

Report to Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

To: Chair and Members
Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

From: Sandra Datars Bere, City Manager

Subject: Draft Economic Development Strategy (2026-2030) and Implementation Plan

Date: March 24, 2026

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the City Manager, the following actions be taken with respect to the report dated March 24, 2026, with regard to the Draft Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan:

- a) the City of London Draft Economic Development Strategy (2026-2030) and Implementation Plan, attached Appendix “A” **BE RECEIVED**; and,
- b) the presentation from Deloitte, attached as Appendix “B”, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Executive Summary

This report presents the Draft Economic Development Strategy (2026–2030) and Implementation Plan for the City of London, attached as Appendix A.

The draft Strategy establishes a five-year economic vision for London, five strategic pillars grounded in research and engagement, and a phased implementation framework. It aligns with the 2023–2027 Strategic Plan, the 2024–2027 Multi-Year Budget (Business Case #P-46), and Council’s April 10, 2025 direction to review economic development service delivery and improve coordination.

It is being presented to Committee for review and feedback, with no endorsement requested at this time. Committee feedback will inform final revisions before the Strategy returns to SPPC for endorsement in Q2 2026.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

The Draft Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan supports the 2023-2027 City of London Strategic Plan through the following:

- Strategic Area of Focus: Economic Growth, Culture, and Prosperity.
- Outcome: London encourages equitable economic growth and diversification.
- Expected Results:
 - Small and growing businesses, entrepreneurs and non-profits are supported to be successful.
 - Increased economic activity from the core and the greater community.
 - London is a regional centre that proactively attracts and retains talent, business, and investment.

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Previous Reports Related to this Matter

- January 13, 2026: Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – [Draft Economic Development Strategy Framework](#)
 - May 27, 2025: Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – [Strategic Plan Implementation Update: Mid-Year 2025](#).
 - April 10, 2025: Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – [Economic Development Strategy: Appointment of Consultant RFP 2025-004](#).
 - April 10, 2025: Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – [Communication from Councillor/Budget Chair E. Pelozza and Councillor S. Lehman](#).
4. December 12, 2023: Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – [Release of the Draft 2024 – 2027 Multi-Year Budget](#)

1.2 Background and Purpose

The direction to develop the City of London’s Economic Development Strategy came from the Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and the adoption of the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget – specifically, Business Case #P-46, as amended. Business Case #P-46 includes a plan to “Develop and implement a new Economic Development Framework/Strategy (Consulting/Request for Proposal).”

In April 2025, Council provided direction to identify opportunities to strengthen coordination, clarify mandates, and improve accountability across the economic development system.

In May 2025, Deloitte LLP Canada was retained through a competitive procurement process to support development of the City’s Economic Development Strategy based on demonstrated expertise in economic development strategy development. A detailed overview of the project team’s qualifications is provided in Appendix C.

The purpose of this report is to present the Draft Economic Development Strategy (2026–2030) and Implementation Plan (“the Strategy”) prepared by Deloitte LLP Canada for discussion and feedback.

2.0 Progress

2.1 Process Recap

Between May 2025 and February 2026, the project team completed:

- **Research and economic analysis**, including sector competitiveness and labour market analysis and macroeconomic research; public research reports summarizing findings are available on [Get Involved London](#).
- 5. **Engagement** with over 200 participants across business, institutional, nonprofit, and community sectors through sector roundtables and individual conversations.
- **System review** of 47 organizations with economic development functions, assessing mandates, coordination gaps, and opportunities for stronger alignment.

Additional information on the development process is available in Appendix A: City of London: Draft Economic Development Strategy (2026-2030) and Implementation Plan.

2.2 January 13, 2026 SPPC

At the January 13, 2026 SPPC meeting, Committee members received the Draft Economic Development Strategy Framework, including vision, mission, guiding principles, and strategic pillars.

Committee discussion emphasized the importance of measurable implementation and accountability, alignment with the Downtown Plan, and talent retention as critical drivers of success. Committee members expressed interest in having an additional opportunity to review the full draft Strategy and implementation Plan before final endorsement.

Civic Administration and Deloitte subsequently incorporated the feedback from January 13 and held targeted validation discussions with economic development partners on the updated draft. Refinements have been incorporated into the draft Strategy provided in Appendix A of this report.

2.3 March 24, 2026 SPPC: Draft Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan

Consistent with Council's feedback on January 13, this report presents a full draft of London's Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan for additional discussion and feedback. The approach seeks to:

- Validate strategic direction prior to finalization;
- Confirm alignment with Council priorities;
- Ensure implementation sequencing reflects fiscal and operational realities;
- Integrate Council feedback and additional engagement findings prior to final approval in Q2 2026.

3.0 The Strategy and Implementation Plan

3.1 Strategic Framework

As outlined in Appendix A, the Strategy establishes:

Vision

London is a globally recognized creative city with a diverse economy, a collaborative business culture, and strong connections to major markets. Fueled by innovation and a highly skilled workforce, London is known as the centre of opportunity, where progress never stops.

Mission

To position London for long-term prosperity by fostering a competitive, resilient, and inclusive economy through evidence-based decision-making, focused investment, and coordinated action.

Guiding Principles

- Connecting current priorities
- Working together across the system
- Promoting fairness and opportunity
- Encouraging bold new ideas
- Being open and showing results

The Strategy also commits the City to advancing economic reconciliation through long-term, Indigenous-led engagement and partnerships that support shared prosperity.

3.2 Strategic Pillars and Initiatives

The strategic pillars and initiatives are:

Talent and Innovation:

- Match in-demand talent needs with accessible training opportunities;

- Support retention of professionals, students, and diverse groups;
- Strengthen London's innovation ecosystem.

Investment Attraction and Retention:

- Prioritize investment in sectors with competitive advantages;
- Activate the core as an economic and cultural driver;
- Strengthen economic activity in commercial areas and corridors city-wide.

Regional Collaboration:

- Strengthen relationships with regional municipalities and industry partners;
- Build mutually beneficial economic partnerships with Indigenous communities.

Transportation and Access:

- Pursue stronger air and rail access to and from London;
- Drive local and regional transportation improvements;
- Position London as an aerospace innovation centre.

System Optimization:

- Enhance coordination and reduce fragmentation;
- Align internal processes to support economic development;
- Improve data sharing and impact measurement.

The sole change from January 13 is that the Regional Collaboration pillar now has two strategic initiatives rather than three, with the global investment destination showcase folded into the first initiative.

The Strategy clarifies that the City's role is to create enabling conditions for economic growth through policy, planning, coordination, infrastructure, and strategic investment. Market-facing investment attraction and business development functions will continue to be delivered through specialized partner organizations, aligned through strengthened governance and accountability mechanisms.

3.3 Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides phased actions for delivering on Strategic Initiatives. Each of the 30 actions in the Implementation Plan includes:

- Partners
- Timing, including short, medium, and long-term actions
- Resource needs and sources

The Strategy recommends establishing a cross-sector Economic Development Partnership Table to coordinate implementation, convene working groups as needed, and support adaptive Strategy updates as conditions evolve. Progress will be reported to City Council and the community annually.

Implementation actions incorporate Council's direction to review service delivery and improve coordination.

Key actions proposed include:

- Outcome-based funding agreements;
- Improved workforce navigation;
- Advance development approvals modernization;
- Annual Economic Development Outcomes Report;
- Governance mechanisms to reduce fragmentation without restructuring.

4.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

There are no immediate operating or capital budget impacts associated with this report.

Implementation Plan actions are sequenced and may:

- Be funded through existing envelopes;
- Be considered as part of future budget processes including the 2028–2031 Multi-Year Budget;
- Leverage provincial and federal funding streams or partner cost-sharing;
- Use the Economic Development reserve fund for one-time or pilot initiatives.

Any new funding requirements will be considered by City Council through established budget processes.

Implementation Cost Projections

The Implementation Plan prioritizes coordination, partnership, and targeted catalytic investment rather than large new spending programs. Many actions rely on staff coordination and alignment of existing initiatives.

The following table reflects the approximate municipal investment required if the Implementation Plan was approved by City Council and fully delivered over the five-year strategy implementation period, based on initial cost estimates:

Category	Estimated Cost
One-time strategic studies and feasibility work	\$835K
Annual program investments	\$600K per year (5 years)
Time-limited pilot initiatives	\$50K per year (2 years)
Approximate 5-year total investment	\$4M

What These Investments Support

The proposed financial commitments focus primarily on catalytic activities that unlock external funding and private investment, and include:

- Innovation ecosystem development (co-investment fund where the City and partners invest together to support new economic initiatives);
- Sector development (including life sciences, creative industries, aerospace);
- Downtown and other key business areas revitalization;
- Regional economic coordination;
- Indigenous-led economic partnership development;
- Workforce retention and entrepreneurship support.

As a general approach that spans the entire Implementation Plan, Civic Administration is committed to pursuing appropriate external funding sources to support investment in Strategy activities. The Strategy positions London competitively for federal and provincial funding, including economic development, skills, and infrastructure programs. Any direct municipal investments will be designed to maximally leverage external funding opportunities.

5.0 Next Steps

This report marks the completion of Deloitte's engagement with the City of London on the Economic Development Strategy. Deloitte's work, comprising the research, engagement process, system review, and Strategy development, has established the foundation on which the final Strategy rests. Next steps will be led and completed by Civic Administration. Following SPPC feedback, Civic Administration will:

- Review and incorporate Committee feedback into the draft Strategy;

- Refine performance metrics, funding alignment, and implementation phasing;
- Share the updated draft with economic development partners for final review;
- Finalize the Strategy document and supporting materials; and
- Return to SPPC seeking endorsement of the Strategy in Q2 2026.

Conclusion

The Draft Economic Development Strategy (2026–2030) positions London to compete in a changing economic environment by aligning talent development, infrastructure readiness, investment attraction, regional collaboration, and system coordination into a coherent, accountable whole.

The Strategy builds on London's documented strengths, including its anchor institutions, growing advanced manufacturing base, UNESCO City of Music designation, and diverse talent pool, while ensuring coordination and accountability for London's economic performance.

Civic Administration will return with the finalized Strategy and implementation plan for approval in Q2 2026.

Prepared by: Cathy Parsons, Manager
Economic Partnerships

Submitted by: Trevor Fowler, Director
Strategy, Innovation, and Economic Development

Recommended by: Sandra Datars Bere, City Manager

Cc: London Economic Development Corporation, TechAlliance of Southwestern Ontario, London Small Business Centre, The London Chamber of Commerce

Appendix A: City of London: Draft Economic Development Strategy (2026-2030) and Implementation Plan

See Attached.

Appendix B: Deloitte's Presentation

See Attached.

Appendix C: About the Consulting Team



Paul Blais, MA, Ec.D., CEcD | Managing Director, Economic Strategy and Impact

Paul is a nationally recognized economic development strategist with over 25 years of experience advising communities, businesses, and public-sector organizations across Canada. His work has supported more than 300 communities, including major city regions such as Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, Winnipeg, and Moncton.

He joined Deloitte in 2022 following the firm's acquisition of MDB Insight, which he co-founded and grew into Canada's leading economic development consultancy over 15 years. Paul is among a small group of professionals in Canada holding both the Economic Developers Association of Canada (Ec.D.) and International Economic Development Council (CEcD) designations.

As Project Lead, Paul was responsible for overall strategic direction, ensuring the final report is grounded in rigorous research, objective analysis, and actionable recommendations aligned with best practices in economic development.



Chris Murray, BAA | Director, Economic Strategy and Impact

Chris is a seasoned municipal leader with over 13 years of experience managing two of Canada's largest cities. Currently, he serves as a Special Advisor to the Federal Deputy Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, a contractor for Deloitte Canada, and a Municipal Expert at the University of Toronto's School of Cities. Chris has led significant urban development projects, including Toronto's \$30 billion subway expansion and Hamilton's waterfront development.

He is highly skilled in strategic planning, public transit expansion, and housing development. Chris has introduced innovative approaches such as the "Results Based Accountability" method to Toronto's budget process and has negotiated key agreements with the Confederacy Chiefs of Six Nations. He holds a Bachelor of Applied Arts in Urban and Regional Planning from Ryerson Polytechnical Institute (Toronto Metropolitan University).

He provided senior-level strategic advice and oversight throughout the engagement.



Clark Hoskin, BFA, Ec.D. | Senior Manager, Economic Strategy and Impact

Clark brings more than 30 years of experience in local and regional economic development, holding senior positions at Deloitte LLP and MDB Insight, and leading municipal economic development and strategic planning for Norfolk County. He is a creative problem-solver who excels at designing practical, client-focused strategies and solutions for municipalities, regions, and industry partners. Through these engagements, Clark has helped communities diversify their economies, attract investment, and enhance workforce development by collaborating with local stakeholders, business leaders, and government partners. He specializes in rural economic development, investment readiness, governance frameworks, destination development, and community improvement incentives, delivering actionable recommendations that drive sustainable growth and support local priorities.

As Lead Project Manager, Clark oversaw project delivery, coordinated the consulting team, and contributed directly to analysis, engagement, and preparation of final deliverables.



Tehseen Rana, BBA | Manager, Economic Strategy and Impact

Tehseen is passionate about transforming economic insights into innovative solutions for communities and organizations, big and small, across the country. He has managed or supported over 80 economic development, tourism, strategic planning and consultation projects. His multi-disciplinary skillset includes analyzing socio-economic data, connecting with clients, triangulating primary and secondary research findings to draw strategic insights and fill in gaps to support final strategy development. Tehseen played a central role in coordinating research activities and supporting the development of the final strategy and action plan.



Rebecca Taylor, BA | Manager, Economic Strategy and Impact

Rebecca has more than 30 years of experience in economic development, culture, and placemaking. As a veteran entrepreneur of two successful businesses, Rebecca's direct and extensive experience allows her to critically understand economic development from both a community development and business perspective. Rebecca brings extensive experience facilitating complex discussions with municipal staff, partner organizations, and community stakeholders. Her background includes work with municipal, provincial, and non-profit organizations, as well as experience as a business owner. Rebecca led the design and delivery of engagement activities and contributed directly to the development of the final strategy and action framework.



Xiao Xiao, Ec.D. | Senior Associate, Economic Advisory

Xiao is driven by a passion for economic development and aviation, reflecting his unique educational background and professional trajectory. Xiao holds a master's degree in Economic Development and Innovation from the University of Waterloo and an Honours Bachelor's degree in Commercial Aviation Management from the University of Western Ontario. Xiao brings specialized expertise in economic base analysis, sector development, and data-driven research. Xiao led quantitative analysis supporting the identification of priority sectors and economic opportunities within the strategy.

Strategic Advisory Panel

The project was further supported by a Strategic Advisory Panel of Deloitte partners and subject-matter experts who contributed targeted expertise, authored discussion papers, and participated in specialized workshops.

Key contributors included:

- **Trevin Stratton, PhD** – National Leader and Partner, Economic Advisory (sector competitiveness and macroeconomic trends)
- **Anita Shinde, MA, BA** – Partner, Economic Advisory (economic participation and DEI analysis)
- **Dean Javier** – Partner and Director, R8dius (Indigenous reconciliation and economic participation)
- **Prakash Venkat, MBA** – Associate Partner (industrial and commercial development)
- **Talia Abramowitz, HBA, CBV** – Managing Partner, Deloitte Ventures (innovation and entrepreneurship)
- **Sarah Lewis, MEd, BA** – Senior Manager (workforce development and talent analysis)

Appendix D: Economic Development Strategy Appendices

See Attached.



London
CANADA

LONDON ONTARIO

THE CENTRE OF OPPORTUNITY

2026-2030 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the City of London is on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron peoples. We honour and respect the history, languages and culture of the diverse Indigenous people who call this territory home.

We acknowledge all the treaties that are specific to this area: the Two Row Wampum Belt Treaty of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy/Silver Covenant Chain; the Beaver Hunting Grounds of the Haudenosaunee NANFAN Treaty of 1701; the McKee Treaty of 1790, the London Township Treaty of 1796, the Huron Tract Treaty of 1827, with the Anishinaabeg, and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum of the Anishinaabek and Haudenosaunee.

The three Indigenous communities that are neighbours to London are the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation; Oneida Nation of the Thames; and the Munsee-Delaware Nation who all continue to live as sovereign Nations with individual and unique languages, cultures, and customs.

Reconciliation requires more than acknowledgement; it requires action. This strategy commits the City of London to economic reconciliation through long-term Indigenous-led partnerships that shape this region's shared economic growth and future.

City of London Economic Development Strategy

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Executive Summary

London's growth is built on clear and lasting strengths. The city has a resilient and diversified business base, a strong manufacturing and agri-food presence, expanding professional and technical services, and a globally recognized cultural economy as a UNESCO City of Music. World-class post-secondary institutions, hospitals, and research capacity support innovation and commercialization across sectors, while London's location near major markets strengthens trade, logistics, and investment appeal.

A city at a pivotal moment

London is experiencing rapid growth while facing intensifying global competition for talent, investment, and skilled labour. The City of London Economic Development Strategy is a comprehensive roadmap that guides how London grows, invests, and thrives now and into the future.

Between 2019 and 2024, London's population grew by 14%, adding more than 60,000 residents and making it one of the fastest-growing cities in Southwestern Ontario. Over the same period, London added 18,380 net new jobs, with more than 70% of that growth concentrated in health and social assistance, professional scientific and technical services, financial and insurance, construction and manufacturing. These sectors generated 12,695 net new jobs and an \$861.2 million increase in annual salary, reinforcing London's role as a centre of regional employment and economic activity.^{1 2}

Opportunity requires readiness

Growth at this pace creates opportunity, but only cities that are prepared can fully capture it. London's employers are facing increasing competition for talent. Skills needs are evolving rapidly as technology advances. Downtown and commercial areas present significant opportunities for reinvestment and revitalization. At the same time, global forces such as automation, supply-chain realignment, and the energy transition are reshaping where investment flows.

The opportunity for London is clear: align growth with talent, infrastructure, investment, and system coordination so that momentum translates into long-term prosperity for businesses, workers, and communities across the city.

Executive Summary

From opportunity to action

Acting now allows London to strengthen competitiveness, attract investment, and build inclusive prosperity. Engagement with more than 200 business leaders, institutions, community organizations, and ecosystem partners identified shared aspirations for a more inclusive economy, stronger coordination, future-focused growth, investment in infrastructure and place, and clearer accountability. This strategy translates those opportunities into action, providing the clarity needed to guide funding, infrastructure delivery, workforce development, and investment readiness.

Aligned with provincial and federal priorities, the strategy also advances the City of London's Strategic Plan, particularly the priority of Economic Growth, Culture, and Prosperity. It reflects the understanding that economic outcomes depend on how well systems work together across areas such as talent, mobility, and infrastructure.

Council's direction was clear: to position London to compete and win in a changing economy, strengthen accountability across the economic development system, and deliver real results for businesses and residents. Through the strategy's vision, mission, and five strategic pillars, the City sets a clear path forward.

Success depends on the ecosystem, with partners across the city and region working alongside the City to turn shared intent into measurable economic and community impact.

Vision and mission

- **Vision:** London is a globally recognized creative city with a diverse economy, a collaborative business culture, and strong connections to major markets. Fueled by innovation and a highly skilled workforce, London is known as the centre of opportunity, where progress never stops.
- **Mission:** To position London for long-term prosperity by fostering a competitive, resilient, and inclusive economy through evidence-based decision-making, focused investment and coordinated action.

Strategic pillars

- **Talent and Innovation:** Attract, retain, and integrate skilled people by aligning education, employers, settlement supports, housing, and community infrastructure.
- **Investment Attraction and Retention:** Create investment-ready conditions through serviced land, reliable infrastructure, activations in downtown and commercial areas, streamlined approvals, and a strong business environment.
- **Regional Collaboration:** Position London as a coordinating convener with neighbouring municipalities, Indigenous communities, and institutions on shared priorities (land, energy, trade, talent).
- **Transportation and Access:** Improve mobility and connectivity through transit, roads, active transportation, digital connectivity, and London International Airport.
- **System Optimization:** Modernize processes, clarify roles, improve digital services, and align funding and governance to strengthen economic development performance.



Introduction

Introduction

London stands at a pivotal moment as global shifts create both significant opportunities and real risks for all cities.

Rapid population growth, economic diversification, and intensifying global competition are reshaping what it means to build a prosperous, inclusive, and future-ready city. Supply chains are being restructured in response to geopolitical tensions, climate transitions, and a growing focus on domestic capacity and nearshoring. Artificial intelligence, automation, and advanced manufacturing systems are changing the nature of work and skills required at every level. The accelerating energy transition is increasing demand for clean technology, resilient infrastructure, and reliable grid capacity. Changes in immigration policy and intensifying global competition for talent are directly affecting London's ability to grow its workforce.

London's economy is anchored by advanced manufacturing, health and life sciences, technology, agri-food, education, tourism, and a vibrant small business community. The city's post-secondary institutions, hospitals, and innovation ecosystem provide a strong foundation that sets it apart from comparable cities. Recent population growth of over 14% between 2019 and 2024 has continued strongly, and employment has surpassed pre-pandemic levels, reaching 220,613 jobs in 2024. Growth in knowledge-based sectors has been particularly strong, with natural and applied sciences employment up 43% and health up 16% since 2019. Within the City, modernization initiatives such as digital transformation, AI pilots, and the Industrial Land Development Strategy are further strengthening London's position.

However, London faces complex challenges: labour shortages, shifting skills demands, housing affordability, infrastructure pressures, downtown recovery needs, and growing competition for global talent. Nationally and provincially, governments are prioritizing supply-chain resilience, clean technology, domestic manufacturing capacity, workforce development, housing acceleration, electrification, and reconciliation with Indigenous communities. Cities that demonstrate readiness, coordination, and credible partnerships are best positioned to attract senior-government investment.

A comprehensive review of London's economic development ecosystem found a broad, committed network of partners working toward shared goals. To fully capitalize on London's advantages, stronger coordination, clearer roles, and improved outcome reporting are needed. When the system works well together, the impact is greater than the sum of its parts.

This strategy provides a focused, coordinated roadmap to sharpen London's competitive edge, align with provincial and federal priorities, and ensure economic progress delivers meaningful benefits for businesses, workers, and communities across the city. Council's direction is clear: build a plan that positions London to compete and win in a changing economy, strengthens accountability across the economic development system, and delivers real results for Londoners and London businesses.

Local and Global Realities

Rapid local change

London is growing faster than much of Ontario, welcoming new residents, businesses, and industries while seeing renewed investment in its downtown and commercial areas. This pace of change requires clear direction and coordinated action.

Shifting economic conditions

Employment growth is increasing in knowledge-based sectors such as natural and applied sciences, while traditional sectors face labour shortages, automation pressures, and rising costs. London must sharpen its competitive edge to succeed in the economy of the future.

Global disruption affecting mid-sized cities

Artificial intelligence, automation, supply-chain realignment, climate transition, and geopolitical uncertainty are reshaping how and where cities compete. These forces demand speed, clarity, and coordination in economic development.

Talent and workforce pressures

Fluctuating immigration policy and growing competition for global talent directly affect London's ability to attract and retain the skilled workforce needed to support growth.

Alignment with senior-government priorities

Federal and provincial governments are prioritizing clean technology, domestic manufacturing, industrial land readiness, workforce development, housing acceleration, electrification, and reconciliation with Indigenous communities. Alignment with these priorities will position London as a ready partner for investment and major projects.

London's economic development ecosystem

In an environment of intensifying global competition for talent and investment, constrained public resources, and complex cross-sector challenges, success depends not only on what strategies are pursued, but on how well the overall ecosystem functions.

While acting as a convenor of economic development activity and working directly with businesses on matters related to municipal services and regulations, the City does not directly operate in the areas of investment attraction and marketing, business support services, or entrepreneurship and innovation.

Like many mid-sized cities, London assigns economic development functions to a standalone, non-profit corporation. Through a shared services agreement, London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) receives \$2.5 million annually from the City, in addition to a \$300K allotment for Film London, with a mandate to develop and carry out economic development strategies, and to attract and retain businesses.

As a UNESCO City of Music, the City prioritizes its vital arts and culture economy through financial supports to Tourism London, Film London, London Music Office, and RBC Place.

London Small Business Centre (SBC) and TechAlliance successfully leverage municipal grants, backed by funding from

provincial and federal programs, to offer services that support entrepreneurship and business innovation.

Dozens of other organizations deliver inclusive workforce development and skills training, entrepreneurship and innovation, commercial district and downtown development, policy advocacy and labour market data, and business support services.

Across this ecosystem, many are working toward shared objectives. In practice, this shared focus can sometimes look like duplication. However, overlap is not always a sign of inefficiency. It can also reflect a healthy ecosystem in which multiple organizations are rowing in the same direction and responding to priority community needs.

This strategy identifies recommendations for optimizing the system through clarified roles, coordinated action, shared data, and aligned investment to ensure that every public dollar and partner effort contributes to the greatest possible economic and community impact.

How this strategy was developed

A strategy is only as strong as the process behind it. This Economic Development Strategy was developed through a rigorous, evidence-based approach that combined research, sector analysis, and broad community input. The result is a London-specific roadmap that links economic growth to quality of life, resilience, and long-term prosperity.

Research

A comprehensive research program provided a clear understanding of London's economic landscape and future opportunities. This included:

- Reviewing more than 30 existing strategies, studies, and reports to ensure alignment with current priorities.
- Conducting sector and market analysis using economic, demographic, workforce, and real estate data, including industrial and office market trends.
- Developing four discussion papers on macroeconomic trends, workforce and talent, sector competitiveness, and economic participation of underrepresented communities.
- Compiling a consolidated community profile to provide an up-to-date snapshot of London's economy.
- Completing a systematic review of the economic development ecosystem, including a survey of organizations to map services, identify gaps, and assess performance metrics.
- Shared research outputs on the City's [“Get Involved” page](#).

Engagement

Structured engagement sessions and interviews reached a broad cross-section of London's business and community leaders. More than 200 participants contributed through interviews, workshops, and roundtables, including:

- Leadership interviews with the Mayor and 12 of 14 City Councillors.
- Five sector roundtables with more than 50 business leaders and industry organizations across key sectors.
- Four ecosystem roundtables with more than 70 representatives, including BIAs, small businesses, post-secondary institutions, and social impact groups.
- A visioning workshop with the City's Senior Leadership Team to clarify roles and focus areas.
- A survey of 47 economic development organizations, with 34 responses.
- Public input collected through the City's online platform and targeted outreach to newcomers, youth, Indigenous organizations and businesses, Francophone community members, and equity-deserving groups.

Engagement and research consistently pointed to five shared aspirations for London's economy. The results from this research directly informed this Strategy's strategic foundations and its strategic pillars.

A vibrant, inclusive, and prosperous economy

London seeks economic growth that creates good jobs, raises incomes, and ensures opportunity is shared across all communities by removing barriers to participation.

A unified approach and coordinated system

London's economic development organizations are collaborative, but stronger coordination is needed. A unified "Team London" approach will streamline support, clarify roles, and provide businesses with a single, coherent entry point.

