



BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION (BR+E) | ACTION PLAN ROADMAP

Economic, Tourism, and Cultural Development Advisory Committee

2026-2028+

INTRODUCTION

BR+E Study Report 2026

The Town of Hanover's Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) initiative is part of a province-wide program supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness, focused on strengthening local economies through business insight and community-driven action.

In 2025, Hanover engaged **61 businesses** across a range of sectors to better understand current conditions, opportunities, and challenges. Their input provides a clear picture of the local business landscape and a strong foundation for moving forward.

This document is Hanover's BR+E Roadmap. It transforms what we heard from local businesses into focused, forward-looking actions that support growth, investment, and a resilient economy.

Through this roadmap, the Town is committed to:



Driving strategic, business-informed economic development



Strengthening partnerships with the local business community



Supporting workforce and investment readiness



Informing policies and programs where they can have the greatest impact

Together, these actions position Hanover for continued growth, adaptability, and long-term success.

The Town extends sincere appreciation to all participating businesses. Their insights are shaping a stronger, more connected, and competitive Hanover today and into the future.



PURPOSE

This Roadmap Action Plan converts BR+E 2026 findings into a sequenced implementation plan with clear actions, timelines, and performance measures that encourages partnerships. The roadmap reflects validation and enhancement through:

- Hanover Chamber of Commerce member polling
- Respondant and business community partner workshop polling results (quantitative confirmation)
- ETCDAC outcomes and ideas facilitated session
- Trends comparison to previous BR+E studies from 2009, 2015, 2021 Recovery Survey and present findings.

BR+E 2026 Survey (Business Community)

- Interest in expansion, investment, and collaboration
- Persistent constraints: workforce supply/skills, housing availability, space availability, operating costs, and process complexity
- Need for clearer navigation of municipal processes and supports
- Downtown/commercial operational concerns (e.g., access, winter maintenance, visibility/wayfinding, cleanliness)
- Growing importance of succession and continuity supports

BR+E survey results form the core evidence base for this roadmap



Chamber of Commerce Polling (Member Validation)

Chamber members prioritized:

- Joint marketing & collaboration
- Joint marketing and promotion & networking and peer learning as the strongest Chamber roles
- Cost margins and uncertainty as the biggest constraints
- Stronger collaboration and fewer businesses closing / selling quietly as a success indicator
- Participation appetite varies noting actions must be low-burden, opt-in, coordinated, and confidence-building

Workshop Results

Top 2-year priority:

Housing and Workforce Attraction/Skills

Ranked most pressing challenges:

- Cost of doing business
- Finding qualified employees
- Housing for owners and employees
- Availability of land/buildings
- Navigating approvals/regulation
- Access to information/supports

ETCDAC Priority Areas and a Practical Implementation Approach

What's most realistic now?

- Quick wins / pilots
- Mix of quick wins + planning
- Major investments longer-term
- Coordination over new programs

Implication: The roadmap must start with pilots, prioritize coordination, and build toward enabling conditions.

Action to tackle first in the first 12-24 months:

- Workforce recruitment/training partnerships
- Business networking/collaboration

Medium-term highest impact:

- Joint marketing + local procurement
- Expanded training/upskilling

Most valuable business supports:

- Grants/financing navigation
- Permits/zoning/approvals navigation

Preferred involvement:

- Workshops/focus groups

Success measure:

- Stronger collaboration among businesses



Confirmed Priorities Based on the Combined Inputs



Workforce
Attraction &
Skills
Development



Housing
Enablment



Collaboration,
Networking,
and Shared
Promotion



Business
Support
Navigation



Succession &
Business
Continuity



Space
Readiness &
Supply Chain
Strengthening

ACTION PLAN ROADMAP

QUICK WINS

SHARED PROMOTIONS REFRESH

Refresh shared promotions by reusing what works while rotating themes, formats, and imagery.

SATURDAY ACTIVATION

Build activity on Saturdays with business and community groups

LOCAL PROCUREMENT | B2B MATCHING

Facilitated matchmaking and connection sessions



BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS & IMAGERY UPDATES

Standardized "business spotlight" program

WORKFORCE QUICK ACTIONS

Targeted workforce pipeline initiative (graduate outreach)

ACTION PLAN ROADMAP

FORMALIZE & STABLIZE (6-12 MONTHS)

Moves pilots into repeatable activities and builds the support infrastructure businesses asked for.

06

Business
Navigation &
Approvals |
Funding Concierge

One-window intake and referral support focused on permits/zoning/ approvals and grants/financing navigation.

07

Succession
Awareness
Session &
Continuity
Pathway

Awareness session + pathway toward programs / matchmaking and referrals.

08

Peer Learning &
Networking
Series

Short, practical sessions with the Chamber of Commerce taking a lead role.

