reimbursement of local municipal contributions to the development and implementation of Community Improvement Plan projects that are completed and funded in 2024.
- 2024 [CIP Application Form](#)



County Led FDI Lead Generation

- Successful Can Export Application (Global Affairs Canada) for activities through March 31, 2025
- RFP process completed - Research FDI Lead Generation Consulting secured
- 3 FDI shows set for 2024 – 2025:
 - National Plastics Expo (May 6-10, 2024) – U.S. (in partnership with SOMA)
 - Institute of Food Technologists (July 14-17, 2024) – U.S.
 - Expo Manufactura – January 30 – February 1, 2025 - Mexico
- 2025-2028 Countywide FDI Strategy developed



2024 Regional FDI Initiatives



- Middlesex County Banker/Co-Chair
- CanExport funding consultant selected for FDI Lead Generation and Strategic Activities Plan for 2024-2026

Tradeshows Booked for 2024:

- ❖ Summer Fancy Food Show (June 23-25) – New York, NY, U.S.
- ❖ SIAL (Oct 19-23) – Paris, France
- ❖ Supply Side West (Oct 23-27) – Las Vegas, NV, U.S.



- Membership continued for 2024

Trade Shows Booked for 2024:

- ❖ Hanover Messe (April 22-26) – Hanover, Germany
- ❖ International Manufacturing Technology Show (Sept 9-14) – Chicago, IL, U.S.

Industrial Land Development

- Inventory of industrial lands across the County have been setup on GIS and shared Dropbox with the Province. Any updates need to be provided to the County on a regular basis to keep this information current
- Business Parks [page](#)
 - Work with local staff to ensure correct mapping, pricing, acreage, services contact info, etc.
 - Looking to add new privately held industrial subdivisions to the mix
- County loan program revamped to focus on industrial development – see [report](#).
- Certification & marketing of development-ready industrial lands - contact us re: how to access County and Provincial funding (can apply to both public and private parcels).



Business Retention and Expansion

Targets

Consistently engage with existing companies within the agri-business, manufacturing, small business and tourism sectors.

Partnering

Ensure local municipal staff (CAO or EDO) have the opportunity to participate in formal BR&E session(s) in partnership with the County.

Focus

Use consistent questions/surveys across the County, with consideration for future BRE&A initiatives.

Business Appreciation Program

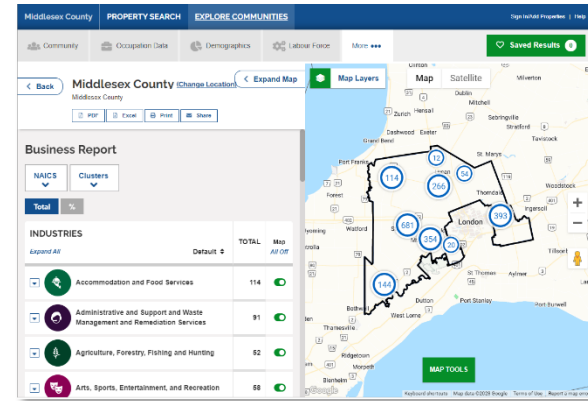
Celebration of significant milestones including business and organization anniversaries, notable awards/accomplishments and new business openings.

- Certificate of appreciation and Invest in Middlesex gifts issued
- Red Carpet and Ribbon cutting scissors are available
- [Application](#) available on Invest in Middlesex website.



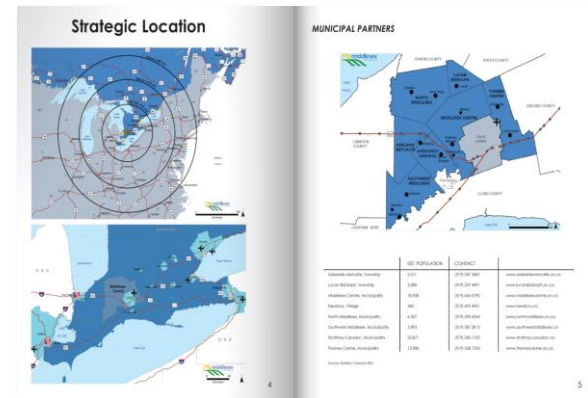
Please continued to share new business openings so we can retain up-to-date information on promotional material and our website – and so we can work together to boost all our social media posts!