A future-focused, diverse economy

London is positioned for growth in advanced manufacturing, health and life sciences, digital technology, AI, and creative industries. Business leaders call for stronger commercialization pathways, support for scale-ups, and deliberate attraction of anchor firms.

Infrastructure and places that attract talent and capital

London has a vibrant downtown, complete neighbourhoods, and modern infrastructure. Investment-ready employment lands, reliable utilities, accessible transit, and culturally dynamic spaces are essential to attracting talent and capital.

Sustainable, evidence-based growth and accountability

London is committed to data-driven decisions, transparent performance indicators, and regular reporting. Coordinated performance measurement and accountability will ensure growth delivers meaningful results for all Londoners.

Shared Aspirations



Strategic Foundations

Vision

London is a globally recognized creative city with a diverse economy, a collaborative business culture, and strong connections to major markets. Fueled by innovation and a highly skilled workforce, London is known as the centre of opportunity, where progress never stops.

The vision speaks to London's unique strengths. The city's UNESCO City of Music designation is distinctive and globally meaningful. London is also home to some of Canada's strongest post-secondary and research institutions, supporting innovation across sectors. Its manufacturing and industrial base continues to expand and diversify, adding resilience to the local economy. With a strategic location within two hours of Toronto and Detroit and positioned along key Great Lakes trade corridors, London holds a lasting competitive advantage. Together, these and other assets form a powerful foundation for a dynamic, competitive economy built for long-term success.

Mission

To position London for long-term prosperity by fostering a competitive, resilient, and inclusive economy through evidence-based decision-making, focused investment and coordinated action.

Reflecting priorities identified through research, ecosystem review, and engagement, London's economic development mission defines the City's role as aligning the overall system, closing coordination gaps, and directing municipal investment where it generates the greatest economic return for residents and businesses. The City and its partners will work together to support inclusive growth, attract investment, and help businesses and workers succeed, complementing, not replacing, the vital roles of employers, post-secondary institutions, and delivery partners.

City of London Guiding Principles

These principles describe how the City will make choices while delivering on its commitments. They reflect the values expressed during engagement and establish shared expectations for how the City approaches economic development decisions.

Connecting current priorities: Our economic decisions will follow London's main plans and priorities, ensuring that workforce, housing, transportation, climate, and culture are all considered together.

Working together across the system: London's economic development partners will collaborate to reach shared goals, avoid duplication, fill gaps, and have each other's backs.

Promoting fairness and opportunity: We will remove obstacles and help people access jobs and start businesses, making sure all programs support both growth and fairness.

Encouraging bold new ideas: We will encourage trying new things, use facts and data to guide us, and expand what works well.

Being open and showing results: We will clearly say who is responsible for what, measure our progress, and share our results with the public to stay open and focused on making a difference.



Strategic Pillars

Strategic Pillars

The five strategic pillars define where the City can have the greatest impact on London's long-term economic future, by pursuing its mission, striving toward its vision, and reflecting on its values when decisions are made. Each pillar is grounded in research and engagement findings. City status and objectives are clearly defined, and recommended actions help to outline what success looks like. This is in addition to how the City can work with its economic development ecosystem partners.



Talent and Innovation

Ensuring London can attract, retain, and integrate the skilled people needed for a dynamic, future-focused economy by aligning education, employers, settlement supports, housing, and community infrastructure.



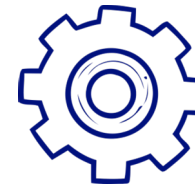
Investment Attraction and Retention

Creating investment-ready conditions through serviced land, reliable infrastructure, streamlined approvals, and an exceptional business environment that grows priority sectors and supports reinvestment.



Regional Collaboration

Positioning London as a convenor and connector for the region's economy, aligning with neighbouring municipalities, Indigenous communities, and institutions to advance shared priorities for land, energy, trade, and talent.



Transportation and Access

Strengthening mobility across transit, roads, rail, digital networks, and air services within the city and across the region to accelerate London's economic growth, expand labour market access, and strengthen its role as the economic focal point of Southwestern Ontario.



System Optimization

Modernizing processes, clarifying roles, improving digital services, and aligning funding and governance across partners to create a more effective, transparent, and high-performing economic development system.

Notes on Implementation Planning

The five strategic pillars define where the City of London, working with its partners, can have the greatest impact on the city's economic future. The sections that follow examine each pillar in detail, moving from context and strategic intent to pillar-specific implementation actions delivered over the strategy period.

The implementation plan of each pillar includes:

- Strategic Initiatives
- Actions
- Timeline
- Key Partners
- Resources
- Funding Sources

Grounding actions in evidence and deliverability

Implementation actions under each pillar were based on research and engagement and assessed against three questions to ensure they are grounded in what is required to deliver results:

- Is this an area where the City and its partners have a clear and distinctive role?
- Will it make a meaningful difference to jobs, investment, productivity, and quality of life?
- Can it be delivered with available or attainable resources, within a reasonable timeframe, and with manageable risk?

Delivering and adapting over time

Major initiatives will be managed with a clear focus on delivery. Risks will be identified early, with clear roles, shared accountability, and mitigation built in from the outset to support timely delivery. Progress will be tracked through indicators covering jobs, investment, productivity, inclusion, and overall system health.

Regular public reporting will show what is working, where adjustments are needed, and how actions are being refined over time. While the strategic pillars provide stable direction, actions and sequencing will evolve as conditions change.



Strategic Pillar 1: Talent and Innovation

Strategic Pillar 1 | Talent and Innovation



London's ability to compete, grow, and deliver inclusive prosperity over the next five years will depend on how effectively it develops, attracts, and retains talent in a rapidly changing economic and demographic context. Cities that can connect people to opportunity, support newcomers and underrepresented groups, retain graduates and professionals, and foster innovation will be better positioned to attract investment, strengthen resilience, and sustain long-term economic growth.

Evidence-based rationale

- London faces significant workforce pressure: ~40,000 new workers needed by 2031 due to growth, retirements, and sector shifts.^{3 4 5 6}
- There is substantial untapped labour potential: 43,000 working-age residents not in the labour force, with barriers disproportionately affecting Indigenous peoples, racialized women, people with disabilities, and newcomers.⁷
- Rapid technological change, including AI, automation, clean tech, and EVs, is accelerating demand for new and upgraded skills.

Where the city stands

- LEDC leads employer-focused workforce strategy, talent attraction campaigns, and labour market intelligence, including an online portal connecting talent to jobs in health, manufacturing, and technology.
- TechAlliance supports innovation commercialization and connects entrepreneurs and scaling firms through sector networks.
- EMOWPDB* delivers regional labour market data, skills forecasting, and employer insights via tools like the EmployerOne survey.
- London International Airport is a centre for aviation talent development, partnering with post-secondary and private pilot-training schools.

Key gaps to be addressed

- Fragmented pathways and platforms: multiple job boards, programs, and entry points make it difficult to move from training to employment and dilute employer participation.
- Structural barriers to participation and retention (housing, transit, childcare, inclusion, sense of belonging) are insufficiently integrated with workforce planning, weakening retention and return on investment on talent attraction.
- Innovation supports lack scale and connectivity, limiting commercialization and local firm growth without clearer pathways from research to scale-up.

Objective

Attract, retain, and integrate the people needed for London's future economy by aligning employers, education, settlement, housing, and community supports to make London a welcoming, opportunity-rich place to live, work, and build a career or business.

Strategic focus

- Align in-demand skills with accessible training pathways
- Improve retention of professionals, students, and diverse talent
- Strengthen London's innovation and commercialization ecosystem

City's role

- Convene partners around shared workforce and innovation priorities
- Reduce barriers to participation and system navigation
- Align City investments, policy, and planning to support talent and innovation outcomes

Strategic Initiatives

1. Match in-demand talent needs with accessible training opportunities

London will strengthen its talent pipeline by better aligning employer demand, labour-market intelligence, and training delivery into clear, accessible pathways for residents, newcomers, and students. By convening priority-sector partners, improving system navigation, and reducing barriers to participation, the City will help ensure that in-demand skills development is directly connected to real employment opportunities and workforce participation outcomes.

2. Support retention of professionals, students, and diverse groups

London will improve talent retention by strengthening the conditions that influence whether people stay and build their careers locally, including career opportunity, inclusion, housing, mobility, and quality of life. The City will focus on improving connections between employers, students, and newcomers; supporting pathways for internationally trained workers; and embedding inclusive workforce objectives into economic development investments and policies to reduce out-migration and increase workforce stability.

3. Strengthen London's innovation ecosystem

London will enhance innovation and commercialization by improving connectivity across research institutions, incubators, investors, entrepreneurs, and employers, creating clearer pathways from ideas to startups to scaling firms. The City will align economic development investments, land-use planning, and place-based strategies to support innovation growth, improve access to space, and strengthen sector-based networks, helping local firms increase productivity, scale, and create high-value jobs.

Strategic Pillar 1 | Talent and Innovation

What success looks like

- In-demand skills and training pathways are aligned with employer needs and priority sectors.
- More residents and newcomers participate in the workforce, including those currently underrepresented or facing barriers.
- London retains more students, graduates, and skilled professionals by strengthening career pathways and quality-of-life conditions.
- Employers have improved access to talent and stronger capacity to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.
- Innovation and commercialization outcomes increase, with clearer pathways from research and entrepreneurship to scaling firms and high-value jobs.

How London will track progress

These indicators will be tracked and reported annually through coordinated reporting by the City, LEDC, workforce planning partners, post-secondary institutions, and innovation ecosystem organizations. The City will support alignment and reporting, while delivery partners will report on program and outcome measures within their mandates.

- **Priority-sector talent pipeline strength:** Number of participants completing priority-sector training programs and entering employment within six months.
- **Workforce participation rate:** Labour force participation rate among working-age residents and underrepresented groups.
- **Access to talent:** Employer-reported difficulty filling vacancies in priority sectors (e.g., EmployerOne survey results).

How this pillar helps London build resilience

- **Reduces labour shortages** that constrain business growth and public service delivery by strengthening training-to-employment pathways.
- **Diversifies the talent pipeline** beyond immigration alone by activating underrepresented local populations and improving workforce participation.
- **Future-proofs the workforce** against automation, AI disruption, and sector transition through upskilling and continuous learning pathways.
- **Strengthens retention and social cohesion**, reducing out-migration of skilled workers and graduates.
- **Increases economic resilience and diversification** by strengthening innovation, commercialization, and scaling capacity.

Strategic Pillar 1 | **Talent and Innovation****Implementation Plan**

To achieve this pillar's objective, London must strengthen the connection between employer demand and the training pathways that prepare people for available and emerging opportunities. The implementation plan below translates this priority into action by outlining the specific steps, timelines, delivery partners, resource needs, and funding sources required to better align in-demand skills development with real workforce needs.

Strategic Initiatives	Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources
1.1 Match in-demand talent needs with accessible training opportunities	Through the Economic Development Partnership Table (see Action 5.1), convene a Talent Working Group to identify annual workforce priorities, drawing on business survey results, vacancy trends, program capacity, and job posting analytics. Use priorities to align partner programming and focus employer engagement across the ecosystem.	S-M	Post-secondary institutions, workforce delivery organizations, major employers in priority sectors, Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning & Development Board	Staff time; Labour market analytics support: \$10,000–\$20,000	Operating budget Seek provincial and federal funding opportunities, where available
	Develop a shared Workforce Navigation Map outlining available programs, entry points, and referral pathways for employers and job seekers, a single clear reference for navigating London's workforce support ecosystem.	S-M	LEDC, SBC, TechAlliance, workforce delivery organizations	Staff time; \$5,000–\$15,000 (design and web integration)	Operating budget Seek provincial and federal funding opportunities, where available

Strategic Pillar 1 | **Talent and Innovation****Implementation Plan**

Meeting London's talent objective requires more than attraction alone; it depends on creating the conditions that encourage people to stay, build careers, and contribute to the local economy over the long term. The implementation plan below sets out how this initiative will be advanced through targeted actions.

Strategic Initiatives	Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources
1.2 Support retention of professionals, students, and diverse groups	Collaborate with partners around shared retention targets, inclusion outcomes, and expanded business supports for immigrant, newcomer, and Francophone entrepreneurs.	S-M	Settlement agencies, newcomer and entrepreneur support organizations, LMLIP, SBC, Francophone orgs	Staff time \$50,000/year (mentorship and programs)	Operating budget Seek provincial and federal funding opportunities, where available
	Support student retention and career pathways by building stronger connections between post-secondary students, schools, and local employers, with a focus on increasing internship-to-employment transitions in priority sectors.	M	LRES, LEDC, Western, Fanshawe, SBC, TechAlliance	Staff time; student entrepreneurship bootcamps; student-to-startup transition support; Mentorship (\$50,000/year)	Operating budget and Economic Development Reserve Fund (for pilot) Seek provincial and federal funding opportunities, where available

Strategic Pillar 1 | **Talent and Innovation****Implementation Plan**

A future-ready talent strategy must support the innovation environment that attracts skilled people, helps ideas grow into firms, and creates high-value employment opportunities in London. The implementation plan below sets out how this initiative will be advanced through targeted actions.

Strategic Initiatives	Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources
1.3 Strengthen London's innovation ecosystem	Establish a co-investment fund that deploys municipal dollars to unlock larger pools of external funding (provincial, federal, philanthropic, and private) for multi-partner initiatives advancing economic priorities. Projects must secure non-municipal co-investment as a condition of eligibility. Designate a delivery partner to administer the fund and evaluate results.	M	TechAlliance, Western, Fanshawe, LEDC, innovation and commercialization partners	Staff time Fund delivery and administration: \$500K /year	Economic Development Reserve Fund Seek provincial and federal funding opportunities, where available
	Consolidate and update existing inventories of innovation and commercialization spaces to identify gaps and priority locations. Use findings to inform zoning amendments, capital program priorities, and partner-led space development in designated employment areas, as well as in the downtown and commercial areas.	M	TechAlliance, Fanshawe, Western	Staff time and \$150K (for study and designation work)	Economic Development Reserve Fund, Capital planning funds, partner contributions Seek provincial and federal funding opportunities, where available
	Advance development approval modernization, building on recent enhancements in structural reforms, digital modernization, and externally validated performance improvements.	M	City departments, development community	Staff time	Operating budget



Strategic Pillar 2: Investment Attraction and Retention

Strategic Pillar 2 | Investment Attraction and Retention



Investment attraction and retention are central to London’s long-term economic prosperity, job creation, and fiscal sustainability. In a highly competitive global environment, cities are increasingly judged on their ability to offer investment-ready land, reliable infrastructure, skilled talent, efficient approvals, and a strong quality of place. For London, securing new domestic and foreign investment while supporting the expansion and modernization of existing firms is essential to diversifying the economy, strengthening supply chains, and building resilience in the face of global volatility, technological change, and shifting trade patterns.

Evidence-based rationale

- Global uncertainty, supply-chain realignment, and geopolitical risk are pushing firms to reshore and seek stable, cost-competitive locations – conditions that London can address.
- London’s priority sectors align with global growth trends, but London has fewer anchor firms in technology and life sciences than comparable regions.
- The City’s Industrial Land Development Strategy sets a competitiveness benchmark of a minimum ten-year supply of shovel-ready industrial land (approx. 200 hectares).
- Reducing building vacancy rates and increasing foot traffic and activity downtown and in commercial areas help to improve revitalization and renewal.⁸

Where the city stands

- LEDC is advancing sector-focused attraction (advanced manufacturing, agri-food, health, digital), with recent investments including Andriani’s \$33-million pasta manufacturing facility.⁹
- The City’s Industrial Land Development Strategy is progressing on land acquisition, servicing, and pre-zoning to maintain an inventory of employment lands.
- Through the Downtown Plan (in draft form at the time of this report’s publication), the City may enable higher-density mixed-use development and adaptive reuse.¹⁰
- Place-based redevelopment is advancing through projects like the Kellogg’s District in Old East Village, alongside ongoing municipal investment in transit, broadband, and utilities.¹¹

Key gaps to be addressed

- London’s competitiveness will increasingly hinge on enabling infrastructure.
- Investment readiness is stronger in greenfield employment areas than in the downtown and commercial areas, where vacancy, fragmented ownership, underused sites, and unclear redevelopment pathways increase perceived risk.
- “Middle-scale” reinvestment (tenant improvements, small business expansion, adaptive reuse, incremental infill) is critical to downtown and commercial area vitality but often faces the same complexity and timelines as large projects.

Strategic Pillar 2 | Investment Attraction and Retention

Objective

Create investment-ready conditions that help businesses choose London, grow, and reinvest by aligning site readiness, infrastructure, approvals, incentives, and sector support to strengthen competitiveness and long-term job creation.

Strategic focus

- Win and keep investment by supporting new investment and helping existing firms expand and reinvest
- Make sites “investment-ready” with available employment land and the right infrastructure
- Speed up and clarify approvals so decisions are fast, reliable, and transparent
- Strengthen London’s offer by combining sector strengths with a strong quality of place, including downtown vitality and cultural vibrancy

City’s role

- Set the conditions for success by aligning City levers
- Convene and deliver investment readiness for the downtown
- Lead city-wide innovation network/district planning

Strategic Initiatives

1. Prioritize investment in sectors with competitive advantages

London will focus on sectors where it already has strengths (agri-food, manufacturing, digital media and technology, and health sciences) by aligning land supply, infrastructure, approvals, and incentives to reduce risk and improve certainty for investors. The City will also support existing firms to expand and reinvest and strengthen enabling energy infrastructure to keep London competitive for technology-intensive growth.

2. Activate the downtown as an economic and cultural driver

London will treat the downtown as a strategic economic asset by making redevelopment more “market-ready” through clearer pathways and faster, more predictable decisions. Practical steps include a “small projects” approvals pathway and targeted incentives (including vacancy-to-occupancy fit-up supports) to raise commercial occupancy, rebuild foot traffic, and create conditions that attract larger employers and institutions downtown and in other commercial areas.

3. Strengthen economic activity in commercial areas and corridors city-wide

London will take a portfolio approach to commercial areas and corridors, focusing coordinated municipal action where it can unlock private reinvestment and support complete communities. In priority neighbourhoods, the City will align permissions, infrastructure capacity, redevelopment pathways, and incentives to accelerate “middle-scale” projects like adaptive reuse, mixed-use infill, and incremental redevelopment.

Strategic Pillar 2 | Investment Attraction and Retention

What success looks like

- A continuous supply of investment-ready employment land.
- Fast, reliable, and transparent development approvals.
- Infrastructure systems (power, water, broadband, transportation) that meet the needs of advanced and technology-intensive industries.
- A compelling value proposition that integrates sector strengths, talent availability, cultural vibrancy, and downtown vitality.
- A seamless, one-window experience for both external investors and local firms seeking to expand or reinvest.

How London will track progress

These indicators will be tracked and reported annually through coordinated City–LEDC performance reporting. LEDC will report on investment and job outcomes, while the City will report on land readiness, approvals performance, and reinvestment and occupancy trends in the downtown and commercial areas.

- **Priority-sector investment secured:** Total annual capital investment (\$) and number of investment projects (new + expansion) in priority sectors.
- **Shovel-ready land supply:** Acres/hectares of shovel-ready employment land available annually, tracked against the ILDS minimum ten-year supply benchmark.
- **Approvals speed and predictability:** Median time (days) for defined approval types (industrial, mixed-use, conversions) and percentage of files meeting published service standards.
- **Reinvestment and occupancy:** Change in commercial vacancy (%) and value of building permits (\$) in the downtown and in commercial areas.

How this pillar helps London build resilience

- Reduces exposure to global volatility by strengthening sector diversity, supporting onshoring and supply chain resilience, and retaining and scaling local firms.
- Protects the tax base and employment by enabling reinvestment in existing firms and increasing commercial occupancy in the downtown and commercial areas.
- Prevents loss of mobile capital by improving the speed, predictability, and coordination of land readiness, infrastructure capacity, and approvals.
- Reduces risk for key sectors by advancing enabling infrastructure required by advanced and technology-intensive industries.
- Strengthens London’s competitiveness for investment and talent by improving economic vitality, amenities, and market confidence.

Strategic Pillar 2 | Investment Attraction and Retention

Implementation Plan

Achieving this pillar's objective begins with focusing City action where London has the strongest potential to compete for and retain investment. The implementation plan below sets out how this initiative will be advanced through targeted actions.

Strategic Initiatives	Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources
2.1	Prioritize investment in sectors with competitive advantages	Ongoing	Realty Services	Staff time	Capital budget Seek provincial and federal funding opportunities, where available
	Co-convene a multi-partner steering committee to complete a feasibility review of a Life Sciences Innovation Network, covering sub-sector focus, governance options, and funding pathways, and bring a recommendation to Council before proceeding to any further phase of development.	S-L	Hospitals, post-secondary institutions, industry partners, economic development partner	Staff time Market analysis and feasibility work: \$125K Remaining work TBD following feasibility study	FedDev Ontario (REGI); applied research programs Seek provincial and federal funding opportunities, where available
	Integrate creative and cultural industries into priority sector planning and work with economic development partners to integrate the UNESCO City of Music designation into sector-targeted investment prospecting, with annual reporting on creative sector firm growth, employment, and investment outcomes.	S-M	Tourism London (Music Office), LEDC (Film London); RBC Place; Fanshawe, Western, Ontario Creates	Staff time	Operating budget Seek provincial and federal funding opportunities, where available

Strategic Pillar 2 | Investment Attraction and Retention

Implementation Plan

Delivering on this pillar objective also requires strengthening the downtown as a place where businesses can locate, expand, and reinvest with greater confidence. The implementation plan below sets out how this initiative will be advanced.

Strategic Initiatives	Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources	
2.2	Activate the downtown as an economic and cultural driver	Complete a targeted inventory of priority underutilized downtown and commercial area sites where investor uncertainty is suppressing action and develop an Investment Portfolio with investor-ready site profiles that economic development partners can actively bring to market	S	Economic development partners, LEDC, TechAlliance, Chamber of Commerce, Tourism London, downtown business association, cultural organizations, commercial real estate sector	Staff time Market analysis, investor-ready site profiles: \$125K	Economic Development Reserve Fund; Fed Dev Seek provincial and federal funding opportunities, where available
	Launch a streamlined approvals process for tenant improvements, adaptive reuse, and modest redevelopment in the downtown and in commercial areas.	S	Downtown business association, Chamber of Commerce	Staff time	Operating budget	

Strategic Pillar 2 | Investment Attraction and Retention

Implementation Plan

Delivering on this pillar objective also requires leveraging London's UNESCO City of Music designation and prioritizing small business resilience. The implementation plan below sets out how this initiative will be advanced.

Strategic Initiatives	Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources
2.2 Activate the downtown as an economic and cultural driver (continued)	Leverage London's UNESCO City of Music designation as a catalyst for economic growth by developing targeted prospecting materials and outreach for music-tech, film production, and digital media firms, positioning London's cultural infrastructure alongside its talent, affordability, and sector strengths as a business location proposition	M	Economic development partners, LEDC (Film London), Tourism London, and music promotion organizations	Staff time Marketing and prospecting \$100K	Tourism MAT Fund; FedDev Ontario Seek provincial and federal funding opportunities, where available
	Pilot a two-year Small Business Resilience Program providing targeted advisory services to support business model adaptation, digital transition, lease navigation, and operational sustainability	S	SBC, Business Improvement Associations, Tourism London	Staff time \$50,000 (program costs)	Economic Development Reserve Fund

Strategic Pillar 2 | Investment Attraction and Retention

Implementation Plan

Creating investment-ready conditions across London also means supporting reinvestment and business activity beyond the downtown, particularly in commercial areas and corridors that contribute to complete communities and city-wide economic vitality. The implementation plan below sets out how this initiative will be advanced through targeted actions.

Strategic Initiatives		Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources
2.3	Strengthen commercial areas and corridors city-wide	Amend the City's Community Improvement Plan to introduce a targeted redevelopment incentive for priority commercial areas and corridors, covering adaptive reuse, mixed-use infill, and incremental intensification.	M	Business improvement associations, commercial property owners	Staff time Program design \$50,000 Program costs: TBD	Community Improvement Plan; Development Charge incentive tools (excluded incentive dollars)



Strategic Pillar 3: Regional Collaboration

Strategic Pillar 3 | **Regional Collaboration**



The London region is entering a period of profound economic transformation. Global trade disruption, geopolitical instability, supply-chain realignment, climate transition, and the accelerating competition for investment, talent, and clean energy are reshaping how regions compete. Economic competitiveness, energy security, infrastructure delivery, and reconciliation outcomes increasingly depend on regional scale, coordinated planning, and aligned investment. As the largest city and primary employment centre in the region, London is uniquely positioned to serve as a convenor and connector for neighbouring municipalities, Indigenous communities and partners, and sector leaders around shared priorities that underpin sustainable economic growth.

Evidence-based rationale

- Global trade disruption and economic security priorities are pushing investment toward regions that can deliver resilient supply chains, reliable low-carbon power, investment-ready sites, trusted standards, and fast, certain approvals.
- Indigenous economic reconciliation is increasingly tied to growth, funding, and social licence. Regions that move from consultation to co-development and shared ownership in land, power, and infrastructure will be more competitive and durable over time.

Where the city stands

- The City of London works through established regional tables and associations to coordinate on land-use planning, growth management, infrastructure advocacy, and economic development priorities affecting the broader region.
- London is actively engaged with Middlesex County, City of St. Thomas, Elgin County, on regional transportation initiatives and advocacy.
- LEDC leads and participates in coordinated investment attraction, cluster development, and innovation initiatives in collaboration with ecosystem partners.
- The City's ReconciliAction Plan establishes London's commitments to Truth and Reconciliation across municipal operations and community relationships.¹²

Key gaps to be addressed

- A sustained regional coordination mechanism would be helpful to align municipalities, utilities, post-secondary institutions, sector organizations, and Indigenous communities around shared priorities, governance, and measurable outcomes.
- Missing a unified approach to investment-ready districts and major project readiness, including regional infrastructure sequencing for large and power- and infrastructure-intensive projects.
- A more consistent, mutually beneficial approach to economic partnership with Indigenous communities is needed.
- Currently lacking a cohesive regional investment narrative.

Strategic Pillar 3 | Regional Collaboration

Objective

Position London as a convenor and strategic integrator of the region's economy by aligning municipalities, Indigenous communities, post-secondary institutions, utilities, and regional organizations around shared priorities for energy readiness, trade resilience, talent, and innovation, and by advancing co-developed, large-scale initiatives that strengthen the region's competitiveness and resilience on a provincial, national, and global stage.