09

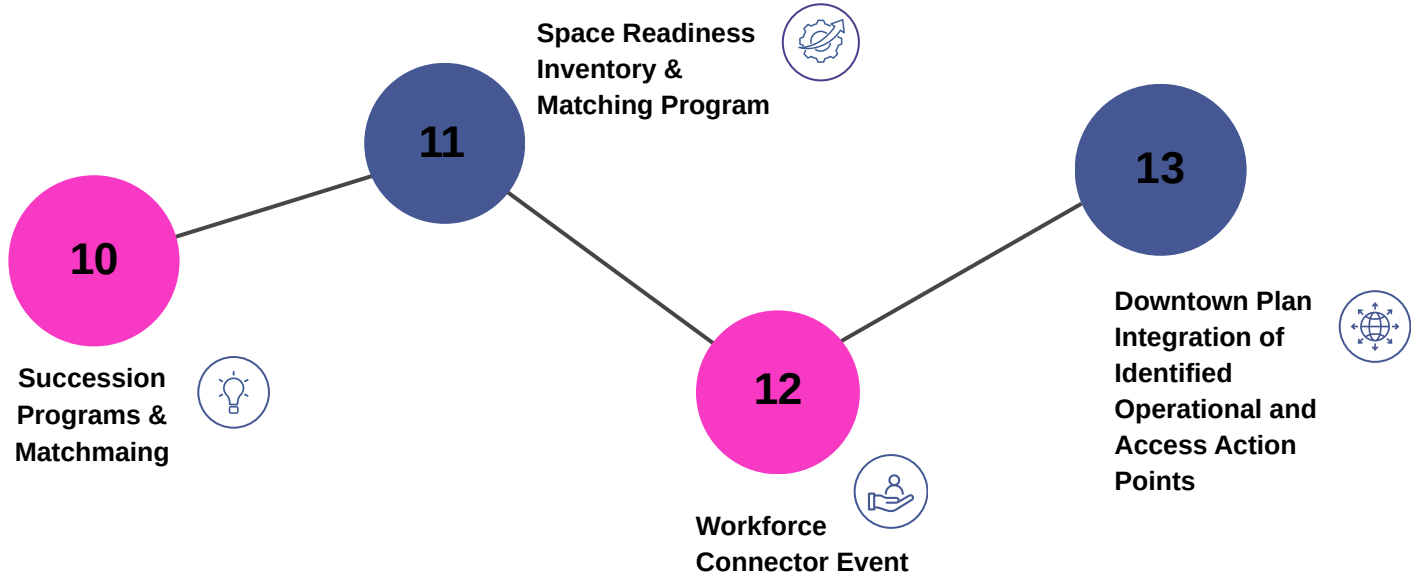
CIP Alignment to
Budget Process

Align CIP communications and timing with the municipal budget process; Identify priorities, "how to apply" supports + an annual communications package.

ACTION PLAN ROADMAP

SCALE WHAT WORKS (12-24 MONTHS)

Expands the highest-impact streams confirmed by identified priorities.



ACTION PLAN ROADMAP

ENABLING CONDITIONS (2-5 YEARS)

These are longer-term commitments aligned with top two-year priorities but requiring multi-year planning.

14

Housing Enablement
(Workforce Housing Lens)

That support
workforce
attraction/retention

15

Infrastructure & Public
Realm Improvements

Accessibility,
streetscaping,
design, CIP evolution

16

Employment Land / Space
Capacity Planning

Servicing and
readiness for business
growth.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

ALIGNED WITH SUCCESS DEFINITIONS

Collaboration & Engagement

- Businesses participating in shared campaigns
- Businesses in peer learning groups
- Workshop/focus group participation rates

Business Continuity

- Succession session and program participation
- Referrals supported and transitions assisted (where trackable)

Business Support / Friction Reduction

- Concierge inquiries by category
- Time-to-referral and resolution pathways
- Top recurring reported barriers

Downtown/Commercial Functionality

- Operational improvements implemented (as mapped out in the Hanover Downtown Plan)

Workforce Pipeline

- Employer and prospective workforce participation in outreach
- Placements/introductions facilitated
- Workforce connector participation and follow-up outcomes



BUILDING ON WHAT WE'VE HEARD

OVER TIME

The 2026 BR+E survey is the primary driver of this roadmap. Previous BR+E studies (2009, 2015, 2021) were reviewed to confirm long-standing issues and ensure the 2026 actions move beyond repetition into implementation.

What Has Been Consistent Since 2009

- Workforce challenges – attraction, skills, and pipelines
- Limited space & housing constraining growth
- Complexity navigating permits, grants, and supports
- Need for collaboration, networking, and shared promotion
- Growing succession risk among long-standing businesses

What's Different in 2026

- Clear alignment across businesses, Chamber, ETCDAC | Town, and regional partners
- Strong preference for quick wins + coordinated planning
- Success defined as stronger collaboration and fewer quiet closures
- Readiness to act through pilots, partnerships, and shared leadership

How the 2026 Roadmap Responds

- Workforce pipelines front-loaded (graduate outreach, skill development, partnerships)
- Housing & space readiness positioned as top two-year priorities
- Business navigation to reduce cost and uncertainty
- Shared marketing & peer learning as early, visible actions
- Succession supports phased from awareness to clinics and continuity
- Coordination over new programs across all actions



Business Retention & Expansion Action Plan Roadmap

hanover.ca