Middlesex County Resources



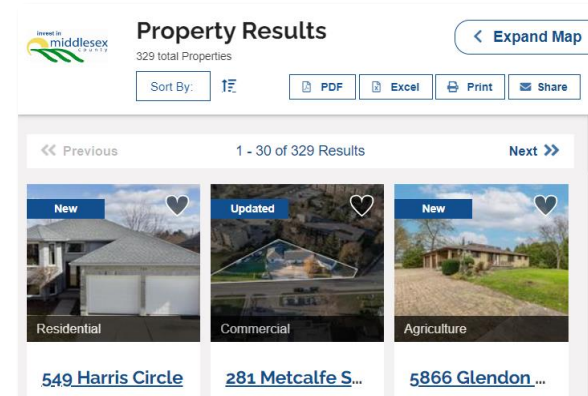
Business Directory

- Integrated with sector mapping software
- User friendly platform for investors and developers
- Ability to sort business industries per municipality



Investor's Guide

- Information on skilled workers, world class education and research facilities, low start-up costs and shovel ready sites.
- For BRE&A - how their business will be appreciated in Middlesex County.



Available Properties

- Synced with the London and St. Thomas Association of Realtors property listing data.
- Facilitates the site selection process, providing accurate and up-to-date property information.

Middlesex County Resources



Sponsorship Funding

- Available for partnering on workshops and business events that are open to all.
- Contact us to discuss any sessions you are looking for support on.
- Visit our Incentive and Support Programs page for additional organizations that support employment, provide grants, loans, or other incentives.



Newsletter

- Our quarterly e-newsletter provides updates for our local businesses, prospective investors and our economic development partners.
- Newest stories, articles, promotions, funding opportunities, business features and more.



File Tracking

- CMS installed in 2024
- Economic Development team is looking into developing annual dashboards.
- This will give municipalities an overview of department activities, achievements, focuses, indicators and more.

Economic Development Corporation – Feasibility Study

Progress to Date

- Working Group established to explore EDC model for Middlesex County
- Tours & meetings with other Southwestern Ontario EDCs
- Preliminary conversations with provincial Ministries, FedDev, Chamber of Commerce, neighbouring EDCs and post-secondary institutions have begun to explore potential partnership opportunities.
- [Report to County Council](#) took place March 26th
- RFP for feasibility study awarded to Urban Metrics
- Municipal engagement completed in June
- Partner interactive workshop completed Summer 2024
- [Report and Recommendations](#) presented to Council
September 2024

Next Steps

- Implementation Plan being presented to Budget Committee consideration in 2025



Tourism Partnerships and Supports

Partnerships with Regional Tourism Organizations

- ❖ Middlesex County is a member of Southwestern Ontario Tourism Corporation (SWOTC) and partners with them for various tourism supports such as promotions, campaigns, provide data etc. to further support tourism to the area



Tourism Experience Development

- ❖ Visit Middlesex can provide resources and find opportunities to coach tourism operators ready to develop tourism experiences to market



Bloggers and Influencers

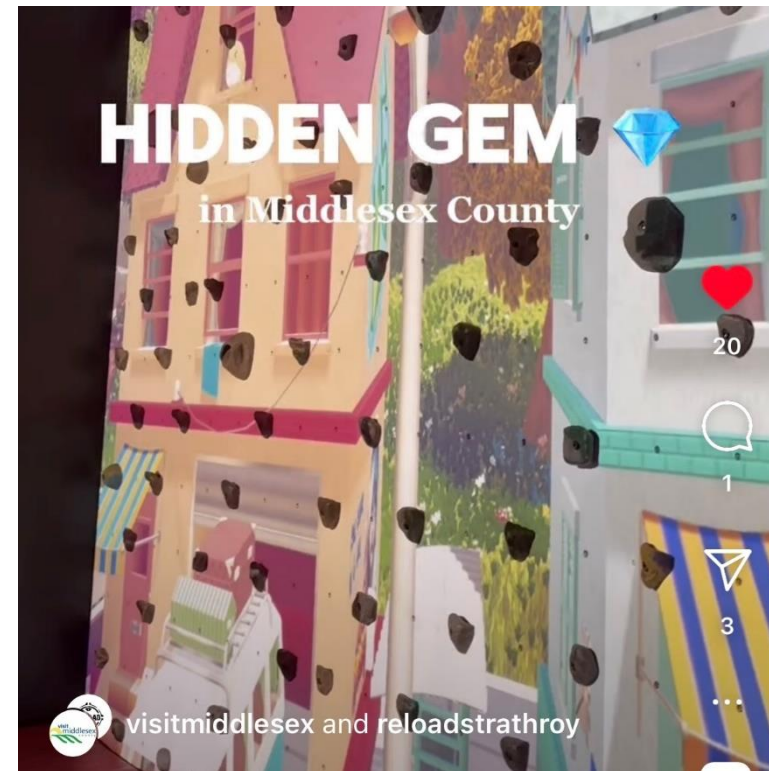
- ❖ Visit Middlesex brings bloggers, influencers, and travel writers to the area to further support local tourism to the region