Strategic focus

- Optimize relationships with neighbouring municipalities and industry partners
- Build economic partnerships with Indigenous communities
- Position the region as a global investment destination

City's role

- Convene regional partners to align infrastructure planning, advocacy, and investment priorities
- Collaborate with Indigenous communities to develop partnership protocols and co-investment opportunities

Strategic Initiatives

1. Strengthen relationships with the region's municipalities and industry partners

London will strengthen collaboration with municipalities across Southwestern Ontario, Indigenous communities, businesses, and sector organizations to align around shared economic priorities, particularly where scale is required to deliver enabling infrastructure, unlock strategic sites, and respond to major investment opportunities. This means improving regional readiness for large projects by aligning land supply, servicing strategies, and infrastructure across jurisdictions, and strengthening the region's collective voice in advocating for economic-enabling infrastructure investment with provincial and federal governments. Over time, stronger alignment will improve coordination, clarity and client navigation, improve investor certainty, and support a more resilient regional economy capable of competing for large-scale, anchor investment.

London will also work with partners to present a unified value proposition to establish Southwestern Ontario as a destination for global investment

2. Build mutually beneficial economic partnerships with Indigenous communities

Economic reconciliation recognizes the inherent rights of Indigenous communities to economic self-determination and supports shared prosperity. This strategy supports an Indigenous-led engagement process that respects Indigenous governance, priorities, and timelines, without presuming outcomes or forms of partnership.

Insights from this engagement can inform refinements across the strategy and support Indigenous representation within economic development partnerships and accountability structures. In parallel, the City can build readiness by strengthening internal capacity and advancing commitments under the ReconciliAction Plan so it is a credible and informed partner when readiness is mutual.

Strategic Pillar 3 | Regional Collaboration

What success looks like

- Regional partners are aligned around shared priorities, with clear governance and sustained collaboration.
- Land and infrastructure investments are coordinated around priority districts, corridors, and strategic sites.
- Indigenous communities are engaged as economic partners in ways that reflect mutual priorities and long-term relationship-building.
- The region presents a unified, credible value proposition to investors and senior governments.
- Joint initiatives are advanced where scale, speed, or complexity require regional coordination.

How London will track progress

Success under this pillar will be measured by the City's ability to enable investment at regional scale and to translate collaboration into tangible outcomes. The following indicators track whether London is effectively advancing major projects and securing senior-government support through coordinated, multi-partner action.

- **Regional investment and major projects enabled:** Number and value (\$) of major investment or infrastructure projects advanced through multi-partner, regional collaboration.
- **Regional advocacy and funding outcomes:** Value (\$) of provincial and federal funding secured for regionally aligned infrastructure, economic development, or workforce initiatives.
- **Indigenous community partnerships:** Active formal partnership or engagement agreements with Indigenous communities on shared economic priorities.

How this pillar helps London build resilience

- Improves investment certainty through coordinated planning of trade-enabling infrastructure, logistics corridors, and employment lands across Southwestern Ontario region.
- Enhances collective advocacy to senior governments for transportation, energy, digital, and water infrastructure critical to economic competitiveness and climate resilience.
- Advances economic reconciliation by creating conditions for genuine economic partnerships with Indigenous communities.
- Reduces fragmentation by establishing shared priorities, governance mechanisms, and performance measures that allow the region to act as a coherent unit rather than a collection of competing jurisdictions or sub-alliances.

Strategic Pillar 3 | **Regional Collaboration****Implementation Plan**

To achieve this pillar's objective, London needs stronger coordination with municipalities and industry partners across Southwestern Ontario on shared economic priorities. The implementation plan below sets out the actions, timelines, partners, resources, and funding sources that will help turn this coordination into practical regional results.

Strategic Initiatives	Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources
3.1 Strengthen relationships with municipalities and industry partners	Work with neighbouring municipalities to identify regionally significant employment sites and priority-sector supply chain opportunities. Build on existing relationships and develop new ones to coordinate regional infrastructure planning and investment sequencing, strengthening integration between London-based firms and industries in surrounding communities for collective regional benefit.	M	Municipalities across SWO, associations, alliances, Provincial government, LEDC, LRMC/EMC	Staff time	Operating budget
	Coordinate trade-enabling infrastructure advocacy through joint meetings with provincial and federal ministers, aligning funding requests across regional partners.	M	Municipalities across SWO, associations, London Hydro and transportation partners	Staff time	Operating budget,
	Co-develop a coordinated Southwestern Ontario investment marketing narrative that positions London and neighbouring municipalities as complementary elements of an economic region.	S-M	LEDC, Municipalities and EDOs across SWO, associations, alliances.	Staff time and \$50K (messaging development, facilitation, and shared materials)	Operating budget, Regional Cost Sharing Seek provincial and federal funding opportunities, where available

Strategic Pillar 3 | **Regional Collaboration****Implementation Plan**

Achieving this pillar’s objective also requires stronger and more intentional economic partnerships with Indigenous communities and communities. The implementation plan below sets out how this initiative will be advanced through targeted actions.

Strategic Initiatives	Actions	Time line	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources
3.2 Build mutually beneficial economic partnerships with Indigenous communities	Resource and support a dedicated, Indigenous-led economic engagement process, aligned with the City's ReconciliAction Plan with neighbouring Nations to build relationship, identify shared priorities, and determine how economic partnership may take shape. Engagement is the foundation for all subsequent work under this strategy. In parallel, the City will build internal capacity and pursue accreditation to engage as an informed and credible partner.	S-M	Neighbouring First Nations; urban Indigenous organizations	Staff time Facilitation and process support \$100K Ongoing to be reviewed toward end of funding period	Operating budget; Indigenous Capacity Support Program (ISC); Ontario Indigenous Economic Development Fund (IEDF)
	Subject to the outcomes of the engagement above, and where Indigenous communities and organizations have expressed shared interest, explore potential equity partnerships with area Indigenous communities in major infrastructure projects through joint feasibility studies, where there is shared interest in doing so.	M-L	Neighbouring First Nations; urban Indigenous organizations	Staff time and TBD based on engagement outcomes	TBD following completion of Action 3.2a



Strategic Pillar 4: Transportation and Access

Strategic Pillar 4 | **Transportation and Access**



Transportation and connectivity are foundational to London business' ability to gain reliable access to markets, the city's overall economic competitiveness, and each citizen's quality of life. As London's population and employment grow faster than the provincial average, pressure on transit, roads, rail, digital networks, and air services will intensify. Coordinated, future-focused investment in mobility and connectivity will enable London to accelerate economic growth, expand labour market access, and strengthen its role as the economic focal point of Southwestern Ontario.

Evidence-based rationale

- London welcomed approximately 2.1 million overnight visitors in 2023, including over 160,000 international visitors generating an estimated \$1.1 billion in spending.¹³
- London's population grew by over 14% (2019-2024), making it one of the fastest growing cities in Southwestern Ontario and driving demand for expanded commuter and intercity transportation. Over 7.5% of workers commute from nearby municipalities, underscoring the need for better regional transit integration.¹⁴
- New aviation technologies and regulatory changes present opportunities for London to lead in advanced air mobility, supported by local training, research, and testing capacity.

Where the city stands

- The City's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) program and transit service expansion supports workforce mobility, student access, and downtown revitalization.¹⁵
- Collaboration with Metrolinx, VIA Rail, and neighbouring municipalities on regional and intercity transportation planning.
- The City is a contributing funder to Middlesex County Connect, a regional transportation initiative that is improving mobility between London and surrounding communities by expanding inter-municipal transit options.¹⁶
- The continued development of London International Airport (YXU), including land development, new hangars, and private aviation facilities, guided by a vision to become Southwestern Ontario's premier aviation centre.

Key gaps to be addressed

- Key connectivity improvements such as regional rail, intercity transit, and air service expansion require coordinated action with senior governments, transit authorities, and the airport authority.
- No single organization currently has the mandate to align land use, infrastructure investment, service planning, and economic development priorities into a single, coordinated mobility system.
- Without City leadership to integrate transportation planning and regional advocacy, London risks underusing its strategic location, limiting airport growth, and reducing competitiveness in ensuring reliable access to talent, tourism, and investment between the city and the rest of the world.

Strategic Pillar 4 | **Transportation and Access**

Objective

Ensure people, goods, and ideas can move easily within the city, across the region, and globally by integrating transit, roads, active transportation, digital infrastructure, and the airport with employment areas and growth priorities.

Strategic Focus

- Pursue stronger air and rail access to and from London
- Drive local and regional transportation improvements
- Position London as an aerospace innovation centre

City's Role

- Fund and develop strategic initiatives to expand air and rail access, including targeted incentives and advocacy
- Convene regional partners to coordinate high-speed rail planning and advance integrated transportation solutions
- Enable aerospace innovation by establishing dedicated zones, aligning land use and infrastructure, and supporting safe testing of emerging aviation technologies

Strategic Initiatives

1. Pursue stronger air and rail access to and from London

The City will work with senior governments and transportation agencies to improve intercity rail and bus service, strengthen London International Airport's role as a regional gateway, and expand direct air routes. These actions will enhance business travel, talent attraction, tourism, and investment, while reducing reliance on Toronto-area airports and broadening London's labour market reach.

2. Drive local and regional transportation improvements

The City will strengthen transit reliability and expand service, focusing on connecting residents to jobs, campuses, and key services. By aligning transit planning with land use and collaborating with neighbouring municipalities, London will support workforce participation, enhance downtown vitality, and support the efficient movement of goods and regional commuting. London will also improve regional commuting access through aligned service models, mobility nodes, and practical cost-sharing frameworks.

3. Position London as an aerospace innovation centre

The City and London's business leaders will leverage the airport, training institutions, and research capacity to attract aerospace firms and support next-generation mobility technologies. Establishing an Aerospace Innovation Zone and aligning airport development with innovation goals will enable testing, commercialization, and business growth, positioning London as a leader in advanced aviation technology.

Strategic Pillar 4 | **Transportation and Access**

What success looks like

- Efficient global, regional and intercity connections, including air, rail and bus, that support commuting, business travel, and tourism.
- Reliable, frequent, and accessible public transit that connects people to employment areas, campuses, downtown, and key services.
- A fully leveraged London International Airport with expanded passenger routes, cargo activity, and aviation-related employment.
- Digital connectivity that supports remote work, advanced manufacturing, research, and global business operations.
- Inclusive mobility that ensures all residents, regardless of income, ability, or location, can access jobs, education, and services.

How London will track progress

These indicators will be tracked and reported annually through coordinated reporting by the City, working with London International Airport and regional transportation partners.

- **Air and intercity connectivity:** Annual passenger volumes at YXU and number of direct destinations served, alongside intercity rail/bus service frequency to key markets (e.g., GTA, Windsor, Kitchener-Waterloo).
- **Transit access to jobs and key destinations:** Percentage of London residents within a defined transit travel-time threshold to major employment areas, campuses, hospitals, downtown, and commercial areas (including evenings and weekends).
- **Aerospace innovation and aviation employment growth:** Number of aerospace/aviation firms located at or linked to YXU and growth in aviation/aerospace-related employment and training activity.

How this pillar helps London build resilience

- Protects tourism, convention, and business travel competitiveness through stronger air service and intercity connections.
- Enables supply-chain resilience and export growth by strengthening goods movement, trade corridors, and regional and global logistics connectivity.
- Reduces congestion and labour access constraints by improving the reliability and reach of local and regional transportation networks.
- Improves resilience to disruption by reducing over-reliance on a limited set of regional transportation options.
- Positions London for next-generation mobility and aerospace opportunities, ensuring the region remains competitive as transportation technologies evolve.

Strategic Pillar 4 | **Transportation and Access**

Implementation Plan

To achieve this pillar's objective, London needs stronger air and rail connections that improve how people, goods, and ideas move to and from the city. This pillar's objective also requires better local and regional transportation connections that link people to jobs, services, and growth areas. The implementation plan below sets out the actions, timelines, partners, resources, and funding sources that will support this work.

Strategic Initiatives	Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources
4.1 Pursue stronger air and rail access to and from London	Develop and implement an Air and Rail Connectivity Advocacy Strategy, informed by analysis of business travel demand, talent mobility needs, priority global markets, and regional cargo and logistics requirements, targeting specific service gaps and advancing coordinated asks to Transport Canada, VIA Rail, and relevant federal and provincial ministers.	M	London International Airport, LEDC	Staff time	Operating budget
4.2 Drive local and regional transportation improvements	Convene regional municipal and transit partners to advance coordinated mobility improvements (including connections between employment areas and transit corridors, cross-boundary routes, and regional road corridor upgrades). Develop joint advocacy positions for provincial and federal transportation investment.	L	Neighbouring municipalities, Indigenous communities, provincial transportation agencies	Staff time	Operating budget

Strategic Pillar 4 | **Transportation and Access****Implementation Plan**

Supporting this pillar's objective also means strengthening London's role in aerospace and aviation by aligning the airport, land use, infrastructure, and innovation activity. The implementation plan below sets out how this initiative will be advanced through targeted actions.

Strategic Initiatives	Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources
4.3 Position London as an aerospace innovation centre	Designate an Aerospace Innovation Zone on and adjacent to London International Airport, supported by enabling land-use permissions, compatible zoning, and infrastructure alignment to support aerospace manufacturing, testing, and aviation services. Align land use and zoning on adjacent City-controlled land and support the airport authority on enabling infrastructure.	S	London International Airport	Staff time Research, analysis, development \$100,000	Capital budget
	In partnership with the London International Airport, advocate for designation of the airport as a priority site for advanced aviation technology testing, including uncrewed aerial systems and advanced air mobility.	M-L	London International Airport, Transport Canada, NAV Canada	Cost-shared with airport authority	Airport Authority cost-sharing



Strategic Pillar 5: System Optimization

Strategic Pillar 5 | System Optimization



London has a strong and diverse economic development ecosystem, with capable municipal departments, agencies, corporations, post-secondary institutions, and community partners delivering a wide range of programs and services. However, in an environment of intensifying global competition for talent and investment, constrained public resources, and complex cross-sector challenges, success depends not only on what strategies are pursued, but on how well the overall system functions. Clear roles, coordinated action, shared data, and aligned investment are essential to avoid duplication, close gaps, and ensure that every public dollar and partner effort contributes to the greatest possible economic and community impact. System optimization is therefore about strengthening the “operating system” that underpins all other pillars of the strategy.

Evidence-based rationale

- Cities such as Waterloo and Calgary have driven economic growth by partnering with independent economic development organizations, which operate outside municipal legislative constraints and political cycles.
- Independent organizations benefit from greater funding flexibility, agility to shift priorities, and long-term stability, which are key factors for executing major economic development initiatives.
- Adopting best practices like outcome-based funding agreements, shared performance indicators, and system-wide dashboards can enhance accountability and maximize the impact of public investments in London.

Where the city stands

- The City has long-standing funding and governance relationships with LEDC, TechAlliance, and the SBC, supported by service agreements, grants and reporting requirements.
- Within the municipal organization, efforts are underway to modernize planning and development approvals, expand digital services, and improve client experience for businesses and investors.
- A municipal benchmarking study ranked London third nationally and first in Ontario, indicating solid performance on planning features, approvals timelines, and government charges.¹⁷

Key gaps to be addressed

- Unclear role definitions and accountability among City-funded organizations, with service agreements lacking clarity on lead responsibilities and measurable outcomes.
- Fragmented workforce and talent navigation creates multiple entry points and parallel platforms for employers and job seekers, reducing system efficiency and visibility.
- Weak connections between job seeker services and employer-facing supports limit the translation of training and employment programs into workforce outcomes.
- Inconsistent municipal performance and limited shared measurement hinder the City’s ability to track ROI, reduce service duplication, and communicate impact to Council and other partners.

Strategic Pillar 5 | System Optimization

Objective

Strengthen how the economic development ecosystem works by clarifying roles and partnerships, modernizing processes and digital services, and ensuring City investments and funded partners are aligned, accountable, and delivering strong returns for the community.

Strategic Focus

- Enhance coordination and reduce fragmentation
- Align internal processes to create supportive conditions for economic development
- Improve data sharing and impact measurement

City's Role

- Revise service and grant agreements to clarify priorities, outcomes, and expectations for coordination among funded partners
- Embed collaboration and participation requirements into funding, and shift resources toward co-delivered initiatives
- Lead the development of shared data systems, standardized reporting, and performance dashboards to track outcomes and inform policy

Strategic Initiatives

1. Enhance coordination and reduce fragmentation

Outcome-based funding and coordinated ecosystem planning will strengthen accountability, improve return on investment, and enable more strategic service delivery. Updated funding agreements, shared workforce priorities, and integrated and more frequent reporting will align partners, improve labour market outcomes, and provide clearer visibility into results. An Economic Development Partnership Table will guide implementation and address emerging competitiveness issues.

2. Align internal processes to support economic development

London will strengthen cross-departmental collaboration to ensure coordinated support for economic development. This includes deepening cross-departmental coordination on complex and high-priority projects, building on existing integrated intake, digital modernization, and performance improvements to shift toward more parallel and coordinated review pathways. The City will maintain and refine approval service standards through performance tracking, external benchmarking, and data-driven continuous improvement.

3. Improve data sharing and impact measurement

The City will build a stronger evidence base for decision-making by strengthening data sharing and impact measurement across City-funded organizations and the broader ecosystem. As a foundation, the City will work with partners to publish an annual economic development outcomes report, communicating to Council and the community what has been delivered, what is working, and where adjustments are planned. Over time, this reporting will be strengthened through shared definitions, consistent reporting templates, increased frequency, and data-sharing where possible, building toward a performance framework that allows the City to allocate resources based on demonstrated outcomes.

Strategic Pillar 5 | System Optimization

What success looks like

- Clear mandates and governance frameworks across the City and its funded partners, with minimal duplication and well-defined leadership roles.
- Strong internal coordination across municipal departments so that planning, infrastructure, transit, housing, culture, and economic development operate as an integrated system.
- Modern, client-centred service delivery for businesses, investors, and partners, supported by digital platforms and one-window access.
- Outcome-based funding and performance management that link municipal investment to measurable results in jobs, investment, talent, inclusion, and community prosperity.
- A culture of collaboration, shared data, continuous improvement, and more frequent reporting across the broader economic development ecosystem.

How London will track progress

The following indicators track system performance and outcomes in ways that are feasible to report annually and meaningful to Council, partners, and the community. These indicators will be tracked and reported annually through coordinated reporting led by the City, with contributions from funded partners and key ecosystem organizations.

- **Business and investor experience navigating City systems:** Investor/business satisfaction score and median time to resolve key service requests across departments.
- **Speed and predictability of internal processes:** Percentage of defined file types meeting published service standards (e.g., approvals, permits, inspections).
- **Partner performance and accountability:** Percentage of funded partners meeting outcome-based performance expectations through annual reporting.

How this pillar helps London manage risk

- Reduces the risk of lost investment due to municipal delay and uncertainty by modernizing internal approvals and issue-resolution processes and advancing more investment-ready employment districts.
- Supports return on municipal investment by shifting reporting from activity counts to outcome-based performance expectations supported by common indicators.
- Supports evidence-based decision making by strengthening shared data and establishing a performance dashboard that enables annual reporting and course correction.
- Strengthens workforce coordination by aligning funded partner priorities, coordinating employer engagement, and improving the clarity of lead and supporting roles across the ecosystem.

Strategic Pillar 5 | System Optimization

Implementation Plan

To achieve this pillar's objective, London needs stronger coordination across the economic development ecosystem. The implementation plan below sets out the actions, timelines, partners, resources, and funding sources that will help improve alignment and reduce fragmentation.

Strategic Initiatives		Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources
5.1	Enhance coordination and reduce fragmentation	Establish an Economic Development Partnership Table to oversee implementation of this Strategy, assess emerging competitiveness issues, and provide advisory input on the co-investment fund. Membership will span economic development partners and major institutional sectors (post-secondary, health, utilities, and transportation infrastructure). The Table will convene subgroups, including a Talent Working Group, as needed.	S	Economic development partners, London Hydro, London International Airport, post-secondary, health, etc..	Staff time	Operating budget
		Update funding agreements to clarify priorities, outcomes, and coordination expectations, including shared workforce planning and priorities, aligned employer outreach, and improved collaboration with equity-serving organizations.	S	Economic development partners	Staff time, legal advisors	Operating budget

Strategic Pillar 5 | **System Optimization****Implementation Plan**

Meeting this pillar’s objective also requires City processes that are clearer, faster, and better connected. The implementation plan below sets out how this initiative will be advanced through targeted actions.

Strategic Initiatives	Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources
5.2 Align internal processes to support economic development	Deepen cross-departmental approval coordination, building on existing integrated intake, digital modernization, and performance improvements, by aligning Planning, Engineering, Building, Legal, and Economic Development staff on enhanced review models for complex and high-priority projects.	S-M	City departments	Staff time	Operating budget
	Maintain and refine approval service standards, performance tracking, and data-driven continuous improvement practices, incorporating external benchmarking and annual development reporting into ongoing performance management.	M	City departments	Staff time	Operating budget
	Convene annual strategic alignment sessions between Tourism London, the Music Office, LEDC (Film London), RBC Place and others to coordinate priorities, develop joint marketing and messaging approaches, and improve coordination across external promotion efforts of events, festivals, and tourism.	S	Tourism (Music Office), LEDC (Film London); RBC Place	Staff time	Operating budget

Strategic Pillar 5 | System Optimization

Implementation Plan

Supporting this pillar's objective also means improving how results are tracked, shared, and used to guide decisions. The implementation plan below sets out how this initiative will be advanced through targeted actions.

Strategic Initiatives	Actions	Timeline	Key Partners	Resources	Funding Sources
5.3 Improve data sharing and impact measurement	Strengthen reporting and communications to give Council and the community greater visibility into business wins, sector growth, and tangible outcomes delivered through the City's economic development investments, including publication of an annual Economic Development Outcomes Report outlining results achieved and planned adjustments.	S	LEDC	Staff time Potential: dashboard development costs	Operating budget Seek provincial and federal funding opportunities, where available



**For London's
Economic Future**

For London's Economic Future

Londoners have built a city worth investing in. This strategy is the City's commitment to ensuring that investment in people, businesses, neighbourhoods, and the systems that connect them delivers lasting economic and community benefit.

Over the next five years, cities will be tested by global change, shifting markets, and intensifying competition for talent and investment. The cities that succeed will be those that act with clarity and coordination. They will align their systems, invest in their people, build on what makes them distinctive, and work together to move quickly when opportunities emerge.

This strategy sets that direction for London. It brings together a clear vision, focused priorities, and a shared approach to delivery that reflects both the City's leadership role and the strength of London's economic development ecosystem.

London enters this period with genuine momentum, strong foundations, and a clear plan. The opportunity now is execution. By working together, the City and its partners can turn shared intent into real impact and ensure London's economy continues to grow in ways that are competitive, inclusive, and resilient for the long term.

Acknowledgements

The City of London gratefully acknowledges the contributions of hundreds of business leaders, industry groups, community organizations, and economic development partners during the development of this strategy, including those who participated in roundtables, interviews, and survey research.

Argyle BIA

Armo Tool

ATN

Auburn Development

Black Community Employment & Empowerment
Services

Boom Intertribal

Business Help Centre

Canada Life

Canada Media Fund

Community Futures Western Ontario

Covent Garden Market

Cross Cultural Learner Centre (CCLC)

CSC Providence

Deep Breath

Digital Extremes

Douglas Windows and Doors

Downtown London Business Association

Drewlo Holdings

Easy Financial

Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and
Development Board

EMC Canada

Fanshawe College

Feather Fields

Film London

Forest City Gallery

Forest City Sport and Social Club

Forward Vision Games

Gleed Inc.

Go Easy

Goodwill Industries Ontario Great Lakes Career
Centre

Grand Theatre

Hamilton Road BIA

Hard Rock Hotel

Heritage London Foundation

Hutton House Employment Services

Hyde Park BIA

Infotech

Innovation Village

Ivey Business School at Western University

Jones Health Group

Kings

Launchit Solutions

Lawson Research

LBMX

LEADS Employment

Libro
 London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership
 London Arts Council
 London Chamber of Commerce
 London Community Foundation
 London Cross Cultural Learner Centre
 London Development Institute
 London District Catholic School Board
 London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC)
 London Environmental Network
 London Heritage Council
 London Home Builders Association
 London Hydro
 London International Airport
 London Music Office
 London Region Manufacturing Council
 London Regional Employment Services
 London Small Business Centre
 London Training Centre
 London Transit Corporation
 Michael Clark Construction
 Middlesex County
 Morissette Institute for Entrepreneurship
 Museum London
 Nokee Kwe
 North London Dance Centre
 Old East Village BIA
 Old South Business Association
 Orca Intelligence
 Oxford Dodge
 Pathways
 Pillar Nonprofit Network
 PolyAnalytik
 RBC Place London (London Convention Centre Corp.)
 RHA Ventures
 Schulich School of Business
 SJH
 Small Business Centre
 Starlim
 TBK Creative
 TechAlliance
 Teppermans Inc.
 Thames Valley District School Board
 The Branding Firm Inc.
 The Grove at Western Fair
 Toboggan/Fellini Koolinis/Joe Kools
 Tourism London
 Trojan Technologies
 Trudell Medical
 United Way
 Western Fair District
 Western Research Parks
 Western University
 WILL Employment Solutions
 XO Homes
 YMCA of Southwestern Ontario
 Young London
 Youth Opportunities Unlimited

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LONDON ONTARIO

THE CENTRE OF OPPORTUNITY

REVIEW OF DRAFT 2026-2030 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

March 24, 2026

Vision

London is a globally recognized creative city with a diverse economy, a collaborative business culture, and strong connections to major markets. Fueled by innovation and a highly skilled workforce, London is known as the centre of opportunity, where progress never stops.

Mission

To position London for long-term prosperity by fostering a competitive, resilient, and inclusive economy through evidence-based decision making, focused investment and coordinated action.

Guiding Principles

Connecting current priorities: Our economic decisions will follow London's main plans and priorities, ensuring that workforce, housing, transportation, climate, and culture are all considered together.

Working together across the system: London's economic development partners will collaborate to reach shared goals, avoid duplication, fill gaps, and have each other's backs.

Promoting fairness and opportunity: We will remove obstacles and help people access jobs and start businesses, making sure all programs support both growth and fairness.

Encouraging bold new ideas: We will encourage trying new things, use facts and data to guide us, and expand what works well.

Being open and showing results: We will clearly say who is responsible for what, measure our progress, and share our results with the public to stay open and focused on making a difference.

Strategic Pillars

The five strategic pillars in this section define where the City of London, working together with economic development partners, can have the greatest impact on London's long-term economic future.



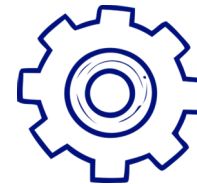
**Talent
and
Innovation**



**Investment
Attraction
and
Retention**



**Regional
Collaboration**



**Transportation
and
Access**



**System
Optimization**

Strategic Pillar 1 | Talent and Innovation

Objective

Attract, retain, and integrate the people needed for London's future economy by aligning employers, education, settlement, housing, and community supports to make London a welcoming, opportunity-rich place to live, work, and build a career or business.

Strategic Initiatives

Match in-demand talent needs with accessible training opportunities.

- Convene a Talent Working Group
- Develop a shared Workforce Navigation Map

Support retention of professionals, students, and diverse groups.

- Collaborate on shared targets, inclusion outcomes, and expanded supports
- Support student retention and career pathways

Strengthen London's innovation ecosystem.

- Establish a co-investment fund
- Inventory innovation and commercialization spaces
- Modernize development approvals

Strategic Pillar 2 | Investment Attraction and Retention

Objective

Create investment-ready conditions that help businesses choose London, grow, and reinvest by aligning site readiness, infrastructure, approvals, incentives, and sector support to strengthen competitiveness and long-term job creation.

Strategic Initiatives

Prioritize investment in sectors with competitive advantages.

- Maintain City-owned employment land
- Feasibility review of a Life Sciences Innovation Network
- Integrate creative and cultural industries into priority sector planning

Activate the downtown as an economic and cultural driver.

- Inventory underutilized downtown and commercial area sites
- Streamlined approvals for developments in downtown and in commercial areas
- Leverage UNESCO City of Music designation for economic growth
- Pilot a Small Business Resilience Program

Strengthen economic activity in commercial areas and corridors city-wide.

- Amend the City's Community Improvement Plan to introduce a targeted redevelopment incentive for priority commercial areas and corridors

Strategic Pillar 3 | **Regional Collaboration**

Objective

Position London as the coordinating hub and strategic integrator of the region's economy by aligning municipalities, Indigenous communities, post-secondary institutions, utilities, and regional organizations around shared priorities for energy readiness, trade resilience, talent, and innovation, and by advancing co-developed, large-scale initiatives that strengthen the region's competitiveness and resilience on a provincial, national, and global stage.

Strategic Initiatives

Strengthen relationships with regional municipalities and industry partners.

- Identify regionally significant employment sites and supply chain opportunities
- Coordinate trade-enabling infrastructure advocacy
- Co-develop a Southwestern Ontario investment marketing narrative

Build mutually beneficial economic partnerships with Indigenous communities.

- Dedicated, Indigenous-led economic engagement process
- Subject to the outcomes of the engagement above, and where Indigenous communities and organizations have expressed shared interest, explore equity partnerships

Strategic Pillar 4 | **Transportation and Access**

Objective

Ensure people, goods, and ideas can move easily within the city, across the region, and globally by integrating transit, roads, active transportation, digital infrastructure, and the airport with employment areas and growth priorities.

Strategic Initiatives

Pursue stronger air and rail access to and from London.

- Develop and implement an Air and Rail Connectivity Advocacy Strategy

Drive local and regional transportation improvements.

- Convene regional municipal and transit partners to advance coordinated mobility improvements

Position London as an aerospace innovation centre.

- Designate an Aerospace Innovation Zone
- Advocate for designation of the airport as a priority site for advanced aviation technology testing

Strategic Pillar 5 | **System Optimization**

Objective

Strengthen how the economic development ecosystem works by clarifying roles and partnerships, modernizing processes and digital services, and ensuring City investments and funded partners are aligned, accountable, and delivering strong returns for the community.

Enhance coordination and reduce fragmentation

- Establish an Economic Development Partnership Table
- Update funding agreements to clarify priorities, outcomes, and coordination expectations

Align internal processes to support economic development

- Deepen cross-departmental approval coordination
- Maintain and refine approval service standards, performance tracking, and data-driven continuous improvement practices
- Convene annual strategic alignment sessions

Improve data sharing and impact measurement

- Strengthen reporting and communications to give Council and the community greater visibility, including publication of an annual Economic Development Outcomes Report



Next steps



Appendices



APPENDIX A:

HOW THIS STRATEGY WAS BUILT

INTRODUCTION

A strategy is only as strong as the process behind it. The strategy is the product of a rigorous, evidence-based process that incorporated comprehensive research, sector analysis, and extensive community engagement. It demonstrates London’s commitment to transparency, collaboration, and community-driven progress. Most importantly, it shows how London is taking a bold, holistic approach that links economic growth to quality of life, resilience, and long-term prosperity for all.

The strategy is intentionally not generic. It is designed to reflect London’s specific context, leveraging the city’s competitive advantages and aligning with other municipal strategies to ensure a cohesive approach to economic growth. Each focus area and action is rooted in local realities and informed by community aspirations, sector insights, and lessons learned from past initiatives.

This section summarizes the methodology that shaped the decisions about London’s strategic approach to economic development. Detailed research findings are provided in Appendix B: Supporting Evidence, which presents the data and analysis that provide rationale for the strategic directions.

RESEARCH AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The development of this strategy was anchored in a comprehensive research program, combining quantitative analysis and qualitative insights. Key elements included:

- **Extensive document and policy review:** Over 34 existing strategies, studies, and reports were analyzed to understand the status of previously identified strategic objectives and initiatives to ensure alignment (and avoid duplication) with work already in progress. A summary of documents reviewed is provided in [Appendix C](#).
- **Sector and market analysis:** Detailed economic, demographic, workforce, and real estate data were collected and analyzed, including population growth trends, employment and business counts by sector and occupation, analysis of London’s leading sectors, and a review of industrial and office space market trends, including vacancy rates and investment patterns.
- **Discussion papers:** Four discussion papers were developed to explore the city’s macroeconomic trends, workforce and talent, sector competitiveness, and economic participation of underrepresented communities.
- **Community profile:** A comprehensive profile was created, synthesizing data from several sources to provide a current snapshot of London’s economic landscape.



- **Economic development ecosystem review:** A survey was conducted to assess services provided by economic development organizations, identify gaps, and analyze performance metrics.

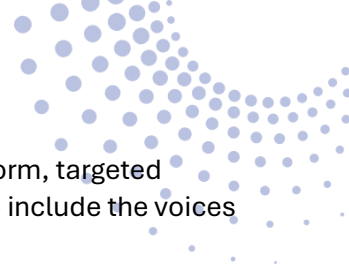
Aggregate research findings were on the City’s ‘Get Involved’ page: [Building Our Economy Together – A Snapshot of London’s Key Sectors](#) and [Research and Insight Briefing](#). This extensive research directly informed the engagement process by identifying key themes and gaps to explore, such as how to better harness innovation, infrastructure, culture, equity, and inclusion to grow London’s economy. It also guided the development of questions around evolving economic development approaches in response to shifting priorities and encouraged participants to consider bold bets or emerging opportunities that could transform London’s economic trajectory.

INCLUSIVE AND PURPOSEFUL ENGAGEMENT

A cornerstone of London’s economic development strategy is its commitment to meaningful, comprehensive engagement. The strategy was shaped not only by data and research, but by the lived experiences, aspirations, and insights of Londoners from many walks of life. The process was intentionally designed to be broad, inclusive, and purposeful, ensuring that the final strategy reflects the diversity and dynamism of the city itself.

More than 200 participants shared input through interviews, workshops, and roundtables. Each engagement stage was tailored to reach different audiences and gather a wide range of perspectives:

1. **Leadership interviews:** In-depth interviews were conducted with the Mayor and 12 of 14 City Councillors. These conversations explored London’s strengths, challenges, and future vision, and provided critical leadership perspectives that informed the strategy’s direction.
2. **Sector roundtables:** Five sector-specific roundtables brought together over 50 business leaders and industry organizations from London’s key economic sectors, including advanced manufacturing, digital and creative industries, education and public services, health and life sciences, and real estate/business services. These conversations revealed industry’s viewpoints on London’s advantages and barriers, cross-sector opportunities, and bold ideas for economic growth.
3. **Ecosystem roundtables:** Four ecosystem roundtables engaged more than 70 representatives from economic development organizations, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), small businesses, post-secondary institutions, and social impact groups. These discussions focused on practical challenges, service delivery improvements, and the vision for a more collaborative and integrated economic development ecosystem.
4. **City management visioning workshop:** London’s Senior Leadership Team participated in a 75-minute interactive workshop to define the City’s role in advancing economic growth. This session helped clarify the city’s vision and strategic focus areas.
5. **Online survey of economic development organizations:** A comprehensive survey was distributed to the leaders of 47 economic development organizations to hear their perspectives on London’s economic advantages and barriers to growth. Completed by 34 organizations, the survey provided data that was used to understand the strengths, gaps, and connections across the ecosystem, and identify opportunities for greater alignment and impact.



6. **Community engagement and public input:** Additional feedback was gathered through the City’s “Get Involved” online platform, targeted outreach to business leaders, and one-on-one interviews with economic development partners. Special efforts were made to include the voices of newcomers, youth, Indigenous organizations and businesses, the Francophone community, and equity-deserving groups.

The approach was intentionally structured to move beyond surface-level consultation. Each activity was designed to:

- Capture both consensus and divergent perspectives, ensuring that the strategy addresses real-world complexities.
- Provide space for underrepresented voices, including Require-deserving groups, small business owners, and community organizations.
- Link engagement findings directly to the strategy’s priorities, using frameworks such as SOARR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Risks, Results) to synthesize and organize input. (The detailed [SOARR analysis](#) is provided in this document under Appendix A).

Throughout the process, engagement was not a one-time event but an ongoing dialogue. Draft findings and emerging themes were shared back with participants for validation and refinement. This iterative approach ensured that the strategy remained grounded in community realities and responsive to new insights as they emerged.

The process established not only the content of the strategy, but also the relationships and trust needed for successful implementation. Mechanisms for ongoing partnership and feedback are embedded in the strategy, ensuring that London’s economic development efforts remain adaptive, transparent, and accountable to the community.

A BIG-PICTURE VIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development does not exist in a vacuum. This strategy is grounded in the concept of building a “whole” city, where economic prosperity both depends on and contributes to vitality in health and wellbeing, quality of place, and transportation. That’s why this strategy was developed in coordination with other city-building efforts, ensuring that economic development decisions complement and reinforce London’s broader priorities.

Engagement participants noted the many ways London’s economic development is intertwined with other city systems and priorities:

- **Workforce and housing:** Participants emphasized that attracting and retaining talent depends not only on job opportunities, but also on the availability of affordable housing, accessible childcare, and vibrant neighborhoods. Input highlighted the need to match workforce development efforts with improvements in livability and housing supply.
- **Transportation and connectivity:** Londoners repeatedly raised the importance of reliable transportation as foundational for economic growth. Input highlighted the need for efficient local transit to move people within the city, ensuring that workers can easily access jobs, services, and amenities. Participants also emphasized the value of strong transportation links between major cities, enabling businesses to connect with regional and national markets. Engagement sessions surfaced the need to align economic priorities with London’s mobility and infrastructure plans, supporting both local and intercity movement so that businesses and workers can move, connect, and grow efficiently.
- **Culture and creative industries:** In addition to creating direct employment opportunities for artists, performers, and technical staff, cultural industries also stimulate spending in hospitality, retail, and related services. Major events and productions draw visitors, enhance London’s



global reputation and designation as a UNESCO City of Music, and encourage investment, making culture a vital contributor to the city’s economic growth and resilience. Input underscored the importance of investing in cultural assets as an integral part of economic development.

- **Health and well-being:** Community members and partners noted that a healthy population is essential for a productive workforce and community vitality. Lack of access to mental health and addictions supports, safe public spaces, and adequate housing was repeatedly identified as barriers to business growth, particularly in the city’s downtown and commercial areas. Participants also emphasized the economic importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, noting that a workforce reflecting a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives cultivates innovation, resilience, and overall prosperity. Creating a welcoming community that fosters a sense of belonging for all residents is essential.

This input, gathered from a wide range of voices and perspectives, reinforced the need for a holistic, cross-system approach to economic development that recognizes and addresses the ripple effects of decisions across all aspects of city life.

This strategy is closely aligned with the City of London’s 2023–2027 Strategic Plan, specifically the priority area of “Economic Growth, Culture, and Prosperity.” City Council has set a clear direction: London should promote equitable economic growth and diversification and position itself as a destination of choice. Key objectives include supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs, increasing economic activity throughout the city and region, ensuring a consistent supply of serviced lands, and attracting and retaining both talent and investment.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGY DESIGN

London’s economic development strategy is built on a foundation of clear, deliberate choices and a commitment to long-term value for the community. The strategy is not simply a collection of good ideas or a wish list of projects. Instead, it is a focused, action-oriented plan that sets out London’s goals and priorities to drive sustainable growth, attract investment, create good jobs, and improve quality of life for all residents and businesses.

Developing an effective strategy means setting priorities that reflect London’s unique strengths and aspirations. By concentrating efforts where they will have the greatest impact, the city ensures that resources, policies, and partnerships are aligned to deliver measurable results. This disciplined approach enables London to create distinct value for the community, supporting progress that is both meaningful and sustainable.

- **Make choices:** Strategy is fundamentally about making clear, deliberate choices. London’s approach goes beyond improving day-to-day operations, focusing instead on the big decisions that will shape the city’s economic future. This means identifying the most promising opportunities and committing to them, while having the discipline to set aside initiatives that no longer align with current priorities.
- **Embrace trade-offs:** Good strategy requires accepting that not every opportunity can be pursued. London’s strategy acknowledges that trade-offs are necessary to maintain focus and achieve meaningful results. By concentrating efforts where they matter most, the city can deliver greater impact and avoid diluting resources.
- **Be unique:** London’s strategy is not about copying what works elsewhere. Instead, it leverages the city’s unique advantages such as its post-secondary education and health research leadership, distinction as Canada’s first UNESCO City of Music, and strong community partnerships to create value that is distinctly London. Differentiation is key. The strategy is designed to set London apart in ways that matter to its people and economy.

- **Align choices and actions:** Every strategic choice is reinforced by others, creating a clear pathway from aspiration to execution. This alignment ensures that resources are focused, efforts are synergistic, and progress is measurable. The strategy is designed so that each action supports the overall vision, making it easier to track results and adjust course as needed.

The choices that shaped this strategy's strategic pillars, goals, and actions were guided by a commitment to reflect London's unique strengths, address pressing challenges, and respond to the priorities voiced by the community. Decisions were influenced by clear evidence of where London holds competitive advantages, as well as where gaps and opportunities for improvement exist. Community values, such as inclusivity, innovation, and sustainability, played a central role in determining which goals would deliver the greatest benefit.

ENABLING ACTION AND MEASURING RESULTS

Actions were identified and prioritized based on their potential for measurable impact, alignment with community aspirations, and ability to build on London's existing strengths. Feasibility was also a key consideration, with priority given to actions that could realistically be implemented based on available resources, internal capabilities, and supportive external conditions.

The implementation framework was developed by mapping out the resources and systems needed to effectively execute the actions and monitor progress toward goals. A collaborative design session with City staff and ecosystem partners helped shape options for system design, including considerations for roles, governance structures, and accountability systems.

ANTICIPATING CHALLENGES

Rising global disruptions such as geopolitical uncertainties, the race to net-zero, and changing workforce expectations call for proactive risk management. The priorities identified in this strategy are fundamentally designed for resilience and agility. Continued economic diversification, innovation, and investment attraction will help to shield London's businesses from external shocks and maintain long-term growth. Risk considerations have also been identified for each set of actions, ensuring that London can anticipate, adapt to, and recover quickly from unexpected challenges.



APPENDIX B: SOARR ANALYSIS

The SOARR analysis framework is used to synthesize the key insights from research and engagement input to identify the London region's Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Risks, and desired Results. This structured approach enables a comprehensive assessment of economic landscape, helping to clarify strategic priorities and foster alignment among economic development organizations.

The following summary presents the major themes identified through the SOARR analysis, offering a clear and actionable overview to guide the next stages of strategy development and support London's vision for a resilient and prosperous future.

The information presented in the SOARR is drawn from background documents, policy reviews, municipal staff surveys, community feedback, and market research. Many of these detailed insights are included in the following appendices:

- Economic Development Ecosystem Review (See Appendix D)
- Discussion Papers (See Appendix E)
- Market Analysis and Comprehensive Community Profile (See Appendix F)

S	Strengths What are we doing well? What key achievements are we most proud of? What can we build on?	
O	Opportunities What our best possible future opportunities? What changes in demand can we expect in the future? What broader trends and policies may affect development and impact our aspirations?	
A	Aspirations What are we deeply passionate about and want to achieve? What difference do we hope to make for all?	
R	Risks What challenges do we need to be aware of? How will we recognize and mitigate or eliminate potential risks?	
R	Results How we know we are succeeding? What are the key goals we would like to accomplish to achieve these results?	

S

STRENGTHS

What are we doing well? What key achievements are we most proud of? What can we build on?

London stands out as a city of strategic opportunity, powered by its unique blend of location, talent, infrastructure, and community vitality.

Prime Location and Infrastructure

London's position at the heart of Southwestern Ontario between major urban centres like Toronto, Windsor, and Detroit, gives it access to major markets and talent. Its proximity to the 401/402 corridor makes London a natural destination for logistics, manufacturing, and business services. The city's industrial land development strategy is recognized as one of the best in Ontario, making it an attractive proposition for advanced manufacturing and related sectors.

Institutional Assets and Talent

London's major post-secondary institutions, Western University and Fanshawe College, along with leading healthcare organizations, serve as economic engines and sources of skilled talent. The city's diverse economy is anchored by strengths in manufacturing, agri-business, technology, and healthcare, supported by a robust workforce and a steady pipeline of students and graduates.

Community and Cultural Vitality

London's vibrant community is enriched by its strong relationships and cultural assets, including its designation as a UNESCO City of Music. This civic identity is further strengthened by thriving arts, culture, and heritage sectors, which drive innovation and community engagement. Housing affordability is also higher in London than in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

Population and Workforce Growth

London is experiencing rapid population growth, outpacing provincial averages and fueling a dynamic labour market. Employment has rebounded beyond pre-pandemic levels, with significant job growth in knowledge-based sectors such as Natural and Applied Sciences and Health. Health Care and Educational Services are leading employment sectors, with concentrations well above provincial norms.

Economic Dynamism and Entrepreneurship

Home to nearly 45,000 businesses, London reflects a vibrant entrepreneurial culture, with a high proportion of self-employed individuals and sole proprietorships. The city's expanding industrial space supports advanced manufacturing and logistics, positioning London for new investment and continued economic dynamism.

Urban Development and Quality of Life

Significant investment in downtown transformation, placemaking, and urban spaces such as Dundas Place and the Thames Valley Parkway enhances London's appeal. The expansion of sustainable transportation, cycling infrastructure, and mixed-use neighbourhoods further improves quality of life and urban vibrancy.



Collaboration and Community Engagement

London's collaborative spirit is evident in its partnerships with regional interest holders, post-secondary institutions, and Indigenous communities, fostering shared growth and cultural inclusion. Resident-led and community-driven projects, when well-resourced, demonstrate London's capacity for local innovation and ownership.

Governance and Planning

London benefits from successful leveraging of federal and municipal funding to support community safety, well-being, and infrastructure. Robust planning frameworks such as The London Plan and the Strategic Advocacy Framework provide clear priorities and evidence-based guidance for coordinated, long-term development.



OPPORTUNITIES

What are our best possible future opportunities? What changes in demand can we expect in the future? What broader trends and policies may affect development and impact our aspirations

London is well positioned to seize a range of exciting opportunities that will shape its next chapter of growth, innovation, and community vibrancy. By anticipating shifts in demand and responding to broader economic, technological, and societal trends, London’s civic, community, and business leaders can build a resilient, inclusive, and prosperous future.

Transforming Business Support and Economic Development

London can enhance its business environment by creating a “One Window - Team London” storefront to connect entrepreneurs and businesses with all available resources and supports. This approach will reduce fragmentation, improve access, and streamline support for startups and established firms alike. Building capacity in partner organizations and exploring innovative funding models can ensure sustainable, long-term economic development, reducing over-reliance on municipal funding.

Deepening Collaboration and Partnerships

There is significant potential to strengthen collaboration with Western University, Fanshawe College, and other educational institutions to leverage talent, research, and business incubation. Uniting City departments, surrounding communities, and leaders of key sectors such as agri-food, high-tech, and creative industries will maximize synergies, resource sharing, and collective impact.

Urban Evolution and Placemaking

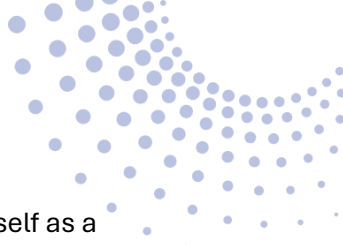
London’s downtown can become a vibrant, 24/7 destination by expanding activation efforts, enhancing safety and cleanliness, and encouraging mixed-use and residential development. Promoting adaptive reuse of heritage buildings and integrating sustainability goals into planning will reinforce London’s unique identity and environmental leadership.

Arts, Culture, and Heritage as Economic Drivers

Increasing affordable space for artists and entrepreneurs and better integrating arts, culture, and heritage into economic development plans will strengthen London’s sense of place. Reinvigorating community engagement and actively promoting the city’s history and neighbourhoods will foster pride and attract visitors and investment.

Talent Attraction and Retention

London can market its affordability, lifestyle amenities, and diverse neighbourhoods to attract and retain talent, students, and newcomers. Adopting modern, digital-first marketing strategies and leveraging influencers can elevate London’s brand and visibility, drawing new residents, visitors, and investors.



Creating a Vibrant and Welcoming Community

By closing gaps in branding and storytelling, London can more effectively communicate its strengths and opportunities, positioning itself as a welcoming, creative, and innovative city. Revitalizing the downtown and supporting small businesses are critical levers for economic renewal, while promoting inclusive growth will ensure that underrepresented groups, newcomers, and diverse entrepreneurs can fully participate in and contribute to the city's success.

Sector Growth and Innovation

London can leverage the expertise of its post-secondary institutions to drive innovation and talent development. Emerging sectors such as electric vehicles, modular construction, cold storage, and life sciences present new frontiers for growth. Creating districts for creative industries and life sciences will attract international investment and talent.

Skills Development and Infrastructure

Expanding technical training and attracting talent in trades, healthcare, and STEM fields will meet evolving workforce needs. Enhancing public transit and transportation infrastructure will support economic expansion and improve accessibility for all residents.

Strategic Investments and Partnerships

Prioritizing resilient and modern infrastructure, including climate adaptation, broadband, and utilities will future-proof London's economy. Strengthening partnerships with Indigenous communities and fostering regional collaboration will reduce competition and unlock new opportunities for shared growth.

Streamlined Business Support and Inclusive Growth

Establishing a one-stop storefront for business support and expanding social procurement and community benefit agreements will drive inclusive economic development. By adopting an ecosystem approach, London can strengthen economic outcomes and ensure all residents benefit from the city's growth.

A

ASPIRATIONS

What are we deeply passionate about and want to achieve? What difference do we hope to make for all?

London's aspirations reflect a deep passion for building a city where every resident thrives, every business can grow, and every neighbourhood is vibrant and welcoming. Guided by a shared vision, these aspirations were shaped and highlighted by the voices and insights gathered throughout the engagement process. London seeks to make a meaningful difference for all, now and for generations to come.

Leadership in Workforce Development and Innovation

London aspires to be recognized across Canada as a leader in workforce development, inclusive economic growth, and innovation. By fostering lifelong learning and adaptability, London will empower residents to succeed in a rapidly changing world and ensure that local talent drives our city's progress.

A Dynamic and Diversified Business Ecosystem

London is committed to nurturing a business environment that supports entrepreneurship, sector diversification, and global competitiveness. We envision a future where economic development services are well-coordinated, accessible, and responsive to the evolving needs of both small and large employers.

Inclusive Prosperity and Quality of Life

Above all, London seeks to ensure that all residents benefit from economic opportunities and enjoy an exceptional quality of life. We are passionate about creating a culturally vibrant and inclusive city that welcomes newcomers, celebrates diversity, and empowers everyone to reach their full potential.

Revitalized Urban Spaces and Community Vibrancy

London's downtown and urban neighbourhoods will be transformed into inclusive, safe, and economically vibrant communities. Through innovative placemaking, improved transit, and sustainable urban design, we aim to create spaces where people want to live, work, and connect.

Environmental Leadership and Sustainability

London is dedicated to environmental stewardship and sustainable development. By investing in green economy initiatives, renewable energy, and climate adaptation, London will lead the way in building a resilient city that protects natural resources and enhances well-being.

Strong, Resilient Partnerships

Londoners consulted in the development of this strategy believe in the power of collaboration locally, regionally, and nationally. London's future will be shaped by strong partnerships with post-secondary institutions, Indigenous communities, and ecosystem partners, working together to maximize opportunities and achieve shared goals.



Integrated and Accessible Urban Infrastructure

London aspires to create a seamless, efficient urban environment with integrated transit and transportation infrastructure, including enhanced intercity connectivity. Improved pedestrian access, cycling networks, and reliable public transit will ensure mobility for all.

Economic Diversity and Integration

Council and ecosystem partners envision an economy that is easy to navigate, supports businesses of all sizes, and attracts anchor firms in technology, life sciences, and manufacturing. London’s future will be defined by economic diversity, integration, and resilience.

Innovation, Collaboration, and Evidence-Based Leadership

London aspires to be a model for collaborative, evidence-based economic development. A unified “Team London” approach will ensure internal alignment and maximize external opportunities, driving growth in advanced manufacturing, technology, digital creative sectors, and public institutions.

R**RISKS**

What challenges do we need to be aware of? How will we recognize and mitigate or eliminate potential risks?

As London pursues a bold vision for inclusive growth and innovation, it must remain alert to a range of potential risks that could impact economic, social, and environmental progress. Recognizing these challenges will be critical to sustaining momentum and achieving long-term goals.

Workforce and Economic Risks

London faces ongoing workforce shortages and skills mismatches, which may persist if training and talent attraction efforts are not sufficiently scaled or targeted. The city's average income per job remains lower than the provincial average, potentially limiting economic mobility and competitiveness. Office vacancy rates signal demand-side weakness in commercial real estate, while economic vulnerability due to over-reliance on specific sectors or delayed diversification exposes London to external shocks.

Social and Community Risks

Unmet demand for workforce housing and inclusive growth threaten talent retention and social cohesion. Persistent social challenges particularly in the downtown, including homelessness, mental health, addiction, and public safety, can undermine community vibrancy. Social and economic inequities may hinder London's ability to attract and retain talent without intentional interventions.

Infrastructure and Ecosystem Risks

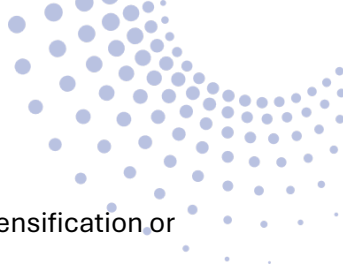
Potential delays or challenges in infrastructure development, such as broadband and transit projects, could impede accessibility and economic expansion. Fragmentation and siloed efforts among economic development organizations create inefficiencies and confusion for businesses. Limited resources or coordination for supporting entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem growth may constrain London's ability to respond to emerging opportunities.