Middlesex County's Department of Economic Development is the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for tourism

Social Media Promotions

- ❖ Work with local tourism operators to highlight their attractions, products, cuisine, etc.
- ❖ Create reels and posts featuring local businesses during the seasons and shop/explore local campaigns



Event Promotions

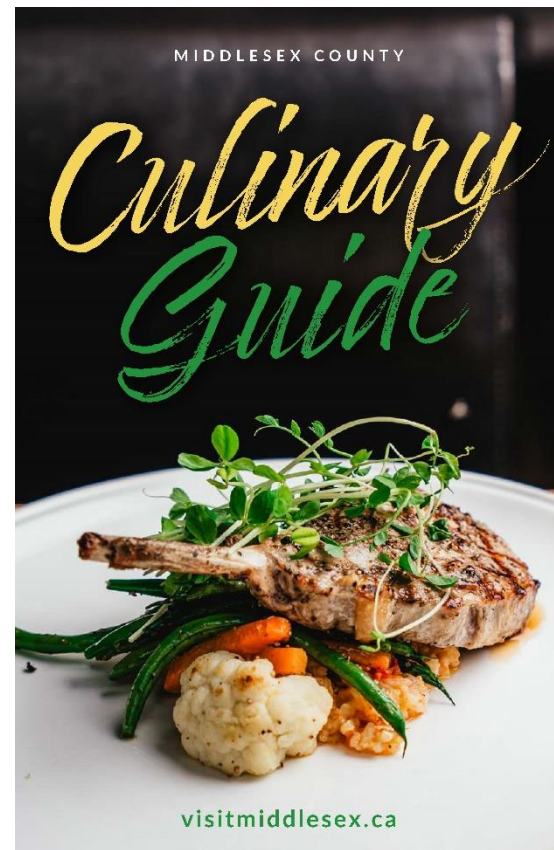
- ❖ Event calendar for tourism operators to submit their local events
- ❖ Share local events on the Visit Middlesex page and creating “things to do” social media posts highlighting key events throughout the year
- ❖ Provide signage to businesses such as All Are Welcome window clings
- ❖ Provide promotional items to attendees of local events

Information Racks

- ❖ Tourism operators have the opportunity to display their marketing materials in these racks located in select Middlesex County Libraries and Holiday Inn Express