Governance, Funding, and Adaptability Risks

Fluctuations in external funding and policy support can disrupt long-term planning and project delivery. Slow permitting, zoning inefficiencies, and fragmented business support processes may deter investment and sectoral growth. Lack of unified vision and coordination can dilute effectiveness and create inefficiencies, while engagement fatigue or disengagement may arise if progress is not clearly communicated and celebrated. Overly rigid regulations or reliance on one-time funding without sustainability may undermine long-term goals.

Competitive and Reputational Risks

Competition from other municipalities for investment, talent, and tourism may dilute London's market share. Insufficient marketing and unclear city identity risk losing talent and investment to competitor cities.



Environmental and Regulatory Risks

Environmental and climate risks may escalate if sustainability measures are not fully implemented. Resistance to change such as intensification or adoption of new standards may slow progress.

R**RESULTS**

How we know we are succeeding? What are the key goals we would like to accomplish to achieve these results?

London's commitment to inclusive growth, innovation, and community vibrancy will be reflected in clear, measurable outcomes. These results will demonstrate progress toward our aspirations and provide tangible evidence of success for residents, businesses, and partners.

Economic Growth and Workforce Development

Success will be evident through increased employment rates and reduced workforce gaps, with particular progress among youth, immigrants, and underrepresented groups. Growth in new business startups, expansions, and investments in priority sectors such as technology, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing will signal a thriving, diversified economy. The attraction and retention of anchor firms, along with higher rates of business survival and stability, will further reinforce London's economic resilience.

Downtown Revitalization and Urban Vibrancy

Enhanced downtown vibrancy will be seen in increased residential and commercial occupancy, lower vacancy rates, and a revitalized downtown. Successful creation and activation of sector-specific innovation and creative districts will contribute to a dynamic city centre that attracts talent, investment, and visitors.

Housing and Community Stability

Improved housing affordability and diversity will support community stability and regeneration, ensuring that all residents benefit from London's growth. Progress will be tracked through broader quality-of-life indicators, including safety, infrastructure quality, and overall community well-being.

Sustainability and Environmental Leadership

Measurable gains in sustainability metrics, such as reduced carbon emissions and expanded green space, will reflect London's leadership in environmental stewardship and climate action.

Tourism and Cultural Impact

Greater visitor numbers and increased tourism spending, driven by London's cultural and natural attractions, will showcase the city's appeal as a destination for residents and tourists alike.

Regional Integration and Collaboration

Strengthened regional economic integration and collaborative initiatives will highlight London's role as a leader in partnership and shared prosperity across Southwestern Ontario.

Transportation and Accessibility

A well-connected, accessible, and efficient transportation network will enable greater mobility for all, supporting economic activity and quality of life.



Business Support and Professional Development

Increased participation in business support and professional development programs will demonstrate London's commitment to entrepreneurship, innovation, and workforce advancement.

Public Perception and Advocacy

An enhanced public perception of London as a destination for talent, investment, and tourism will be achieved through effective communication and branding. Demonstrated impact of advocacy efforts will be reflected in secured funding, policy advancements, and strategic planning successes.

Inclusivity and Community Well-Being

Progress will be measured through metrics on support for diverse entrepreneurs, inclusive growth, and reductions in poverty and unemployment. London's success will also be gauged by improvements in community well-being, safety, and infrastructure quality.

Data-Driven Decision Making

Enhanced data dashboards and communication strategies will enable transparent tracking of progress, ensuring that London's achievements are visible, celebrated, and continually improved.



APPENDIX C: PLANS AND STRATEGIES REVIEWED

- London’s Community Economic Road Map (2015)
- Industrial Land Development Strategy (2023)
- London Plan and all relevant secondary plans
 - The London Plan - Our City
 - The London Plan - Our Strategy
 - The London Plan - Our Tools
- Annual development reports for past five years
- Economic development updates and reports to Council for past three years
- London’s Downtown Plan (2015)
- Sector profile reports from London Economic Development
- London Music Strategy (2014)
- 2023-2027 City of London Strategic Plan
- Corporate Asset Management Plan
- Strategic Financial Framework (2023)
- Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (2021)
- Climate Emergency Action Plan (2022)
- London Invasive Plant Management Strategy (2020)
- Our City, Our Culture: Cultural Prosperity Plan (2018)
- Cycling Master Plan (2016)
- Housing Stability for All Plan (2019)
- London Newcomer Strategy 2024-2028
- London Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2019)
- 2030 Transportation Master Plan (2013)
- London Economic Development Corporation Strategic Plan 2021-2025
- Workplace Equity and Inclusion Action Plan 2024-2027
- London for All: A Roadmap to End Poverty (2016)
- Community Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2017)
- London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership 2022-2025 Strategic Plan
- Media articles related to economic development initiatives
- Updates and reports from LEDC
- Updates and reports from TechAlliance
- Updates and reports from Small Business Centre
- Updates and reports from Downtown London
- Middlesex County Economic Development Strategy
- London Medical Innovation & Commercialization Network Strategic Plan – Executive Summary
- Mediating Innovation Policy Delivery, The Regional Innovation Centres of Ontario



APPENDIX D: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM REVIEW

London’s economic development ecosystem is marked by both impressive strengths and clear opportunities for improvement. Deloitte’s comprehensive review, which engaged 34 leading organizations across business, culture, workforce, and innovation sectors, revealed a diverse and collaborative network anchored by major institutions and a vibrant small business community. Respondents highlighted London’s unique assets, such as its UNESCO City of Music designation, strong post-secondary institutions, and integrated business support services, as key drivers of talent, innovation, and economic growth.

However, the analysis also surfaced ongoing challenges: fragmentation and duplication of services, limited data sharing, and insufficient integration of cultural, nonprofit, and equity-seeking groups. Many organizations called for stronger cross-sector collaboration, unified branding, and streamlined processes to reduce silos and maximize collective impact. Network analysis further underscored the need for more effective coordination¹ and brokerage² roles to bridge communities and ensure all sectors contribute to London’s economic prosperity. These findings point to significant opportunities for London to build a more connected, inclusive, and high-performing economic development ecosystem.

METHODOLOGY

A confidential online survey was distributed to executive directors and leaders of 47 economic development organizations, as validated by the project’s Economic Advisory Panel. The survey sought to evaluate existing service levels, uncover service gaps, and explore how organizations measure performance, while also gaining a deeper understanding of collaboration and coordination within the ecosystem. Survey respondents were also asked to share perspectives on the strengths and challenges facing London’s economic growth and to share their perspectives on the strengths, gaps, or opportunities across London’s economic development ecosystem.

Responses were collected between July 8 and September 16, 2025. Organizations were contacted by email and were invited to complete the survey to provide their perspectives as an important part of the economic development ecosystem in London, and that a summary of themes would be used as an input to the development of London’s Economic Development Strategy. After the initial email was sent in early July, reminder emails were sent to those organizations that had not yet completed the survey in mid-August and in late August. The survey was completed by 34 organizations.

¹ See Glossary for definitions.

² Ibid.



ECOSYSTEM STRENGTHS

Survey respondents highlighted several strengths within London’s economic development ecosystem. They pointed to the city’s diverse economic base, including manufacturing, health, technology, education, and a vibrant cultural and tourism sector. Key institutions such as Western University, Fanshawe College, LEDC, and TechAlliance were frequently cited as “fueling talent, research, and innovation.”

Respondents also recognized the impact of established business support organizations and a “very strong small-business community, when supported and rallied together,” as well as the city’s unique assets like the UNESCO City of Music designation. One respondent noted, “The London Region currently has the largest group of manufacturers in North America working together to help each other continuously improve.” The presence of “integration between services and interest holders” was also mentioned as a foundation to build upon.

GAPS AND DUPLICATION

Respondents from nonprofit and cultural sectors felt that they are “often not viewed as part of the business or economic community,” despite their significant contributions. Other identified gaps included limited data sharing, insufficiently integrated impact measurement, administrative red tape, and a pressing need for investment in downtown revitalization and public transit. As one respondent observed, “There is a gap in communicating the vision and the driver economic growth can be.”

Fragmentation and overlapping mandates among agencies were seen as leading to “siloefforts, duplication, and missed opportunities to support inclusive growth, workforce development, and underserved entrepreneurs.” Respondents pointed to a “lack of enriched, deep collaboration between Music, Film, Arts,” and a “need to build inclusive entrepreneurship pipelines, more startup support to recognize diverse population and increasing complexities of starting a business.”

OPPORTUNITIES FOR BETTER COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT, AND IMPACT

Respondents saw many opportunities to improve coordination, alignment, and impact across London’s ecosystem. They advocated for “stronger collaboration between larger economic development organizations and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs)” and for bringing “more of us in these sectors to the table to best figure out the way forward for the betterment of our community.” Opportunities were seen in the development of city-wide strategies, data sharing, joint investments, and “regular cross-sector roundtables to drive inclusive growth, reduce silos, and build a resilient local economy.”

Many pointed to the potential of London’s UNESCO City of Music designation, with one respondent stating, “There is a massive opportunity in London around our unique one-of-a-kind UNESCO City of Music designation. This is what separates us from other Canadian and Ontario cities. We need to lean into this identity and separate ourselves.” Respondents emphasized the need for “a unified brand” and “more intentional inclusion strategies, ensuring London’s growth is sustainable, coordinated, and equitable.”

Other suggestions included establishing one point of contact to help individuals, business owners, investors and smaller developers navigate services and processes, and more alignment of economic development organizations (e.g., Tech Alliance, Small Business Centre, LEDC, Tourism London, Chamber of Commerce) to avoid duplication, clarify roles, and enhance collaborative planning and implementation.



MANDATES AND OBJECTIVES

Shared mandates can have significant positive impacts when collaboration and shared resources are used to leverage diverse expertise and networks. However, alignment of effort is essential to minimize duplication, fill service gaps, and create a stronger, more resilient economic ecosystem. When organizations are not aligned, overlap presents risks, such as potential competition for funding, confusion about roles and responsibilities, and the possibility of fragmented or duplicated efforts. To maximize the benefits and minimize the risks, clear communication, defined roles, and ongoing collaboration are essential.

Survey respondents identified the objectives that they pursued, either as a core function of their organizational mandate or through a supporting role. Economic development objectives are shared by multiple organizations across London’s ecosystem. There also appears to be a tendency toward generalization rather than specialization or focus, with most organizations reporting multiple “core” and “supporting” objectives. To anonymise survey responses in this section of the report, organizations are randomly ordered and identified by a letter.

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION (BR&E)

As illustrated in the table below, 14 organizations (dark green) indicated that business retention and expansion was part of their core mandate. An additional 13 organizations (light green) indicated a supporting role. This broadly shared objective presents an opportunity to develop a coordinated BR&E visitation program that would use a standardized interview format and centralized data collection and analysis. Such a program would provide sector-level insights and open opportunities to connect individual businesses to resources needed to address issues and support growth.

“Opportunities exist to strengthen collaboration through city-wide strategies, data sharing, joint investments, and regular cross-sector roundtables to drive inclusive growth, reduce silos, and build a resilient local economy.” – survey respondent

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	BB	CC	DD	EE	FF	GG	HH		

BUSINESS ATTRACTION AND INVESTMENT

The table below shows that eight organizations (dark blue) indicated that business attraction and investment is part of their core mandate, with another 16 organizations (light blue) indicating a supporting role. Survey responses indicated a desire for more support related to investment attraction, such as incentives, streamlined processes, and improved branding. Creating an investment attraction task force made up of organizations such as LEDC, TechAlliance, BIAs, sector leaders, and culture organizations can ensure that investment attraction efforts are aligned. An investment attraction fund could provide resources for organizations to receive training and participate in trade shows.

“London’s branding currently lacks cohesive messaging. A unified brand (such as positioning London as a centre of innovation and culture) could significantly strengthen investment attraction.” – survey respondent

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	BB	CC	DD	EE	FF	GG	HH			



ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Support for entrepreneurship and business development is a niche focus area. As shown in the table below, just eight organizations (deep yellow) indicate this as part of their core mandate, and an additional 20 organizations (light yellow) indicate they support this objective. Navigating the broad range of services across London’s economic development ecosystem could be challenging. A central point of access, such as London Small Business Centre or the City’s Business Support Services team, could help connect entrepreneurs and established businesses to services and programs. This could be further enhanced through co-location of organizations.

“We need support for creative sector start-ups. People need support to build their creative industry businesses in London. These are the early adopters that will drive the change needed!”– survey respondent

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	BB	CC	DD	EE	FF	GG	HH		

CULTURE, TOURISM, FILM, AND MUSIC INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

The 14 organizations (deep pink) that identified cultural industry development as part of their core mandate were united in their call for more investment in leveraging cultural designations. Organizations such as Film London (under LEDC), London Music Office, London Arts Council, London Chamber of Commerce, RBC Place London, Nokee Kwe, Western Fair Association and Tourism London possess a collective wealth of expertise that can be employed in improving support for creative start-ups, enhancing marketing initiatives, while the City can play a role in providing supporting infrastructure and fostering a more “culture-friendly” regulatory environment.

“Cultural investment remains low relative to peer cities. London’s UNESCO City of Music status has largely gone unattended to and increased municipal investment, and planning is essential to fully leverage cultural opportunities. London needs a ‘culture friendly’ regulatory and licensing environment... I’m sure it’s well known to Deloitte how cities have leveraged their cultural amenities to attract businesses. Cities like Austin have achieved near economic miracles by doing this. Why is culture not promoted? Why do we not work harder to revitalize our downtown? This may represent one of the single most important underutilized opportunities.” – survey respondent

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	BB	CC	DD	EE	FF	GG	HH		



INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As shown in the table below, a commitment to inclusivity and sustainable economic development was shared by nearly all survey respondents, with 16 organizations (deep orange) indicating that this priority is part of their core mandate. The City of London can serve as a convener and catalyst within the broader economic development ecosystem by championing pilot projects that demonstrate impact.

“To build a resilient economy, we must prioritize initiatives that support marginalized populations, create green jobs, and foster long-term community health.” – survey respondent

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	BB	CC	DD	EE	FF	GG	HH		

DOWNTOWN OR COMMERCIAL DISTRICT REVITALIZATION

Organizations focused on downtown or commercial district revitalization as a core mandate (deep gray) include BIAs and creative industry organizations, with support from several other organizations. Collaboration is key in creating vibrant commercial areas activated by creative entrepreneurs and cultural programming. Identifying the required enabling capabilities such as inclusive and sustainable regulations and policies, supporting infrastructure, and operational support is an essential foundational step toward.

“Investing in our downtown means investing in the city’s future, attracting talent, supporting local businesses, and enhancing quality of life.” – survey respondent

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	BB	CC	DD	EE	FF	GG	HH		



POLICY ADVOCACY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As shown in the table below, 16 economic development organizations (deep red) indicated that policy advocacy was a core mandate. This objective was reported across organizations that provide business support, employment programs, and commercial district development services, which see policy advocacy as key to building equitable, inclusive and sustainable communities.

“Policy advocacy is the catalyst for meaningful change, turning ideas into action and aspirations into reality.” – survey respondent

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	BB	CC	DD	EE	FF	GG	HH		



ECOSYSTEM NETWORK ANALYSIS

An ecosystem network analysis was conducted to examine the web of relationships and interactions among organizations within the ecosystem. Each survey respondent was asked to select up to 10 economic development organizations that helped carry out their organization’s mandate and then to describe the frequency of contact and the closeness of their connection.

The analysis focused on understanding the interactions between organizations delivering economic development services in the region, highlighting key players, and pinpointing areas of overlap or unmet need. By mapping these connections, the analysis provides valuable insights into how information, resources, and influence circulate, as well as the roles that different organizations play in fostering collaboration and driving outcomes.

Three key network metrics³ were used to analyse London’s economic development ecosystem:

1. **Centrality** is a measure of the number of connections each organization has across the network. The most connected organizations are often more important or influential.
2. **Communities** are clusters of organizations that are more densely connected to each other than to the rest of the network.
3. **Brokerage** identifies organizations that connect otherwise disconnected groups, helping information flow between them.

These metrics were then visualized to reveal the underlying patterns of relationships and interactions among organizations within the ecosystem. The network, as visualized in Figure 1, provides a clear picture of how information, resources, and influence flow throughout the network. This visual approach transforms complex relational data into actionable insights, supporting more informed decision-making and strategic planning. It helps to understand which organizations are key players, where there are strong partnerships, and where improvements could be made.

London’s network visualization features a dense central area that suggests a core network where **collaboration or communication is strong**. Most organizations (represented as dots, or ‘**nodes**’) are interconnected through multiple cross-community ties (represented as lines, or ‘**edges**’), pointing to a collaborative and integrated ecosystem.

Larger nodes (dots) indicate organizations that have the greatest number of connections with other organizations, making them potentially more influential within the network. Edge (line) length indicates the closeness between organizations, with short connections indicating a very close or direct relationship, and longer edges indicating more distant connections.

Organizations located near the centre of the network (e.g., London Small Business Centre, Pillar Nonprofit Network, The Grove at Western Fair, and Western University) function as key ecosystem conveners that maintain numerous direct connections that are integral to the flow of information, resources, and collaboration. Their central location suggests they are critical to the network’s cohesion and effectiveness, and changes to their participation or connectivity could have a significant impact on the overall functioning of the ecosystem.

³ See Glossary for additional definitions.

Figure 1 illustrates the network of relationships among a sample of organizations within London’s economic development ecosystem. Each node represents an organization, and connections show where organizations reported frequent collaboration, coordination, or information sharing. Nodes are coloured to reflect clustering patterns, indicating groups of organizations that are more closely connected and tend to work together around related mandates or functions.

The visualization highlights four distinct clusters across the network. Organizations named within each cluster are provided as examples to add context and support understanding of the analysis results, recognizing that the visualization reflects a broader set of surveyed organizations.

Further detail on these clusters and the organizations within them is provided in the Communities analysis.



Fig.1: London’s Economic Development Ecosystem Network

Community 1: Culture, tourism, and neighbourhood organizations

Examples

- Business improvement Areas
- Downtown London Business Association
- London Arts Council
- London Heritage Council
- London Music Office
- Museum London
- Tourism London

Community 2 – Business support, entrepreneurship, and innovation

Examples

- Community Futures Western Ontario
- London Chamber of Commerce
- London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC)
- London International Airport
- London Small Business Centre
- TechAlliance

Community 3 – Workforce development and industry support

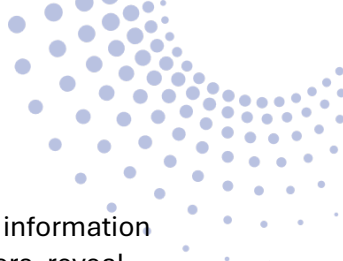
Examples

- Cross Cultural Learner Centre (CCLC)
- Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board
- London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership
- London Development Institute
- London Training Centre
- London Region Manufacturing Council

Community 4 – Cross-sector initiatives

Examples

- Film London
- London Community Foundation
- London Environmental Network
- Nokee Kwe
- Pillar Nonprofit Network
- RBC Place - London Convention Centre
- Western University



CENTRALITY

Centrality is a network analysis metric that helps to identify which organizations are most significant in terms of connectivity, control, information sharing, or influence on other organizations within the network. Measuring centrality is important because it helps to identify key players, reveal vulnerabilities, and inform strategy and resource allocation.

In the visualization of London’s economic development ecosystem network, organizations that have a greater number of incoming connections are indicated by larger node sizes. This ‘degree centrality’ is an indication of the number of times an organization was identified by other organizations as one they frequently work with or reach out to for advice or collaboration on ideas or initiatives. It is essential to note that this measure is not an indication of an organization’s effectiveness in service delivery, but merely an indication of its relationships with other economic development organizations.

Examples of organizations with the greatest measure of ‘degree centrality’ in London’s network were:

- Western University
- Fanshawe College
- London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC)
- Pillar Nonprofit Network
- London Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism London
- Downtown London Business Association
- London Arts Council
- London Small Business Centre
- The Grove at Western Fair / Western Fair Association
- London Community Foundation
- London Music Office



Peripheral nodes (outer edges) are more **isolated actors** in the ecosystem. Many of these organizations are highly specialized in their focus, which might naturally result in fewer network connections. Other less specialized organizations located at the periphery may be focused on client-facing relationships, or they may have difficulty making connections across the ecosystem.

Notably, organizations that are least connected across London’s economic development network include organizations that:

- Provide **employment supports for Indigenous people** and for people with disabilities
- Provide **financing for small businesses**
- Improve and promote **commercial districts**

Integrating these organizations more fully in the network is needed to address inequity, optimize service delivery, and improve outcomes for small businesses.

“There are coordination gaps among agencies, BIAs, and grassroots groups, resulting in siloed efforts, duplication, and missed opportunities to support inclusive growth, workforce development, and underserved entrepreneurs across London (i.e. racialized communities, youth, newcomers).” – survey respondent



COMMUNITIES

Nodes are coloured to indicate membership in **communities** (or clusters) of organizations that are more closely connected to each other than the rest of the network, revealing subgroups with strong internal collaboration or shared interests. Four communities emerged in the network visualization. Understanding community structure helps identify how subnetworks of organizations work together and across the network.

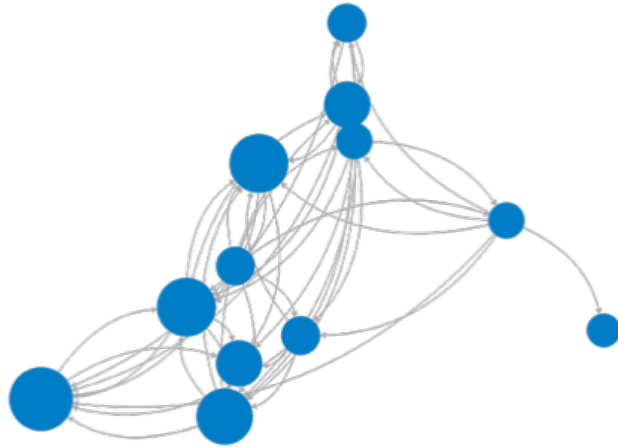
In our network analysis, the communities that emerged were not defined or grouped based on organizational mandate or formal roles. Instead, community detection was driven by patterns of interaction, specifically, the closeness and frequency of connections between entities. This means that organizations were clustered together because they interacted more frequently or closely with each other within the network, regardless of their stated purpose or mandate.

We conducted a further review of the composition of each community, which revealed that, although the communities were formed based on interaction patterns, many of them also shared a common organizational mandate. In other words, while mandate was not the basis for grouping, it often emerged as a shared feature within the communities, suggesting that organizations with similar mandates tend to interact more closely.

This observation highlights an important dynamic within the ecosystem: informal collaboration and mutual interests often reinforce formal organizational mandates, even when grouping is not explicitly based on these criteria. For example, organizations focused on workforce development or business support may naturally gravitate toward each other due to shared activities, target populations, or common challenges. As a result, these interaction-driven communities can become powerful engines for coordinated action, knowledge sharing, and resource pooling within their respective domains.

However, the presence of distinct communities also underscores the importance of fostering connections across these clusters to prevent fragmentation and ensure the broader ecosystem functions cohesively. Without deliberate efforts to bridge communities, valuable insights, innovations, and resources may remain siloed within subgroups, limiting the potential for cross-sector collaboration and collective impact. Recognizing both the strengths and limitations of these naturally occurring communities provides a foundation for targeted interventions, such as cross-community working groups or joint initiatives, that can enhance connectivity, reduce duplication, and drive more integrated progress across London's economic development network.

Community 1 – Culture, tourism, and neighbourhood organizations



Examples

- Business improvement Areas
- Downtown London Business Association
- London Arts Council
- London Heritage Council
- London Music Office
- Museum London
- Tourism London

The network analysis shows that this community is highly interdependent, with frequent interaction and exchange of information. Organizations are well connected within the community, with many reciprocal links among nodes. However, this community is not well-integrated with the greater economic development ecosystem, undermining the potential for these organizations to contribute to London’s economic growth through innovative partnerships aimed at addressing London’s challenges and capitalizing on strengths. As one survey respondent noted, the ecosystem should “consider a broader definition of economic development. Include culture, heritage and the arts, as these types of services help drive economic development in very meaningful ways.”

This community is especially distanced from Community 3 (workforce development and industry support); stronger connections could support labour needs associated with hospitality, arts, and small neighbourhood businesses.

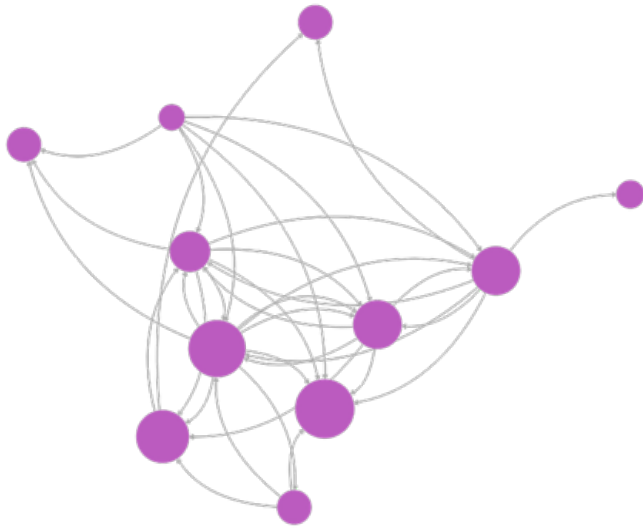
Survey respondents in Community 1 suggested the following approaches to support London’s economic growth:

- **Stronger communication, collaboration, and inclusion:** Respondents consistently called for improved, transparent, and regular communication among City staff, BIAs, economic development agencies, and grassroots/community organizations. They identified a need for mechanisms that break down silos, foster cross-sector collaboration, and continue ensuring all voices, especially those of small businesses, cultural groups, and underrepresented communities, are included in decision-making and planning.
- **Strategic integration and leveraging of cultural assets:** There is a strong desire to see London’s arts, culture, and heritage sectors more fully integrated into economic development strategies. Organizations in this community want the city to leverage its unique strengths, such as its UNESCO City of Music designation, to build a clear and compelling identity that differentiates London, attracts investment, and retains talent.
- **Support for inclusive growth and infrastructure investment:** Respondents highlighted the need for targeted support for small businesses, creative sector start-ups, and marginalized groups. They also emphasized the importance of revitalizing downtown and main streets, enhancing public transit

and connectivity, and investing in both physical and social infrastructure. Programs to retain local graduates and foster workforce development are also seen as critical.

- **Addressing social and public safety issues:** Culture, tourism, and neighbourhood organizations emphasized a pressing need for coordinated strategies to address homelessness, mental health, and public safety challenges, to create a safer, more attractive environment for businesses, residents, and visitors, especially in the downtown.
- **Streamlined processes and clear points of contact:** Respondents expressed frustration with bureaucratic barriers and a lack of clarity in City processes. They would like a more welcoming, efficient, and accessible system for navigating city services, obtaining permits, and accessing economic development support.

Community 2 – Business support, entrepreneurship, and innovation



Examples

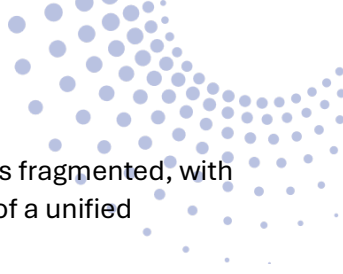
- The Business Help Centre (CFDC) of Middlesex
- The Grove at Western Fair/Western Fair Association
- Community Futures Western Ontario
- London Chamber of Commerce
- London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC)
- London International Airport
- London Small Business Centre
- TechAlliance

Community 2 stands out for its strong integration across the entire network. Made up of organizations supporting **small business, entrepreneurship, and innovation** (including key players such as Fanshawe College, LEDC, London Chamber of Commerce, The Grove at Western Fair, London Small Business Centre, and TechAlliance), this community acts as a central connector, facilitating collaboration and information flow throughout the ecosystem.

However, some organizations appear to operate at the margins, and could be better integrated if London chooses to cultivate a regional leadership role. Community 2 could also be encouraged to reach out to Community 1 (culture, tourism, and neighbourhood organizations) and Community 3 (workforce development and industry support) to act as an ambassador and to build stronger relationships across the broader ecosystem.

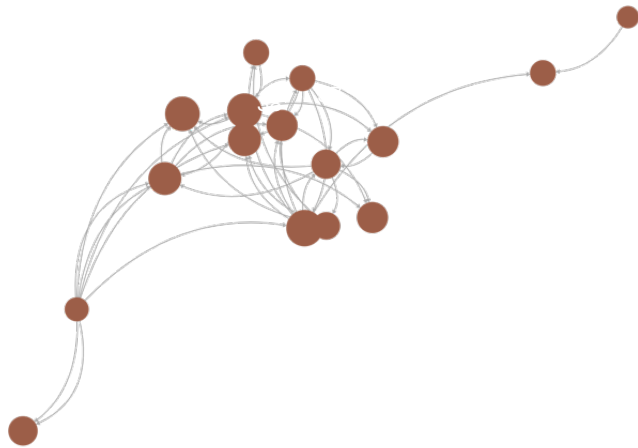
For Community 2, London can optimize economic growth through the following ways:

- **Leveraging priority sector strengths and innovation:** Survey respondents representing this network subgroup highlighted London’s strengths in Health and Life Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing, Agri-food, Digital Media and Technology, and the UNESCO City of Music designation. Respondents suggest that leveraging this diversity, along with a well-educated talent pool and strong supply chains, can drive resilience and growth. London’s strong academic and research network, anchored by Western University, Fanshawe College, and major hospitals, were seen as a foundation for innovation and talent development.
- **Talent development, attraction, and retention:** Respondents expressed concern about an aging workforce and talent shortages. Many emphasized the importance of retaining youth, attracting new talent (especially immigrants), and ensuring that educational institutions align with workforce needs. There was also a strong call to remove barriers for equity-deserving groups and to support inclusive entrepreneurship.



- **Collaboration, coordination, and ecosystem alignment:** Many respondents described the economic development ecosystem as fragmented, with siloed organizations and duplicated programs. They called for greater coordination, improved data sharing, and the development of a unified economic strategy across London’s municipal departments, agencies, and community partners.
- **Infrastructure, housing, and transit:** Respondents frequently identified infrastructure gaps, especially in public transit, connectivity, and affordable housing, as significant barriers to economic growth, workforce mobility, and talent attraction and retention.
- **Inclusive growth and addressing social challenges:** A recurring theme among respondents in Community 2 was the need to address persistent barriers for racialized, newcomer, and Indigenous communities, as well as a critical need for interventions in homelessness, mental health, and addictions. Respondents emphasized the importance of inclusive strategies and investments in social infrastructure to support economic growth.

Community 3 – Workforce development and industry support



Examples

- Cross Cultural Learner Centre (CCLC)
- Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board
- London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership
- London Development Institute
- London Training Centre
- London Region Manufacturing Council

Community 3 is loosely connected, both internally and across the ecosystem. The organizations in this community are largely focused on **workforce development and industry support**. Many of these organizations specifically serve newcomers and equity-seeking groups, making their limited integration a missed opportunity for advancing sustainable and equitable economic development. London Training Centre is the organization in this community that is closest to the centre of the economic ecosystem. The school boards are also well connected within this community.

Notably, the connection between these organizations and the culture, tourism and neighbourhood organizations in Community 1 is particularly weak. Stronger collaboration within this community and with other sectors could maximize resources, reduce duplication of efforts, align workforce training with industry needs, and facilitate access to opportunities for underrepresented populations, ultimately supporting a more inclusive and resilient local economy.

Organizations in Community 3 suggested the following opportunities to optimize economic development services:

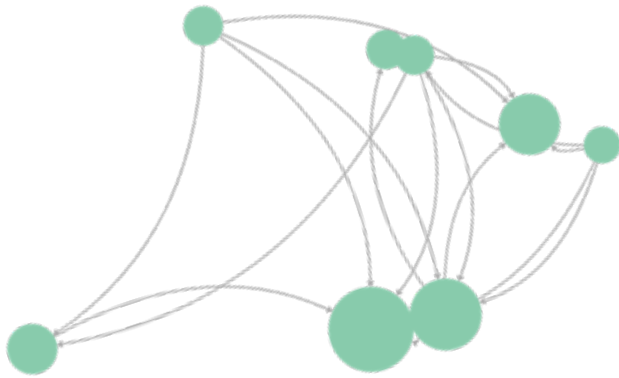
- 1. Support for newcomers and inclusive entrepreneurship:** Respondents highlighted the value of investing in newcomer entrepreneurship as a driver for job creation and economic growth. There is recognition that supporting diverse entrepreneurs will broaden economic opportunities.
- 2. Workforce development and skills alignment:** There is a strong emphasis on increasing awareness of in-demand sectors, improving pathways to apprenticeships, and supporting upskilling. Respondents noted that a skilled workforce is critical to economic vitality, and that more support is needed for workforce development and skills training.
- 3. Communication and vision:** While some respondents feel coordination among service providers is satisfactory, there is a perceived gap in clearly communicating a shared vision for economic growth and ensuring all economic development organizations understand and contribute to it.



4. Collaboration and employer engagement: Respondents noted the importance of ongoing collaboration between economic development organizations, employers, and industry groups. Increased input and consultation with employers, as well as strong relationships between organizations, were seen as key strengths that should be further leveraged.

5. Accessible and responsive municipal services: Several comments pointed to the need for City Hall and related agencies to be more accessible, responsive, and business-friendly. Reducing barriers and improving the ease of doing business were identified as opportunities for enhancing service delivery.

Community 4 – Cross-sector initiatives



Examples

- Film London (Run by LEDC)
- London Community Foundation
- London Environmental Network
- Nokee Kwe
- Pillar Nonprofit Network
- RBC Place - London Convention Centre
- Western University

Community 4 is composed of organizations that, while not strongly connected to each other, have connections across the broader ecosystem that allow them to access and contribute to **cross-sector initiatives**. Western University and Pillar Nonprofit Network are strongly connected across the ecosystem, but other organizations in this community appear to work in relative isolation. Community 4 organizations could reach out to Community 3 (workforce development and industry support) to help them build stronger relationships with the broader ecosystem.

Community 4 organizations offered the following perspectives on optimizing the ecosystem:

- **Centralized leadership and coordination:** Respondents emphasized the need for a single, centralized economic development agency to oversee the ecosystem. This would minimize overlap, improve efficiency, and enable more strategic, unified action across the city’s economic development activities.
- **Sector-specific strategies and support:** There is strong support for focused strategies in key sectors such as creative industries (music, film, arts, gaming), tourism, and technology. Suggestions include establishing dedicated teams or incubators/accelerators to nurture sector growth and ensure these industries are integral to economic development plans.
- **Recognition and integration of small business and nonprofit sectors:** Respondents highlighted the significant contributions of small businesses and nonprofits to London’s economy. They advocated for greater recognition, support, and integration of these sectors into broader economic development strategies, particularly in light of recent reductions in partnership and grant programs.
- **Cross-sector collaboration and inclusion:** There is a call for stronger collaboration between employers, educational institutions, nonprofits, and government. Respondents see value in cross-sector partnerships that link economic, social, and infrastructure planning, and in intentional efforts to include small businesses, equity-deserving groups, and Indigenous communities in economic growth.

- **Strategic marketing and rebranding:** Respondents identified coordinated marketing and rebranding initiatives as important for attracting visitors, talent, and investment. Positioning London as a centre for culture, entertainment, and innovation is seen as a way to enhance the city’s profile and economic prospects.

“From a creative industries perspective, London can and should develop a centralized Culture & Creative Industries team with a strong focus on economic development and job creation. The team can create an economic strategy, identify and implement goals, and collaborate with community partners/service providers. They can work towards rebranding London as a hub for culture, entertainment, and the broader creative industries. From a tech standpoint, London can work towards the development of a tech incubator/accelerator space, similar in scope to Communitel and Invest Ottawa.” – survey respondent



BROKERAGE

In network theory, brokerage refers to the ways in which certain actors (nodes) facilitate connections between otherwise disconnected individuals or groups. There are several distinct types of brokerage roles, each with unique functions in a network. The absence of any one brokerage role within a community network can have significant consequences for the community's cohesion, efficiency, and ability to adapt. Here are the main types and their roles:

- **Gatekeepers**⁴ control the flow of information or resources *from outside the community into the community*, screening or translating external information before it reaches the internal group. A lack of gatekeepers means that groups may be inundated with irrelevant or excessive external information, making them more vulnerable to misinformation and less able to strategically select valuable inputs from outside.
- **Representatives** act as the point of contact for their community to external parties, representing the community's interests by channeling information or resources *from the community to outsiders*. If representatives are missing, the group's interests and perspectives may not be effectively communicated or advocated for in broader community or policy discussions, resulting in reduced influence and missed opportunities for external support or partnerships.
- **Coordinators** connect members within the same community, facilitating collaboration or communication *within* a single community. Without coordinators, collaboration and communication within individual communities can suffer, leading to silos, misunderstandings, and duplicated efforts that ultimately weaken group performance and morale.
- **Liaisons** connect two actors from different communities but are not member of either community. Without liaisons to bridge diverse groups or sectors, the community can become fragmented and isolated, with less integration and more duplication of efforts. This lack of cross-community connectivity also reduces the community's ability to mobilize collective action or respond effectively to complex, cross-cutting challenges.

⁴ In network theory, the term “gatekeeper” is descriptive rather than evaluative. It refers to an organization or actor that plays a structural role in filtering, translating, or directing information, resources, or connections between different parts of a network. The term does not imply obstruction or negative intent; rather, effective gatekeepers can improve coordination, reduce noise, and enable more efficient and purposeful interaction across complex systems.



Fig. 2: Brokerage roles in London’s economic development ecosystem

Community	Gatekeeper	Representative	Coordinator	Liaison
Community 1 – Culture, tourism, and neighbourhood organizations	Existing among at least two organizations	Existing among at least eight organizations		
Community 2 – Business support, entrepreneurship, and innovation	Existing among at least three organizations	Existing among at least one organization		Existing among at least two organizations
Community 3 – Workforce development and industry support	Existing among at least five organizations	Existing among at least two organizations	Existing among at least two organizations	
Community 4 – Cross-sector initiatives	Existing among at least one organization	Existing among at least two organizations		Existing among at least two organizations

Note: Not all organizations in London’s economic development network play a brokerage role.

London’s economic development ecosystem has described fragmentation, lack of coordination, and inefficiencies. Looking at the brokerage roles across London’s ecosystem, as shown in Figure 2, few organizations are acting as a coordinator or liaison, while most organization are functioning as representatives or gatekeepers.

This imbalance in brokerage roles suggests that while London’s organizations are outward facing (effectively advocating for their interests and managing the inflow of external information), they may be less effective at fostering internal collaboration or building bridges across different sectors and communities. The shortage of coordinators within groups can lead to internal silos and missed opportunities for synergy, while the lack of liaisons hampers the ability to share knowledge, resources, and innovations across organizational and sectoral boundaries. As a result, the network may struggle to respond cohesively to emerging challenges or capitalize on opportunities that require cross-sector collaboration.

To address these gaps, London’s ecosystem could benefit from intentionally cultivating more coordinator and liaison roles. This might involve formalizing internal leadership positions focused on group cohesion, or establishing cross-sector working groups and partnership initiatives designed to bridge divides between organizations and sectors. By strengthening these underrepresented brokerage roles, London can enhance its network’s adaptability, promote more inclusive and innovative problem-solving, and better position itself to achieve collective impact in economic development.



SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Argyle BIA

Community Futures Western Ontario

Cross Cultural Learner Centre (CCLC)

Downtown London Business Association

Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board

Film London

Goodwill Industries Ontario Great Lakes Career Centre

Hamilton Road BIA

Hyde Park BIA

Ivey Business School at Western University

LEADS Employment

London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership

London Arts Council

London Chamber of Commerce

London Development Institute

London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC)

London Environmental Network

London Heritage Council

London International Airport

London Music Office

London Region Manufacturing Council

London Small Business Centre

London Training Centre

Museum London

Nokee Kwe

Old East Village BIA

Pillar Nonprofit Network

RBC Place London (London Convention Centre Corp.)

TechAlliance

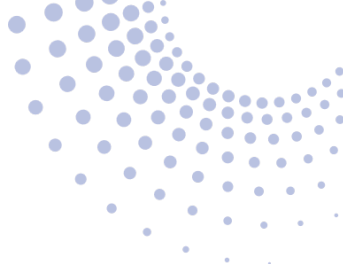
Thames Valley District School Board

Tourism London

The Grove at Western Fair/Western Fair Association

WILL Employment Solutions

YMCA of Southwestern Ontario



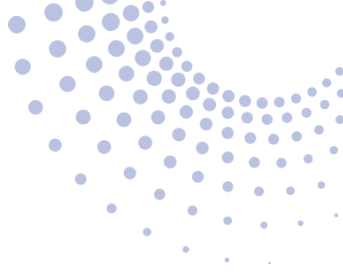
APPENDIX E: DISCUSSION PAPERS

In August 2025, to support meaningful community engagement as part of the development of this Economic Development Strategy, a panel of Deloitte’s strategic advisors oversaw the development of four **discussion papers**. These papers provided insights and thought leadership on London’s economic outlook, the local impacts of macroeconomic trends, workforce characteristics, the competitiveness and evolution of key sectors, and the economic participation of under-represented communities.

- **Macroeconomic Trends and Local Realities** – Examines global economic shifts, including trade dynamics, interest rate changes, and supply chain realignments, and their implications for London’s business environment.
- **London’s People: A Snapshot of the City’s Talent** – Explores workforce demographics, skills gaps, and opportunities for aligning talent with high-demand sectors.
- **Evaluating the Competitiveness and Evolution of Leading Sectors** – Assesses the performance, challenges, and growth potential of sectors such as health care, education, manufacturing, retail, and hospitality.
- **Economic Participation of Underrepresented Communities** – Highlights barriers to workforce participation for underrepresented groups and strategies to unlock their potential.

Each paper identifies a series of discussion questions that are meant to encourage further discourse in the topics areas and support future economic development efforts.

In a rapidly changing global context, understanding both the challenges and opportunities within London is essential for designing effective policies and strategies. The relevance of these papers lies in their ability to highlight pressing issues, examine emerging trends, and identify areas for targeted intervention.



Macroeconomic Trends and Local Realities

INTRODUCTION

Global macroeconomic trends are increasingly influencing local economies and it is crucial for municipalities to identify the trends that matter. Embracing the synergy between impactful trends and local realities unlocks powerful decision-making that minimizes risks and unveils exciting opportunities for growth and innovation.

As local businesses compete not just within Canada but globally, understanding the ripple effects of these trends on London's economy is critical for informed decision-making. Deloitte has forecasted Canada's economy to experience a modest downturn for Q2 and Q3 in 2025 while still maintaining positive growth of 1.2% for the year overall.⁵ This paper explores the local implications of key macroeconomic trends, including US tariff threats, interest rate changes, shifting supply chains, and housing market developments, and offers insights into mitigating risks and leveraging opportunities.

IDENTIFYING THE MACROECONOMIC TRENDS

Macroeconomic conditions have rapidly changed in 2025 with no expectation of stagnancy. This paper captures a sample of relevant trends, the following are among the most impactful and will influence choices made by decision makers in London.

US Tariff Threats and Global Trade Realignments: The escalation of US tariff threats has disrupted global supply chains, creating uncertainty for businesses worldwide. As a direct result of this uncertainty, Japan, China, and South Korea, whose historical relationship is fraught with distrust, are renewing their stalled efforts to negotiating a free-trade agreement. Canada has also made it a priority to pursue stronger ties with other markets to mitigate risks of over-reliance on the US market. The uncertainty surrounding US-Canada trade relations could deter business investment in the country, as seen with paused projects like Honda's electric vehicle production in Alliston, Ontario. However, the shift toward increased inter-provincial trade offers new opportunities for businesses, particularly in manufacturing and fishing, hunting and trapping⁶, to expand their national market presence.

Economic Uncertainty and Interest Rate Changes: Major global economies, including Canada, have been cutting interest rates to counter weak economic outlooks and declining business investments. In March 2025, the Bank of Canada cut interest rates for the seventh consecutive time to 2.75%, which is among the lowest in the G20.⁷ The Bank of Canada opted to maintain this rate in June and cited ongoing uncertainty regarding US tariffs, slight softening of the economy, and firmness in inflation data as rationale to hold the rate steady.⁸ Other central banks across the world have also slowly cut their policy rates reflecting a cautious approach to current economic conditions. The US Federal Reserve has so far held steady on their policy rate as to combat the expected increase in inflation and increased costs for consumers.⁹

Shifting Supply Chains: The global realignment of supply chains is another critical trend to monitor. Companies such as Apple are moving production from China to lower-cost manufacturing centres including India and Vietnam to reduce the impact of rising costs on their business.¹⁰ There is an expected increase in manufacturing investment in the US to reduce the impacts of tariffs while maintaining access to a large wealthy population base. With the shifting landscape of business investment, Canada faces heightened competition from other countries who are also looking to form new trade deals with the US that maintain or improve access to US consumers.

⁵ Deloitte, [Trade Tensions Stall Momentum: Economic Outlook April 2025](#), April 2025.

⁶ Statistics Canada, [Interprovincial trade flows and frictions](#), March 2025.

⁷ Trading Economics, [Interest Rate | G20](#), May 2025.

⁸ Bank of Canada, [Bank of Canada reduces policy rate by 25 basis points to 2¾%](#), March 12, 2025.

⁹ Federal Reserve, [Federal Reserve issues FOMC statement](#), May 7, 2025.

¹⁰ Supply Chain Digital, [Apple Shifts Supply Chain by Diversifying Production](#), May 12, 2025.

Housing Market Dynamics: The soaring cost of housing in major cities across North America has become a critical issue that local, state, provincial, and federal governments are trying to address. Housing costs have risen dramatically due to substantial demand for living spaces with a limited and slowly growing supply. It is possible that in Canada, housing price increases may slow due to changes in immigration policy that could reduce demand for rental units. The newly formed federal government has indicated that increasing the housing supply is a priority. It is unclear what potential impacts this priority may have on overall housing costs across the country.

IMPACTS TO LONDON'S ECONOMY

London's economy is diverse which helps in mitigating risks of a slowing global economy. It is, however, not immune to the potential impacts. General Dynamics Land Systems, a local armoured vehicle manufacturer, is already experiencing reduced interest from US military contracts, and is lobbying the federal government for new purchase commitments to maintain its operations.¹¹ While London does offer a strategic location for many businesses, its competitive advantages in this new economic environment may be limited by higher shipping costs and lag times compared to other competitors, or by investors choosing the US as a business destination to avoid tariffs altogether. Investment is still occurring surrounding London region as Volkswagen is moving forward with its electric vehicle manufacturing plant in St. Thomas.¹² Ontario's provincial leadership has also taken strides to reduce interprovincial trade barriers that could further benefit local companies, enabling them mitigate reliance on international markets.

Reduced borrowing costs, through lower interest rates can support innovation and entrepreneurship at the local level. Small business owners in London may find it easier to access capital to fund new ventures and create new employment in the city. As affordability in larger cities like Toronto and Vancouver continues to erode, London's relatively lower housing costs could attract talent and businesses seeking a more cost-effective base of operations.

However, the broader economic uncertainty tied to trade tensions may still dampen overall business confidence and reduce investment, even with lower borrowing rates as demonstrated by the Conference Board of Canada's Index of Business Confidence falling to 64.5 in April 2025, its second lowest level on record.¹³ London's housing market, while more affordable than those of Toronto and Vancouver, is not immune to broader trends of rising costs and supply-demand imbalances. While London is a lower cost city than others, with benchmark composite housing property prices 16.8% lower than the Canadian aggregate benchmark as of June 2025¹⁴ and lower average rental rates for both offices and industrial properties than the Canadian average in Q1 of 2025,¹⁵ Investors and residents may still choose other lower cost options to reduce spending during uncertain economic periods.

MITIGATING RISKS AND RECOGNIZING BENEFITS

To navigate these macroeconomic trends, London must adopt a proactive and adaptive approach. Continuing to support entrepreneurship and innovation in the city will be crucial to mitigate declining business investment in the city and highlight London as a supportive environment, which has been seen in London's recent recognition. Recognized for the fourth consecutive year on the CBRE Scoring Tech Talent 2025, London makes a prominent jump from Top Emerging Tech Markets in North America list, now ranking #4 on North America's Next 25 Markets list, reaffirming the region's reputation as a hub for innovation, growth, and talent.¹⁶ The City of London may consider providing additional tools, resources, and safety nets for startups and small businesses that further support innovation and job creation. London must also advocate to the provincial and federal governments to address trade uncertainties specific to London and promote its advantages to the investor community. Advocating for reduced interprovincial trade barriers that are directly relevant to existing London businesses can unlock new growth opportunities within the city.

¹¹ The London Free Press, [General Dynamics to Ottawa: We need more military orders or risk layoffs](#), March 24, 2025.

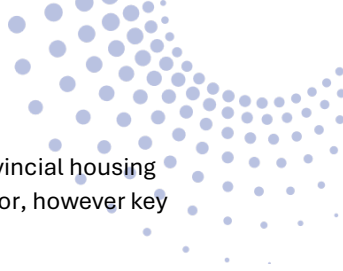
¹² The London Free Press, [St. Thomas gets huge tariff update on Volkswagen's planned 3,000-worker plant](#), May 8, 2025.

¹³ Conference Board of Canada, [Broken Bridges, Broken Business Confidence](#), April 10, 2025

¹⁴ Canadian Real Estate Association, [National Statistics](#), July 2025.

¹⁵ Colliers, [National Market Snapshot Q1 2025](#) | [London Office Market Report Q1 2025](#) | [London Industrial Market Report Q1 2025](#), May 2025.

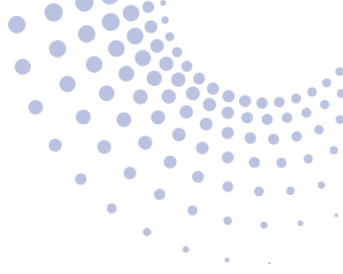
¹⁶ CBRE, [Scoring Tech Talent 2025](#), 2025.



To support London in attracting new talent and improve the broader economic stability, London should ensure that it is at the forefront of national and provincial housing initiatives that support the expansion housing supply to improve affordability within the city. London does not have any significant reliance on a single sector, however key sectors of the economy may still be vulnerable to decreased investment flows, necessitating proactive measures to support local economic resilience.

CONCLUSION

London is at a pivotal juncture as global macroeconomic trends reshape local realities. The city faces challenges stemming from US tariff threats, shifting supply chains, and economic uncertainty. London can leverage its competitive advantages in its strategic location and relative affordability to mitigate the risks and take advantage of their potential benefits. By focusing on entrepreneurship, strengthening domestic trade, and addressing housing market dynamics, London can help the business community position themselves as a resilient and innovative regional hub in an interconnected economy. Proactive decision-making and collaboration across all levels of government will be critical to ensuring the city's long-term prosperity amidst these evolving global conditions.



London's People: A Snapshot of the City's Talent

INTRODUCTION

London is undergoing a significant transformation as its population and economy grow and diversify. Annual population growth rate projections estimate that the city's population could grow from 422,324 in 2021¹⁷ to between 601,500 and 692,100¹⁸ by 2051. As the city positions itself as a regional hub for education, health care, and industry, a focus on aligning workforce availability and skills with the needs of leading sectors will be critical to sustaining momentum. This paper aims to provide a profile of London's current and future workforce, focusing on its demographics, skills, and talent pool.

LONDON'S STRENGTHS

With affordable cost of living and a high quality of life, London has a competitive edge in attracting and retaining talent. The average home price in the London-St. Thomas area, at \$650,501, remains significantly lower than in the Greater Toronto Area (\$1.1 million).¹⁹ The growing population fueled by international migration introduces London's employers to diverse perspectives and global connections, which are critical for businesses seeking to expand their reach.

Workforce attraction is bolstered by 37,745 international students who attend London's post-secondary institutions each year, working toward advanced degrees and specialized skills in areas such as health care, engineering, and information technology.²⁰ However, major shifts in Canada's immigration policies and caps directed at international students, temporary residents, and foreign workers are expected to have a significant impact on the ability to attract newcomers to meet growing demand for talent. Under new rules, London hopes to continue to attract at least 14,000 international students per year.²¹

London's cultural economy adds a unique dimension to its workforce. The Ontario Institute of Audio Recording Technology (OIART) offers a music production program in state-of-the-studios to prepare students for careers in music production, live sound and event production, and audio for visual media. The city's designation as a UNESCO City of Music underscores its vibrant arts scene, which not only attracts creative talent but also supports adjacent industries such as tourism and digital media. In 2023, the city welcomed close to 2.1 million overnight visitors, including 136,000 from the United States, 25,000 from other international locations, and almost two million domestic travelers who collectively spent an estimated \$1.09 billion in local restaurants, retail shops, accommodations, and attractions.²²

TALENT TRENDS

According to London Economic Development Corporation, addressing growth, change and retirements in London's key sectors is expected to require 40,000 new hires between 2023-2031.^{23, 24, 25, 26} London's employers are striving to address growing workforce needs, with immigration expected to remain a key factor. Fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment is a priority as workplaces become more diverse.

¹⁷ Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.

¹⁸ City of London Report to Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee, [City of London Growth Projections 2021-2051](#), December 6, 2022

¹⁹ Canadian Real Estate Association, [London & St. Thomas Real Estate Market](#), June 4, 2025.

²⁰ London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership, [London's Student Numbers Tell a Story About to Change](#), November 2024

²¹ City of London, [London Newcomer Strategy 2024-2028](#).

²² The Conference Board of Canada, [Economic Impact Analysis of Tourism in the City of London](#), May 2024

²³ London Economic Development, [Employment Prospects 2023-31 Advanced Manufacturing](#), October 2023.