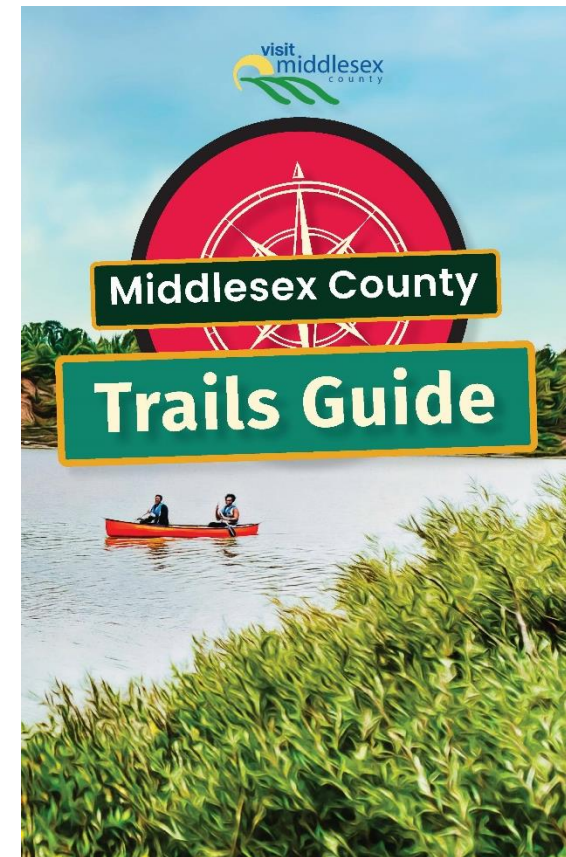


Culinary Guide



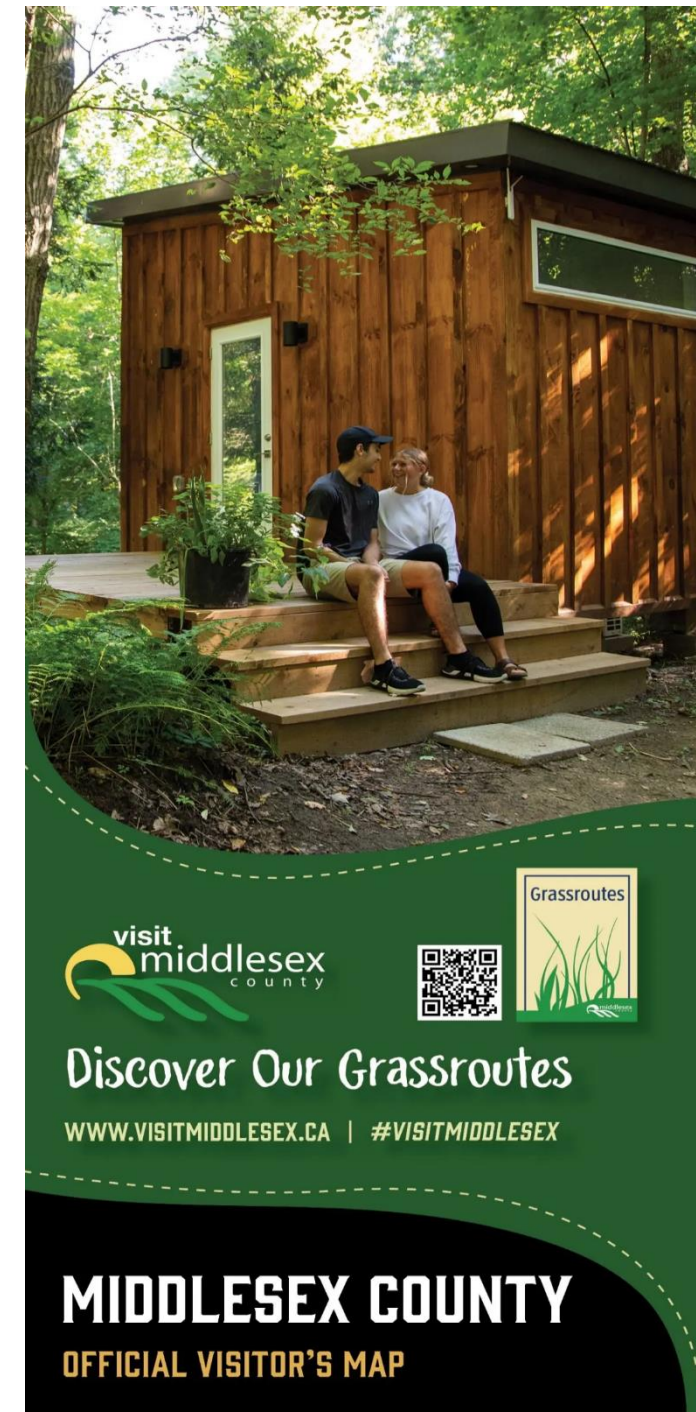
- ❖ Released 3rd edition of the guide in Summer 2024
- ❖ Sponsorship secured by Middlesex Federation of Agriculture and Middlesex London Food Policy Council.
- ❖ Adding a new feature identifying cultural cuisine available across Middlesex County

Trails Guide



- ❖ Released 2nd edition of the guide earlier this year
- ❖ Fresh new look and design featuring detailed maps indicating activities and key points of interests within each trail/conservation area

Discover Our Grassroutes Official Visitor's Map



- ❖ Released 3rd edition of the guide last year
- ❖ Map follows the Grassroutes Trail and points visitors to the best tourism hot spots in the County

Tourism Publications



- Partnership with Sarnia-Lambton – 5th campaign to date
- Partners include Economic Development and Tourism from each county as well as both Federations of Agriculture
- “Hands to Table Harvest” dining program in its 2nd year – ran throughout October 2024
- Video campaign will take place in November 2024

www.handstotable.ca



Tourism FAM Tour

- Annual tour provides tourism operators the opportunity to network, building partnership, and learning about industry resources and best practices.
- 2024 FAM Tour included:
 - Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum
 - Holiday Inn Express
 - U.Cake
 - Jireh Hills
 - Let it Brie



Tourism Sponsorship Program

Sponsorship offered for **new events and experiences not exceeding 50% and/or \$2500** of the cash budget per project.

Sponsorship for **returning annual events not exceeding \$1000.**

Total sponsorships may not exceed \$5,000 per operator/organization per year.