²⁴ London Economic Development, [Employment Prospects 2023-31 Construction](#), October 2023.

²⁵ London Economic Development, [Employment Prospects 2023-31 Health](#), October 2023.

²⁶ London Economic Development, [Employment Prospects 2023-31 IT](#), October 2023.



As older workers retire, their successors have different career expectations. Younger workers are placing a greater value on work-life balance, flexibility, autonomy, learning, inclusivity, and meaningful work. Deloitte's global survey of 23,000+ Gen Zs and Millennials found that these generations are looking for careers that blend financial security, purpose, and well-being.²⁷

The rise of remote work has created opportunities for people to live in London while working elsewhere, and for employers to tap into the global talent pool to fill critical roles and address labour shortages. Flexible working arrangements have also increased the demand for co-working spaces, which offer shared workspaces, lounges, and amenities such as cafés. These environments can encourage informal interactions that foster creativity and collaboration among entrepreneurs, remote workers, organizations, and small businesses.

TODAY'S WORKFORCE

London's workforce presents a dynamic picture of growth and opportunity. As of August 2025, the city's (Census Subdivision) labour force reached approximately 274,100, reflecting steady growth from 270,500 in August 2023.²⁸ The participation rate has hovered around 64%, slightly below Ontario's average but indicative of the city's untapped potential. London's unemployment rate was 5.4% in March 2025, reflecting a slight decline in contrast to a rising provincial trend that sets Ontario's unemployment rate at 7.6%, indicating that London remains resilient amid economic challenges.

Demographics and skills profile

The population grew by 14% between 2019 and 2024, adding over 60,000 residents in London (CY)²⁹, making it the second-fastest growing city in Western Ontario.³⁰ According to Ontario's Ministry of Finance, Middlesex County is projected to grow by 6.6% between 2024 and 2030, an increase of more than 38,000 residents³¹. This growth rate is expected to surpass both Ontario's projected growth of 6% and Canada's projected growth of 3%.

Despite its population growth, workforce readiness remains a challenge. The Workforce Planning & Development Board's *EmployerOne Survey 2025* highlights foundational skills, such as accountability, communication and teamwork, as priorities for employers, while technical skills in computers, mechanical abilities, mathematical skills, and data analysis are increasingly in demand and short supply³².

The city's talent pipeline is supported by post-secondary programs such as Fanshawe's *Corporate Training Solutions* and Western's *Medical Innovation Fellows*, directly linking students to industry needs. Work-integrated learning (WIL) programs support talent development through co-op placements, internships, and applied research projects. In partnership with Huron University College, Fanshawe College, and London Chamber of Commerce, TechAlliance facilitated more than 550 WIL opportunities during 2023, connecting students to employers in high-demand fields.³³

²⁷ Deloitte Global, [2025 Gen Z and Millennial Survey](#), 2025

²⁸ Statistics Canada, *Labour force characteristics, selected census subdivisions, three-month moving averages, monthly, unadjusted for seasonality*, [Table 14-10-0445-01](#), September 2025

²⁹ London (CY) refers to the City of London, while London CMA refers to the greater metropolitan area.

³⁰ [Statistics Canada, Table 17-10-0155-01](#)

³¹ Ontario Ministry of Finance, [Population Projections](#), Summer 2025.

³² Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning & Development Board, [EmployerOne 2025 Results](#), 2025

³³ TechAlliance, *Strategic Priorities & Policy Committee Report*, 2024

The city's prime working-age group (25-54 years) accounts for 39% of the population, on par with the provincial average.³⁴ The proportion of older adults in London is increasing in step with the provincial population, with 18% aged 65 or older compared to 19% across Ontario. This demographic shift poses both challenges and opportunities for workforce planning, as retirees offset workforce gains from population growth, while demand for health care workers increases.

To meet growing labour market needs, the *London Newcomer Strategy* seeks to achieve a net average newcomer inflow of 4,000 newcomers per year through direct immigration, with a focus on international students, skilled workers, and entrepreneurs.

Occupational profile

London's workforce is concentrated in health care, advanced manufacturing, education, and digital media. The health care sector alone employs more than 35,000 people across 100 organizations.³⁵ Manufacturing (including food processing) remains a cornerstone, with 34,300 people employed across 500 companies, underscoring the city's industrial strength. Meanwhile, emerging sectors like digital media and technology employ 16,100 individuals³⁶, reflecting London's growing reputation as a tech hub.

London has seen an overall net growth of 18,380 jobs over the past six years. More than 70% of that growth was credited to the health care and social assistance, professional, scientific and technical services, finance and insurance, construction, and manufacturing sectors.

While general employment growth in those sectors across Canada can account for much of that increase, the city shows a strong competitive advantage in manufacturing, finance and insurance, and construction sectors.³⁷

Employment in the finance and insurance and construction sectors saw growth of more than 4,000 positions, although regional and national industry trends would have predicted a more moderate growth of about 2,500 jobs.

Between 2019 and 2024, employment in London's manufacturing sector, which includes food processing, increased by nearly 1,500 positions. This growth occurred despite an anticipated overall net decline of more than 200 positions in the sector based on regional and national industry trends. Maple Leaf Foods' \$772 million investment in its 660,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art London poultry processing facility can be credited with nearly all of London's net employment growth over that period.³⁸

Recent investments in advanced manufacturing and clean technology have spurred demand for high-skilled roles in robotics and renewable energy. For example, the Volkswagen electric vehicle battery plant in nearby St. Thomas is expected to generate 3,000 direct jobs and thousands more in supplier industries, creating a ripple effect across London's talent ecosystem³⁹. Global disruptions and declining EV sales may have an impact on how quickly EV projects such as this move forward.

Figure 1 - Employment growth in London (2019-2024): top five sectors

Industry	Growth (Net jobs)	Growth (%)	Average salary
Health care and social assistance	4,590	15%	\$60,658
Professional, scientific and technical services	2,592	24%	\$75,003
Finance and insurance	2,193	23%	\$72,612
Construction	1,824	19%	\$71,160
Manufacturing	1,496	8%	\$66,378

Source: Lightcast™, datarun 2025.5. (The data covers the London Census Subdivision (3539036) and includes only the number of employees, excluding self-employed individuals.)

³⁴ Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021 Census, 2016 Census

³⁵ Lightcast, datarun, 2025.5

³⁶ London Economic Development Corporation, *2024 Year-to-Date Update*, 2024

³⁷ Lightcast, datarun, 2025.5.

³⁸ Maple Leaf Foods, *Q2 2023 Business & Financial Review*, 2023

³⁹ [City of London, 2023 Industrial Land Development Strategy, 2023](#)



At the regional level, worker shortages have been reported in truck driving and teaching positions, with more than 130 vacant positions in these occupations reported by employers in June 2024.⁴⁰ Lack of required education/credentials or experience were cited as the top reasons that positions were hard to fill, followed by an insufficient number of applicants for available positions. Skills tied to digital literacy, mechanical ability, and mathematical aptitude are increasingly sought after. Employers are also prioritizing foundational skills such as trustworthiness, ability to work independently, and reliability, although employers are unsure how to evaluate these soft skills during recruitment.⁴¹

TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

Since 2020, the world of work has changed dramatically, with growing shortages of both workers and skills due to an aging population, rapidly changing skills needs, and evolving worker preferences. In the context of other global disruptions, the AI revolution, geopolitical uncertainty, and the race to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions, a growing uncertainty about the future points to significant changes in London's workforce.

Across all sectors, there is a growing need for digital literacy, problem-solving, and adaptability as the rapid adoption of digital technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI) and automation, transforms job roles.⁴² However, Deloitte research highlights that 48% of Canadian business leaders feel their employees are unprepared to work alongside AI, underscoring the urgency for upskilling initiatives, and strategies to attract and retain talent.⁴³

Advanced manufacturing (including food processing) is leveraging robotics and predictive analytics to enhance production efficiency and supply chain management, while AI-driven diagnostics and telemedicine are reshaping the health care sector. In the finance and insurance industry, AI has streamlined underwriting, claims processing, and customer service, as noted in Deloitte's *2022 Insurance Industry Outlook*.⁴⁴ Inflation and cybersecurity risks are driving demand for financial professionals skilled in risk management and AI-powered analytics, with 90% of Canadian insurers indicating a desire to leverage AI capabilities and data analysis. As competition intensifies for top talent globally, the sector must prepare for talent shortages, particularly in IT and cybersecurity.

The construction industry faces dual pressures as it looks to the future: meeting sustainability targets while addressing labour shortages. According to BuildForce Canada, 21% of Ontario's construction workforce is expected to retire by 2030⁴⁵, putting increasing pressure on an industry where 40% of employers have already reported current labour shortages.⁴⁶ The adoption of AI and robotics could alleviate some challenges, but a robust workforce strategy is needed to ensure a pipeline of skilled workers. Technological advancements in the construction sector necessitate development of new skills in areas such as Building Information Modeling (BIM), modular construction, and sustainable construction practices like retrofitting buildings and installing renewable energy systems.

Meanwhile, the City's *Climate Emergency Action Plan (2022)* identifies a role for post-secondary institutions in developing programs focused on skills needed for climate action technologies.⁴⁷ Implementing the action plan requires a skilled workforce trained in areas such as HVAC systems, energy-efficient renovations, and renewable energy installations.

⁴⁰ [Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning Board, EmployerOne survey, 2025](#)

⁴¹ [Ibid.](#)

⁴² [Deloitte, Global disruption in 4D: Exploring intersecting forces impacting Canada's future, 2024](#)

⁴³ [Ibid.](#)

⁴⁴ [Deloitte Canada, 2022 insurance industry outlook, 2022](#)

⁴⁵ [BuildForce, Employment Forecast, 2025](#)

⁴⁶ [Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 2025 Ontario Economic Report, 2025](#)

⁴⁷ [City of London, Climate Emergency Action Plan, 2022](#)



CONCLUSION

The implications of these findings are clear: London must prioritize a workforce strategy that aligns educational outcomes, employer needs, and economic development goals. To secure its position as a regional economic leader, London should prioritize the futureproofing of its workforce. Upskilling and reskilling programs in areas like AI, robotics, and sustainability will be essential as industries adapt to technological advancements and global disruptions. Fostering a culture of innovation through partnerships will ensure the city remains competitive in attracting talent and investment. By anticipating challenges and leveraging capabilities, the city can build a workforce that not only meets today's demands but also anticipates the needs of tomorrow.



Evaluating the Competitiveness and Evolution of Leading Sectors

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the current landscape of London’s leading economic sectors is essential for developing a robust and forward-looking Economic Development Strategy. As the city navigates rapid changes in technology, shifting demographics, and evolving market dynamics, a clear picture of sector strengths, challenges, and opportunities becomes the foundation for informed decision-making.

London has experienced notable employment growth in recent years. From 2019 to 2024, total employment in the city increased by 4%, representing 9,190 new jobs⁴⁸. Although there were fluctuations in employment during 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, the labour market has since recovered and surpassed pre-pandemic employment levels by 2022, with a continued upward trend through 2023 and 2024. To better understand the sectors driving this growth, a comprehensive assessment of London’s leading economic sectors was undertaken by drawing on multiple sources of data and analysis. The City of London has highlighted nine key sectors on its website, each supported by sector-specific reports that outline the city’s comparative advantages and emerging opportunities. In parallel, the London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) has identified four fast-growing sectors, supplemented by a business directory and profiles of major local employers. To further support these findings, this discussion paper incorporates a Location Quotient (LQ) analysis using the most recent employment data available from Statistics Canada.

KEY EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

LEDC Identified Key Employment Sectors

The LEDC has identified four sectors as experiencing particularly rapid growth in London:

- Agri-Food
- Manufacturing
- Digital Media and Technology
- Health

These sectors are supported by a robust ecosystem of businesses and key employers, underscoring their importance to London’s economic development trajectory.

City of London Identified Key Employment Sectors

In addition to the LEDC-identified rapid growth sectors, the City of London identified the following as the top employment sectors:

- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Retail Trade
- Educational Services
- Manufacturing

⁴⁸ Lightcast, datarun, 2025.5



- Accommodation and Food Services
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Finance and Insurance
- Construction

Additionally, London’s creative industries, including the music and film sectors, are acknowledged as areas of local strength and cultural significance.

LOCATION QUOTIENT RESULTS

A Location Quotient (LQ) analysis is a useful tool for understanding which industries are especially important or unique to London’s economy. This method compares the share of employment in each sector in London to the average share of that sector in Ontario as a whole. If a sector’s LQ is higher than 1.1, it indicates that the sector has an above average concentration of jobs in London than the provincial average, suggesting it is a key or “leading” sector for the city. In this analysis, sectors were examined using the 2-digit NAICS industry classification, which provides a broad overview of different parts of the economy.

The LQ analysis identifies several sectors in London that have a higher concentration of employment compared to the provincial average in Ontario. As shown in Figure 2, the sectors with the highest LQ values are Educational Services (NAICS 61) and Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS 62). Educational Services accounts for 10.8% of London’s total employment, compared to 7.8% in Ontario, resulting in an LQ of 1.38. Similarly, Health Care and Social Assistance represents 16.0% of local employment versus 11.8% provincially, with an LQ of 1.36. These high LQ values indicate that both sectors are particularly significant to London’s economy, serving as major employers and key drivers of local economic activity.

Accommodation and Food Services (NAICS 72) and Retail Trade (NAICS 44-45) also exhibit LQ values above 1, at 1.18 and 1.09 respectively. Manufacturing (NAICS 31-33) has LQ values just below 1, indicating that employment concentrations are roughly on par with provincial levels. While these sectors do not stand out as highly concentrated compared to Ontario, they remain significant components of London’s overall economic structure.

Figure 2 – Location Quotient of London’s Leading Sectors, 2-digit NAICS, 2024

NAICS	Description	London (CSD)		Ontario		LQ
		Employment	Employment Distribution (%)	Employment	Employment Distribution (%)	
61	Educational services	23,936	10.8%	562,544	7.8%	1.38
62	Health care and social assistance	35,308	16.0%	847,543	11.8%	1.36
72	Accommodation and food services	17,397	7.9%	481,384	6.7%	1.18
44-45	Retail trade	24,796	11.2%	737,258	10.3%	1.09
X0	Unclassified	3,843	1.7%	125,884	1.8%	0.99
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	3,616	1.6%	121,971	1.7%	0.96
31-33	Manufacturing	19,985	9.1%	680,547	9.5%	0.96
52	Finance and insurance	11,664	5.3%	402,225	5.6%	0.94
56	Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	10,526	4.8%	372,799	5.2%	0.92
23	Construction	11,473	5.2%	406,664	5.7%	0.92
81	Other services (except public administration)	6,619	3.0%	238,912	3.3%	0.90



NAICS	Description	London (CSD)		Ontario		LQ
		Employment	Employment Distribution (%)	Employment	Employment Distribution (%)	
41	Wholesale trade	9,802	4.4%	358,652	5.0%	0.89
71	Arts, entertainment and recreation	3,256	1.5%	120,094	1.7%	0.88
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	8,272	3.7%	311,918	4.3%	0.86
54	Professional, scientific and technical services	13,484	6.1%	544,811	7.6%	0.81
91	Public administration	11,509	5.2%	534,330	7.4%	0.70
55	Management of companies and enterprises	894	0.4%	48,494	0.7%	0.60
51	Information and cultural industries	2,720	1.2%	149,284	2.1%	0.59
22	Utilities	793	0.4%	51,813	0.7%	0.50
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	528	0.2%	50,619	0.7%	0.34
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	190	0.1%	29,552	0.4%	0.21

DETERMINE LONDON’S LEADING SECTORS

To ensure a comprehensive perspective, the results of the LQ analysis have been supplemented with qualitative insights from the City of London and LEDC. This combined approach highlights sectors that are both statistically significant and locally recognized as economic priorities. The following five sectors are identified as London’s leading sectors and are explored in detail within this discussion paper:

- Educational services
- Health care and social assistance
- Accommodation and food services
- Retail trade
- Manufacturing



Figure 3 - Identifying London's Leading Sectors

NAICS	Description	LQ	City of London Key Employment Sectors	LEDC Fastest-growing Sectors
61	Educational services	1.38	✓	
62	Health care and social assistance	1.36	✓	✓
72	Accommodation and food services	1.18	✓	
44-45	Retail trade	1.09	✓	
X0	Unclassified	0.99		
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	0.96		
31-33	Manufacturing	0.96	✓	✓
52	Finance and insurance	0.94	✓	
56	Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	0.92		
23	Construction	0.92	✓	
81	Other services (except public administration)	0.90		
41	Wholesale trade	0.89		
71	Arts, entertainment and recreation	0.88		
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	0.86		
54	Professional, scientific and technical services	0.81	✓	
91	Public administration	0.70	✓	
55	Management of companies and enterprises	0.60		
51	Information and cultural industries	0.59		✓
22	Utilities	0.50		
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0.34		
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.21		

This evidence-based approach ensures that London’s economic development strategy is informed by both quantitative data and local context, providing a robust foundation for future planning and targeted interventions.

CURRENT LANDSCAPE AND PEST ANALYSIS

Educational Services

The **Educational Services** sector stands out as one of London’s key economic drivers, employing close to 24,000 people and accounting for 10.8% of the city’s total workforce in 2024. London’s competitive advantage in this sector is anchored by a robust network of educational institutions, ranging from primary and secondary schools to world-class post-secondary establishments such as Western University and Fanshawe College. Western University, recognized among the top 1% of universities globally⁴⁹, and Fanshawe College, one of Ontario’s largest colleges, together attract more than 88,000 students annually and generate significant economic impact for the region. The sector is further

⁴⁹ Western News, [Western ranked among top world universities by CWUR](#), June 2025
City of London Economic Development Strategy 2026-2030



supported by a skilled and experienced workforce, diverse educational offerings, and strong investment in research and innovation. Recent years have seen major investments in new schools, expanded research facilities, and innovative programming, positioning London as a hub for talent development and lifelong learning. Examples include the \$55.3 million investment from the Thames Valley District School Board for two new elementary schools⁵⁰, and Western University’s \$55.5 million investment in student mental health, anti-hate/racism, and fee transparency.

Below is a summary of external factors, organized using the PEST framework, that could potentially impact the Educational Services sector in London. This list is not exhaustive but is intended to serve as a foundation for further engagement and discussion.

Political	Economic	Social	Technological
<p>The Ontario government reduced tuition fees by 10 per cent for the 2019-20 school year and has frozen rates since then. The tuition cut and ongoing freeze has reduced the value of tuition by about 30%.⁵¹</p> <p>The federal government has announced a reduction in the intake cap on international student study permits for 2025.⁵²</p>	<p>Labour shortages, especially for qualified teachers and support staff, are a recurring challenge.⁵³</p> <p>The anticipated decline in international student enrolment has led to the closure of certain programs at post-secondary institutions. Fanshawe College is among the institutions affected by these changes.⁵⁴</p>	<p>London is experiencing robust population growth, making it one of the fastest-growing regions in Canada.</p> <p>There is a rising emphasis on postsecondary education and ongoing skills development, with 71% of projected employment growth in Canada expected to require postsecondary education or management experience between 2022 and 2031.⁵⁵</p>	<p>The sector is increasingly adopting digital platforms and online learning tools, which are reshaping how education is delivered at all levels.⁵⁶</p> <p>Western University has made investment in this fields that include introducing new digital leaning management systems and enhance virtual learning offerings.</p>

Health Care and Social Assistance

The **Health Care and Social Assistance** sector employs over 35,000 people and represents 16% of the city’s total workforce in 2024. London’s competitive advantage in this sector is driven by its world-class medical facilities, including London Health Sciences Centre⁵⁷ and St. Joseph’s Health Care London⁵⁸, as well as its strong research and academic institutions such as Western University’s Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and the Robarts and Lawson Research Institutes The city boasts a longstanding tradition of medical research, a strong culture of innovation, and a collaborative environment that unites health care providers, academia, and industry partners. With over 2,000 establishments, the sector is supported by a skilled workforce and a diverse range of services, from advanced hospital care to social support programs. Recent years have seen

⁵⁰ CBC News, *2 new elementary schools will ease growth pressures in London, school board chair says*, April 2024

⁵¹ Ontario’s Universities, *CQU Statement: Response to Ontario’s 2025 Budget*, May 2025

⁵² Government of Canada, *Strengthening temporary residence programs for sustainable volumes*, September 2024

⁵³ Government of Canada, *Educational Services: Ontario 2024-2026 - Job Bank*, 2025

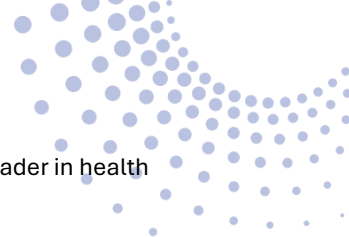
⁵⁴ Fanshawe College, *Program Suspensions*, 2025

⁵⁵ Government of Canada, *Educational Services: Ontario 2024-2026 - Job Bank*, 2025

⁵⁶ Government of Ontario, *Ontario Brings Learning Into The Digital Age*, November 2019

⁵⁷ LHSC is one of Canada’s largest acute-care teaching hospitals, affiliated with Western University. LHSC is home to several nationally and internationally renowned programs, including the Canadian Surgical Technologies & Advanced Robotics (CSTAR) program and one of the country’s largest organ transplant programs.

⁵⁸ St. Joseph’s is recognized for its leadership in mental health care, rehabilitation, chronic disease management, and long-term and ambulatory care. It is home to specialized centres such as Parkwood Institute, which provides leading-edge rehabilitation and complex care, and the Lawson Health Research Institute, one of Canada’s top hospital-based research institutes.



significant investments in medical research and manufacturing, new health care technologies, and expanded service offerings, positioning London as a leader in health innovation and patient care. Example includes the \$165 million investment from Medicom Group for Canada’s first medical-grade nitrile glove plant⁵⁹.

Below is a summary of external factors, organized using the PEST framework, that could potentially impact the Health Care and Social Assistance sector in London. This list is not exhaustive but is intended to serve as a foundation for further engagement and discussion.

Political	Economic	Social	Technological
Recent regulatory reforms in this sector, such as shifting social assistance financial administration to the province, aim to streamline services but risk underfunding municipal life stabilization supports. ⁶⁰	Healthcare labour shortages (e.g., doctors, nurses, personal support workers) exacerbate service gaps. ⁶¹	<p>Ontario’s senior population will grow by 68% in 20 years, increasing demand for long-term care, home care, and chronic disease management.⁶²</p> <p>Homelessness, mental health crises, and addiction require integrated municipal responses, but fragmented provincial funding limits coordination.⁶³</p> <p>There is a significant and growing demand for youth mental health services in London, with London Health Sciences Centre reporting increased emergency admissions, greater patient complexity, and longer hospital stays for children and adolescents with mental health concerns.⁶⁴</p>	LHSC and St. Joseph’s Virtual Care Program provides telehealth services, supported by digital navigators assisting patients with technical barriers. This addresses rural access gaps and mobility challenges. ⁶⁵

Accommodation and Food Services

The **Accommodation and Food Services** sector is a vital contributor to London’s economy, employing nearly 18,000 people and comprising 7.9% of the city’s workforce in 2024. With more than 800 establishments, this sector benefits from London’s strategic location between major urban centers and U.S. border crossings, positioning the city as an attractive venue for both domestic and cross-border events. London’s vibrant hospitality scene is supported by a skilled workforce, bolstered by specialized training programs at Fanshawe College and Western University. The sector continues to attract significant investment, such as the Hard Rock Hotel at 100 Kellogg Lane, which boosts tourism, creates jobs, and enhances London’s profile as a destination for events and entertainment. Additionally, expansions like Beerlab London’s new eatery-entertainment venue, Supply and Demand Beer and Pizza, illustrate the sector’s ongoing innovation and growth. As tourism rebounds and the city hosts major events, the accommodation and food services industry is well-positioned for continued expansion, offering diverse opportunities for collaboration, culinary tourism, and economic development.

⁵⁹ Government of Ontario Newsroom, [Ontario Supporting \\$165 Million Investment to Secure Critical Personal Protective Equipment Supply](#), 2023

⁶⁰ Association of Municipalities Ontario, [Social Assistance Change to Municipal Delivery Role](#), May 2021

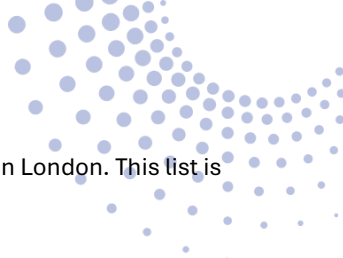
⁶¹ CBC News, [Ontario election puts London’s doctor shortage under the stethoscope](#), January 2025

⁶² Ontario Hospital Association, [Health System News Ontario’s Aging Population: Preparing for the Future](#)

⁶³ Association of Municipalities Ontario, [Health, Emergency, and Social Services](#)

⁶⁴ CBC News, [More youth being admitted to London’s ER for mental health treatment](#), March 2025

⁶⁵ St. Joseph’s Health Care London, [Bridging the digital divide in health care](#)



Below is a summary of external factors, organized using the PEST framework, that could potentially impact the Accommodation and Food Services sector in London. This list is not exhaustive but is intended to serve as a foundation for further engagement and discussion.