All projects must be geared to the attraction of **visitors from outside Middlesex County.**

*Click [HERE](#) for Application Form



Marketing & Advertising

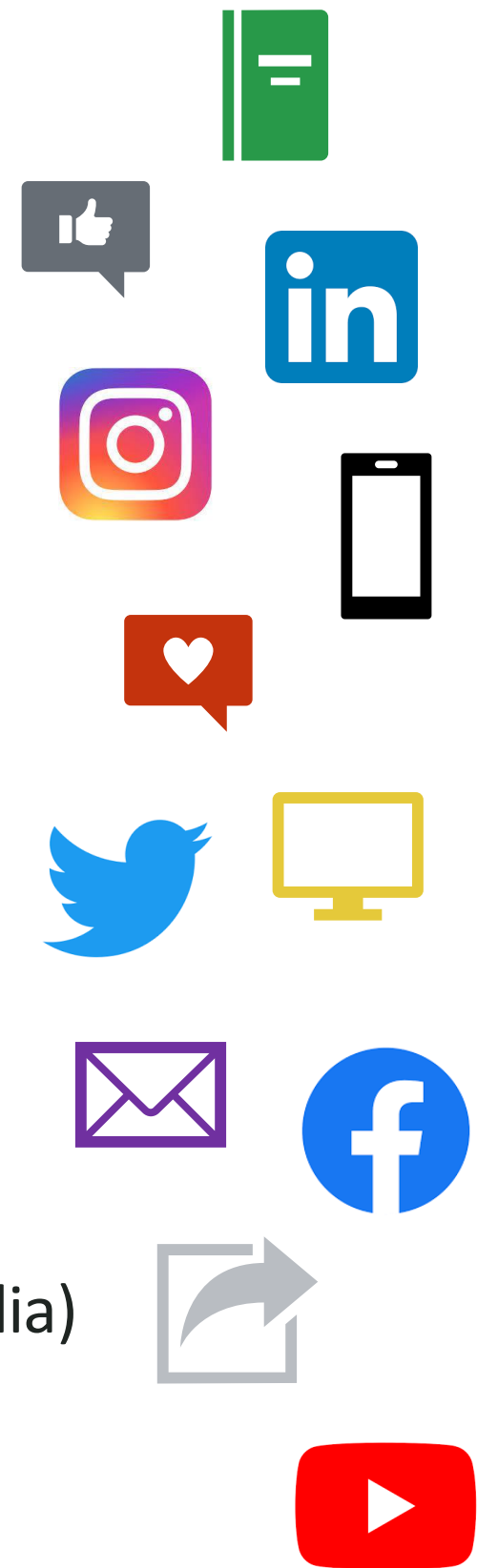
- ❖ A variety of campaigns in the works for Invest in Middlesex and Visit Middlesex brands.
- ❖ Will continue taking advantage of partnerships as it allows us to reach new audiences and different markets.
- ❖ Staggered release in 2024 of Making it in Middlesex videos produced in 2023.
- ❖ Following has increased significantly in 2024

Visit Middlesex

- CTV (Summer & Winter Tourism Commercials)
- Summer Fun Guide
- Destination Ontario
- Culinary Tourism Alliance
- Digital Media Advertising (social media)

Invest in Middlesex

- Expansion Solutions Magazine
- Digital Media Advertising (social media)
- Business Facilities Magazine
- Business Xpansion Journal Magazine
- Radio campaigns (MyFM/ Blackburn/Bell Media)
- SIOR (Industrial/Office Realtors)



Videography and Photography

We are always interested in hearing from you if there is a need for any investment, tourism or other economic development related photography in your area.

Economic Development Videography and Photography

- “Making it in Middlesex” video/photo series throughout 2024. Completed in partnership with local municipalities.
- Sector specific videos and investment attraction videos

Tourism Videography and Photography

- Seasonal videos and photography
- Social reels
- Event and theme specific videos

* Drone available



Work In Middlesex

- Wrapped up Co-op focused campaign in partnership with OMAFRA March 31, 2024.
- Two series of videos have been produced; all featuring Middlesex businesses. The first series features secondary school students and employers in partnership with both school boards. The second series features post-secondary students and their employers.
- New project in partnership with OMAFRA for 2024 focused on detailed job matching and resources for job seekers; with particular emphasis on the trades.
- Overhauled and added a new matching platform to www.workinmiddlesex.ca



- Partnership with LEDC and others to feature Middlesex employers and employment services in campaigns such as London & Area Works – news stories and regional job fairs: <https://london.ctvnews.ca/london-and-area-works>

We're here to help....

www.investinmiddlesex.ca www.visitmiddlesex.ca www.workinmiddlesex.ca

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