Political	Economic	Social	Technological
<p>Due to economic fluctuations and trade uncertainties with the United States, Ontarians may increasingly choose to travel within the province, supporting local economies.⁶⁶</p> <p>The City of London has increased the MAT (Municipal Accommodation Tax) from 4% to 5% as of May 1, 2025, for short-term accommodations of less than 30 nights.⁶⁷</p>	<p>Tourism spending in London surged by 11% in 2023, reaching nearly \$1.1 billion and marking a strong post-pandemic recovery.⁶⁸</p> <p>Despite growth, inflationary pressures and workforce gaps persist. Over 23% of Ontario’s jobs in this sector are part-time, exacerbating recruitment challenges.⁶⁹</p> <p>Depreciation of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. currency makes Canada a more attractive destination for American tourists, while simultaneously making international travel more expensive for Canadians.⁷⁰</p> <p>Fanshawe College’s School of Tourism, Hospitality and Culinary Arts offers a range of programs in cooking, event planning, tourism, and food processing. However, due to recent trends of work permit eligibility, market demand and financial viability, two hospitality-related programs will be suspended as of Fall 2025.⁷¹</p>	<p>Visitors and locals increasingly seek experiences that go beyond basic services, such as live music, themed events, and collaborations between hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues.⁷²</p> <p>Ongoing U.S.-Canada trade tensions have led to a significant decline in Canadians travelling to the U.S., with car trips dropping 31.9% and air travel down 13.5% year-over-year in March 2025.⁷³</p>	<p>Data-driven marketing and loyalty programs are increasingly sophisticated, using guest profiles to deliver targeted offers and build customer loyalty.⁷⁴</p>

⁶⁶ Destination Ontario, [Ontario's Top Travel Trends Revealed Ahead of National Tourism Week 2025](#), April 2025

⁶⁷ City of London, [Municipal Accommodation Tax By-law - A-8290-227](#)

⁶⁸ London Free Press, [Tourist spending in London jumps 11 per cent in 2023: Report](#), July 2024

⁶⁹ Government of Canada, [Accommodation and Food Services: Ontario 2024-2026 - Job Bank](#)

⁷⁰ BDC, [Canada tourism economy outlook for 2025](#), March 2025

⁷¹ Fanshawe College, [Program Suspensions](#)

⁷² CBC News, [London's tourism sector is seeing a boom, says Tourism London](#), July 2024

⁷³ London Free Press, [Canadians' U.S. visits keep dropping, and local tourism may benefit](#), April 2025

⁷⁴ Hotel Technology News, [Hospitality Technology Innovation to Take Center Stage at HRC](#), February 2025



Retail Trade

The **Retail Trade** sector employs nearly 25,000 people and represents 11.2% of the city’s workforce in 2024. With over 1,600 establishments ranging from major national chains to unique local boutiques, London’s retail landscape is both diverse and dynamic. The sector benefits from the city’s strategic location as a regional transportation hub, growing population, and relative housing affordability, all of which contribute to a robust and expanding consumer base. London’s supportive business environment, bolstered by local business improvement associations and entrepreneurial resources, encourages innovation and growth, while the presence of strong post-secondary institutions ensures a steady supply of skilled workers. Recent investments, such as the opening of T&T Supermarket (the city’s largest Asian grocer), highlight the sector’s ongoing evolution and appeal to both residents and newcomers. As e-commerce and omni-channel retailing continue to grow, and as new ventures and international brands enter the market, London’s retail sector is well-positioned for continued expansion, offering abundant opportunities for entrepreneurs and established businesses alike.

Below is a summary of external factors, organized using the PEST framework, that could potentially impact the Retail Trade sector in London. This list is not exhaustive but is intended to serve as a foundation for further engagement and discussion.

Political	Economic	Social	Technological
<p>Recent Canada-US tariff negotiation may lead to logistical and financial challenges.⁷⁵</p> <p>Tariffs imposed by the U.S. on Canadian goods (25% on most goods, 10% on energy) and Canada’s retaliatory tariffs (25% on U.S. autos and phased tariffs on \$155B of U.S. goods) will raise the cost of imported products for Canadian retailers.⁷⁶</p>	<p>Recent trends see a 0.7% Canada-wide increase in total retail sales in May, and spending was firmer up 1.1% excluding auto sales.⁷⁷</p> <p>The closure of two Hudson’s Bay stores in London’s two shopping malls, the Toys “R” Us store in Argyle Mall, and two Peavey Mart locations in London, highlights ongoing challenges in the retail sector.^{78 79 80}</p>	<p>Employment is expected to see slight growth over the 2024-2026 forecast period, supported by ongoing e-commerce activities and population growth in Ontario.⁸¹</p> <p>73% of Canadian consumers use multiple channels such as websites, apps, social media, and physical stores before making a purchase. Retailers that provide seamless online and offline experiences are more likely to succeed.⁸²</p>	<p>Retailers are enhancing digital platforms as online sales grow, requiring seamless integration with physical stores.⁸³</p> <p>Online retailer Amazon is making a significant investment in the region, with a new fulfillment center opened in 2023 that employs about 1,000 people.⁸⁴</p>

Manufacturing

The **Manufacturing** sector is a cornerstone of London’s economy, employing close to 20,000 people and accounting for 9.1% of the city’s workforce in 2024. With more than 430 establishments, London’s manufacturing landscape is highly diversified, producing everything from automotive parts and medical devices to food products and advanced materials. The city’s strategic location within two hours of major U.S. border crossings and along key transportation routes gives manufacturers efficient access to North American and global markets. London is home to the Canadian headquarters of industry leaders such as 3M Canada, McCormick Canada, Diamond Aircraft, General Dynamics Land Systems, Maple Leaf Foods, Labatt and Dr. Oetker, and benefits from a skilled workforce trained at Western University and Fanshawe College. Recent investments

⁷⁵ Retail Insider, [U.S. Tariffs Pose Risk to Canadian Retail Supply Chains](#), April 2025
⁷⁶ Retail Council of Canada, [Tariffs and Trade](#)
⁷⁷ Royal Bank of Canada, [RBC Consumer Spending Tracker](#)
⁷⁸ Ontario Farmer, [Peavey Mart closing stores across Southwestern Ontario](#), January 2025
⁷⁹ InSauga, [CLOSURE: Major chain retailer shutting down in 5 Ontario cities](#), January 2025
⁸⁰ London Free Press, [If London’s landmark Hudson’s Bay stores close, what will fill the space?](#), March 2025
⁸¹ Government of Canada, [Sectoral profile - Retail Trade: Ontario 2024-2026 - Job Bank](#)
⁸² Retail Insider, [Top Emerging Retail Trends in Canada for 2025](#), March 2025
⁸³ Retail Insider, [Top Emerging Retail Trends in Canada for 2025](#), March 2025
⁸⁴ CBC News, [Local Amazon fulfillment centre to open Oct. 1, company announces](#), August 2023



underscore the sector’s momentum, including Volkswagen’s \$7-billion electric vehicle battery plant in nearby St. Thomas, and Andriani Ltd.’s \$33.6-million North American pasta plant. London’s advanced manufacturing ecosystem is further strengthened by research and innovation hubs like the Western Advanced Manufacturing Park, along with the city’s post-secondary institutions and major employers, positioning the city as a leader in automation, robotics, and industrial innovation. As demand for skilled workers grows and new technologies reshape the industry, London’s manufacturing sector is poised for continued growth, offering robust opportunities for investment, collaboration, and economic development.

Below is a summary of external factors, organized using the PEST framework, that could potentially impact the Manufacturing sector in London. This list is not exhaustive but is intended to serve as a foundation for further community engagement and discussion.

Political	Economic	Social	Technological
The ongoing Canada-U.S. tariff disputes are creating significant uncertainty for manufacturers. Many companies have frozen hiring and investment. ⁸⁵	Economic headwinds from tariffs and reduced export demand are slowing growth. The manufacturing sector’s employment growth in London (Census Subdivision) was 0.3% in 2024 ⁸⁶ , but the region is experiencing increased availability in industrial real estate and no new project breaking ground. ⁸⁷	The sector faces acute labour shortages due to an aging workforce and insufficient numbers of skilled graduates. ⁸⁸ There is a pressing need to attract youth and new talent into manufacturing careers.	Manufacturers are rapidly adopting automation, robotics, and artificial intelligence to improve productivity, address labour shortages, and enhance supply chain processes. ⁸⁹ The recognition of LBMX, Digital Extremes, Western University, Open Text, and Trojan Technologies as Southwestern Ontario’s Top Employers for 2025 highlights a strong emphasis on employee engagement, positive workplace culture, and innovative human resources practices within the region’s advanced manufacturing sector. ⁹⁰

UNDERLEVERAGED SECTORS AND EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

While Location Quotient (LQ) analysis and recent reviews of London and LEDC documents highlight the city’s areas of comparative concentration and competitive advantage, it is equally important to examine sectors with lower LQ values. Often described as underleveraged or underrepresented, these industries may not currently dominate the local economy, but a low LQ does not equate to an absence of potential. Instead, it can signal untapped opportunities, avenues for diversification, or sectors poised for future growth.

For example, London’s mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction sector currently exhibits a low LQ (0.21) relative to Ontario. Nevertheless, emerging trends in critical minerals are creating long-term opportunities. Canada’s rising demand for minerals essential to batteries, electric vehicles, clean technologies, and advanced manufacturing is reshaping the resource landscape.⁹¹ While London may not serve as a direct mining hub, its established strengths in advanced manufacturing and academic research position it well to participate in the critical minerals value chain including mineral processing innovation, battery component manufacturing, recycling, and supply chain management.

⁸⁵ Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, *Manufacturing industry in London-Windsor corridor needs further investment in workforce development*, May 2025

⁸⁶ Employees in NAICS 31-33 Manufacturing Industries, Lightcast, datarun, 2025.5

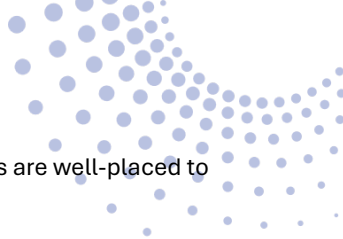
⁸⁷ CBRE Canada, *London Ontario Industrial Figures Q1 2025*, 2025

⁸⁸ Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, *Manufacturing industry in London-Windsor corridor needs further investment in workforce development*, May 2025

⁸⁹ London Economic Development Corporation, *Advanced Manufacturing*

⁹⁰ Tech Alliance, *LBMX, Digital Extremes, Western University, Open Text, Trojan Technologies named among SWO’s Top Employers*, 2025

⁹¹ Canada Climate Institute, *Securing Canada’s Place in the Global Critical Minerals Race*, June 2025



With the federal Critical Minerals Strategy⁹² emphasizing infrastructure, Indigenous partnerships, and ESG leadership, London-based firms and institutions are well-placed to develop technologies, services, and talent that support responsible resource development nationwide.

Similarly, although London’s information and cultural industries currently register a lower LQ compared to provincial benchmarks, the city is positioned to seize growing opportunities in artificial intelligence (AI) and information technology (IT). Nationally, rapid AI adoption and significant government investment are transforming business models, driving productivity, and increasing demand for specialized talent. Recent federal funding initiatives, such as the \$300 million investment announced in March 2025 to support affordable computing power for SMEs and develop Canadian-made AI solutions⁹³, further accelerate this trend. London’s robust post-secondary institutions and expanding research capacity create fertile ground for nurturing AI-driven start-ups, supporting digital transformation in traditional sectors, and fostering innovation partnerships.

In addition, London’s designation as a UNESCO City of Music⁹⁴ offers a unique platform to enhance the city’s profile and stimulate growth within its cultural industries. By leveraging this internationally recognized status, London can attract new audiences, creative talent, and investment, while further promoting the city as a vibrant cultural destination. Strong cultural and tourism sectors not only contribute to economic growth but also make London a more attractive place to live and work, helping to draw and retain top talent from across Canada and beyond.

CONCLUSION

London’s economy is defined by a diverse set of leading sectors that include Educational Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Services, Retail Trade, and Manufacturing, each contributing uniquely to the city’s growth and resilience. However, these sectors face evolving challenges, including labour shortages, technological disruption, demographic shifts, and global trade uncertainties.

Leading Sector	Key Competitiveness Advantages	Key Challenges & Trends
Educational Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust network of primary, secondary, and world-class post-secondary institutions • Significant student population and talent pipeline • Strong investment in research, innovation, and infrastructure • Skilled and experienced workforce • Diverse educational offerings and lifelong learning opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour shortages, especially among qualified teachers and support staff • Decline in international student enrolment due to federal cap • Closure of certain post-secondary programs • Ongoing tuition freezes reducing financial resources • Rapid adoption of digital/online learning platforms • Strong demand for ongoing skills development and lifelong learning
Health Care & Social Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World-class medical facilities and research institutions • Strong culture of innovation and collaboration among providers, academia, and industry • Skilled and diverse workforce • Significant investments in medical research, manufacturing, and technology • Comprehensive range of health and social services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour shortages (doctors, nurses, personal support workers) • Fragmented funding for integrated municipal responses • Growing demand for long-term care and youth mental health services • Aging population increasing service demand • Expansion of telehealth and digital health technologies

⁹² Government of Canada, [The Canadian Critical Minerals Strategy](#), 2023

⁹³ Government of Canada, [AI Compute Access Fund](#), March 2025

⁹⁴ London Music Office, [Canada’s first UNESCO City of Music](#)



Leading Sector	Key Competitiveness Advantages	Key Challenges & Trends
Accommodation & Food Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic location between major urban centres and U.S. border crossings • Vibrant hospitality scene with over 800 establishments • Skilled workforce supported by specialized training programs • Ongoing investment in tourism infrastructure and entertainment venues • Strong post-pandemic recovery in tourism spending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent workforce gaps and high proportion of part-time jobs • Inflationary pressures affecting costs and profitability • Suspension of some hospitality-related training programs • Increased Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) • Sensitivity to economic fluctuations and trade uncertainties • Shift in consumer preferences towards experiential and collaborative offerings • Growth in data-driven marketing and loyalty programs
Retail Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse mix of national chains and local boutiques (over 1,600 establishments) • Strategic position as a regional transportation hub • Growing population and consumer base • Supportive business environment and entrepreneurial resources • Embracing omni-channel and digital retail innovations • Strong investment from major retailers and e-commerce leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of Canada-U.S. tariffs and trade disputes raising costs • Store closures (e.g., Hudson’s Bay, Toys “R” Us, Peavey Mart) • Workforce and recruitment challenges • Need for seamless omni-channel and digital integration • Growing competition from e-commerce and international brands • Changing consumer habits (multi-channel purchasing, demand for convenience)
Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly diversified manufacturing base • Strategic access to North American and global markets • Presence of major industry leaders and headquarters • Skilled workforce and strong post-secondary training • Advanced research and innovation hubs (e.g., Western Advanced Manufacturing Park) • Rapid adoption of automation, robotics, and AI • Ongoing major investments in new manufacturing facilities and technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty from ongoing Canada-U.S. tariff disputes • Slowing growth due to economic headwinds and reduced export demand • Acute labour shortages and aging workforce • Need to attract youth and new talent • Increased industrial real estate availability, reduction in new construction • Rapid technological change: automation, robotics, AI adoption • Emphasis on workplace culture and employee engagement

As London continues to recover from recent economic shocks and positions itself for long-term prosperity, it is critical to leverage local strengths, foster innovation, and ensure inclusive growth. The insights from the PEST analysis highlight both the opportunities and external pressures shaping each sector. Moving forward, active engagement with local communities will be essential to refine priorities, identify actionable strategies, and build a resilient economic development roadmap that benefits all Londoners.



Taking a Deeper Look – Economic Participation of London's Underrepresented Communities

INTRODUCTION

Estimates show that more than 40,000 new workers will be needed by 2031 to address growth, change, and retirements in London's key sectors: Information Technology, Health, Advanced Manufacturing (including Food Processing), and Construction. With recent changes to Canada's immigration policies signalling that employers may need to rely less on newcomers to meet their workforce needs, London's economic success could depend on increasing the current population's participation in the labour market.

Census data indicates about 15% (43,695) of the city's prime working-age population (25-54 years old) are not working or actively seeking employment.⁹⁵ Based on London's average employment income of \$45,160⁹⁶, if as many as half of this group could find their way to employment, more than \$900 million⁹⁷ in earnings would be added to the local economy. For many, barriers to participation include a mismatch between skills and available jobs, health concerns (physical, mental, addictions), lack of childcare, work schedule flexibility, perceived discrimination, and access to transportation. A 2021 study estimates that between 30,000 and 40,000 prime-age non-participants could be available to enter London's labour market if such barriers to participation were addressed.⁹⁸

Participation in the labour market is highest for prime working-age men who are not visible minorities (this group recorded a participation rate of 87.4%), with 89.7% of immigrant men and 87.2% of non-immigrant men actively working or seeking employment⁹⁹. Underrepresented communities have lower participation rates and more difficulty finding employment, particularly when considering the intersectionality of gender, age, visible minority, and immigrant status when identifying under-represented groups. The economic participation of underrepresented communities in London has a direct impact on the city's overall economic growth, social equity, and community well-being.

IMMIGRANTS, NEWCOMERS AND RACIALIZED PEOPLE

London's entrepreneurs are more likely to be immigrants than not.¹⁰⁰ While 12.7% of non-immigrants are self-employed, compared to 19.5% of immigrants.¹⁰¹ London is home to the highest proportion of immigrant entrepreneurs in Ontario, surpassing Toronto where 19.2% of entrepreneurs are immigrants. Programs such as the London Small Business Centre's "Starter Company Plus" and "Foodpreneur Advantage" have supported many immigrant entrepreneurs in starting and growing their small businesses.

Recent surges in immigration saw more than 19,685 immigrants and 19,220 non-permanent residents move to London (CY) between 2016 and 2021, with 70% of newcomers born in Asian countries and 12% in African countries.¹⁰² Over the same period, a rapid and significant transformation in workplace composition is marked by an 83.1% increase in immigrants in the region's workforce.¹⁰³ London Economic Development Corporation reports that 23.1% of London's workforce are immigrants, with top countries of origin including India, Syria, and the Philippines.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁵ Statistics Canada. [Table 98-10-0436-01](#). Labour force status by visible minority, highest level of education and immigrant status: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions with a population 5,000 or more

⁹⁶ Statistics Canada, [2021 Census](#), Average employment income in 2020 among recipients (\$)

⁹⁷ The estimate is calculated by multiplying the population by the previously mentioned average employment income, and then by 50%.

⁹⁸ City of London, [Labour market participation in the London Economic Region](#), August 2021

⁹⁹ Statistics Canada. [Table 98-10-0436-01](#). Labour force status by visible minority, highest level of education and immigrant status: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions with a population 5,000 or more

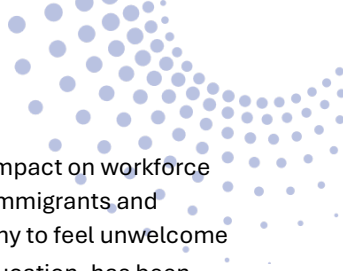
¹⁰⁰ Immigrant refers to a person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this group.

¹⁰¹ CBC News, [London's immigrants are more self-made than in other Ontario cities, report says](#), August, 2024

¹⁰² Statistics Canada, [2021 Census of Population](#)

¹⁰³ LEDC, [2025 – 2026 Local Labour Market Plan](#)

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.



While employers depend on immigration to meet workforce needs, the experience of newcomers in the workplace is not always positive, with a potential impact on workforce retention. A 2023 study prepared for the City of London by the Network for Economic and Social Trends (NEST) at Western University found that London's immigrants and racialized individuals experience significant discrimination, microaggressions, and overt racism in the workplace as well as in the community, causing many to feel unwelcome and consider leaving the community.¹⁰⁵ Discouragement, largely due to perceived discrimination and a lack of opportunities that match their skills and education, has been identified as the primary barrier keeping up to 8,000 - 8,500 prime-age immigrants currently living in London from participating in the labour market.¹⁰⁶

A strategic priority for the City of London is fostering and leveraging strategic partnerships that promote collaboration, innovation, and investment in business and employment. Programs like the City's International Student Graduate Internship initiative provide valuable skill development opportunities and employment experience for recent international graduates. The City also provides support for TechAlliance, which delivers talent programs that include micro-placements, a talent exchange, and a connecting program for newcomers.

Almost 18% of London's workforce are members of racialized communities, represented primarily by South Asian, Arab, and Black groups.¹⁰⁷ The 2021 Census reported 15.2% unemployment for visible minorities compared to just 11.6% for the rest of the population in London CMA. Survey results indicate that a sense of discouragement and perceived discrimination from employers has led many to withdraw from the labour market, affecting thousands of people who would otherwise be available to work.¹⁰⁸

WOMEN

London's population in 2021 included more than 179,000 working-aged women (15+).¹⁰⁹ The lowest participation rate is seen for prime-age racialized immigrant women, at just 70.6%, a stark contrast to the 83.6% participation rate for prime-age women who are not racialized or immigrants.¹¹⁰ Racialized immigrant women also experience the highest rates of unemployment, with 14.5% actively seeking work compared to just 8.9% non-racialized, non-immigrant men.¹¹¹

While low participation in the labour market may be partly due to lack of available childcare, the participation rate only increases to 71.4% for 45-54 years, who also have an unemployment rate of 13% compared to just 8.8% for non-visible minority immigrants in the same age group.¹¹² Women identify barriers such as lack of transportation, unavailability of jobs that match their schedule, and a lack of well-paying jobs. Removal of these barriers could enable 22,000-29,000 women to enter the workforce.¹¹³

For women aged 45-54 years, non-immigrant women who are visible minorities have a similar participation rate (83.5%) and unemployment rate (7.7%) to those who are not visible minorities (83.6% and 7.6%). Immigrant women in this age group have a 71.4% participation rate and 13% unemployment rate if they are a visible minority, and 80.3% and 8.8% if not.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁵ City of London, [An in-depth look at the discrimination experienced by immigrants and racialized individuals in London and Middlesex, and strategies for combatting this discrimination](#), 2023

¹⁰⁶ City of London, [Labour market participation in the London Economic Region](#), August 2021

¹⁰⁷ Statistics Canada, [2021 Census of Population](#)

¹⁰⁸ City of London, [Labour market participation in the London Economic Region](#), August 2021

¹⁰⁹ Statistics Canada, [2021 Census of Population](#)

¹¹⁰ Statistics Canada. [Table 98-10-0436-01](#). Labour force status by visible minority, highest level of education and immigrant status: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions with a population 5,000 or more.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Statistics Canada. [Table 98-10-0436-01](#). Labour force status by visible minority, highest level of education and immigrant status: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions with a population 5,000 or more

¹¹³ City of London, [Labour market participation in the London Economic Region](#), August 2021

¹¹⁴ Statistics Canada. [Table 98-10-0436-01](#). Labour force status by visible minority, highest level of education and immigrant status: Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions and census subdivisions with a population 5,000 or more.



PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Approximately 29% of the population (age 15 years and over) in the London region (London Census Metropolitan Area) reports having some form of disability, according to the 2022 survey by Statistics Canada¹¹⁵. A lack of transportation stands out as a significant obstacle for prime-age individuals with a disability or physical health condition; 23% of respondents in a 2021 City of London survey identified transportation issues as a factor in their non-participation, compared to 16% of those without physical disabilities.¹¹⁶ Prime-age respondents with a health condition are also more likely to report that employer discrimination is a reason for not participating in the workforce (25% versus 14% among those without a health condition).¹¹⁷ Additionally, 59.4% of those not participating in the work force due to a health condition indicate that they are unable to work due to a mental health condition.¹¹⁸ Supports for these individuals may need to address mental health needs in addition to physical accommodations.

INDIGENOUS POPULATION

2.3% of London's workforce identifies as Indigenous, slightly lower than 2.9% for Ontario overall.¹¹⁹ According to Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., barriers to Indigenous participation in the workforce relate to literacy and education, cultural differences, discrimination, self-esteem, poverty and housing, and transportation.¹²⁰

CONCLUSION

London's future economic growth and resilience will depend on whether the city's labour market becomes more accessible and inclusive for underrepresented communities. With significant numbers of prime working-age residents currently not participating in the workforce, London's full economic potential can only be realized through coordinated efforts to remove obstacles. Targeted supports and strong partnerships between government, employers, and various agencies are essential to promote equity, unlock talent, and ensure all Londoners, regardless of background, can contribute to and benefit from growth. Proactively confronting these issues will help address labour shortages in critical sectors and foster a more vibrant, equitable, and sustainable local economy.

To facilitate meaningful engagement, Deloitte created snapshots of London's key sectors for use during workshops with industry leaders. These snapshots include essential data insights found in the discussion papers above, as well as information from the community profile in the next section. They may also feature additional sector-specific data designed to support workshop discussions. The snapshots are available on the City of London Get Involved website, which can be accessed through the following link:

- [City of London Economic Development Strategy | Get Involved London](#)

¹¹⁵ Statistics Canada, *Persons with and without disabilities aged 15 years and over, census metropolitan areas*, [Table: 13-10-0750-01](#), 2022

¹¹⁶ City of London, [Labour market participation in the London Economic Region](#), page 44, August 2021

¹¹⁷ Ibid, page 44.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, page 55.

¹¹⁹ London Economic Development Corporation, *2025 – 2026 Local Labour Market Plan*

¹²⁰ Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., [8 Basic Barriers to Indigenous Employment](#). 2025.



APPENDIX F: MARKET ANALYSIS AND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PROFILE

This Community Profile provides the City of London with a current analysis of economic, demographic, workforce, and real estate statistics. The analysis in this section will be used to develop an understanding of the London socio-economic environment to inform the strategy development.

Key Takeaways¹²¹



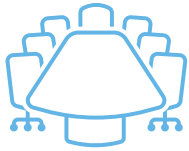
Rapid Growth and Young Demographics: London's population grew by 10.0% between 2016 and 2021 (to 422,324), outpacing Ontario's 5.8%. Projections show a further 15.7% increase from 2021 to 2024. The city has a higher proportion of children (16.3% vs. 15.8% Ontario) and young adults (15.3% ages 25–34 vs. 13.8% Ontario), providing a strong workforce base.



Sectoral Strengths and Economic Recovery: Employment has rebounded from the pandemic, surpassing pre-pandemic levels to reach 220,613 jobs in 2024. Health Care and Social Assistance (16.0% of jobs; 35,308 jobs) and Educational Services (10.8%; 23,936 jobs) are leading sectors, both with high location quotients (1.36 and 1.38, respectively). However, tourism, hospitality, creative industries, culture and small businesses have taken a huge hit in employment changes in 5 years. The Information and Cultural Industries declined by 26% (down 976 jobs since 2019). The Accommodation and Food Services industry, which affects the tourism and hospitality sector, also lost 1,442 jobs since 2019.¹²²

¹²¹ Please note that the data points in the Key Takeaways are summarized from the data insights, tables, and charts found in the following sub-sections of the Community Profile, where source references are provided. For detailed references, please refer to those sub-sections.

¹²² Lightcast, datarun, 2025.5. For more details, see Figure 12.



Business and Entrepreneurial Environment: London is home to 59,783 businesses (as of December 2024), with 73% (43,457) being self-employed or sole proprietorships. Real Estate and Rental and Leasing leads with 13,184 businesses, most of which are without employees.



Shifting Labour Market: The strongest job growth from 2019 to 2024 was in Natural and Applied Sciences (+6,910 jobs, +43%) and Health Occupations (+3,748 jobs, +16%). Sales and Service jobs declined by 5,004 (-7%), and Manufacturing and Utilities by 713 jobs (-3%), reflecting a shift toward knowledge-based sectors. London's average income remains well below the provincial average (\$50,440 vs \$56,350 in 2020), and the income gap has widened slightly as Ontario's average income grew faster over the past five years.



Real Estate Market Trends: Industrial space inventory increased to 42.4 million sq. ft. by Q1 2025, with vacancy rates rising from 0.6% to 2.5% year-over-year. Office vacancy remains elevated at 22.4% in Q1 2025, with negative net absorption (-37,874 sq. ft.), indicating ongoing challenges in the office market. Less than half of London's dwellings are single-detached houses (below the Ontario average), and there's a notable prevalence of apartments (34% vs 31% for Ontario), suggesting a faster densification trend.

Data Overview

This section of the report includes data for the City of London (Census Subdivision) and the Middlesex County (Census Division). The following data sources were used in developing this economic baseline analysis for the Region of Portage la Prairie.

- Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Counts, December 2024
- Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021, 2016, 2011
- Lightcast Economic Modeling, datarun 2025.5¹²³

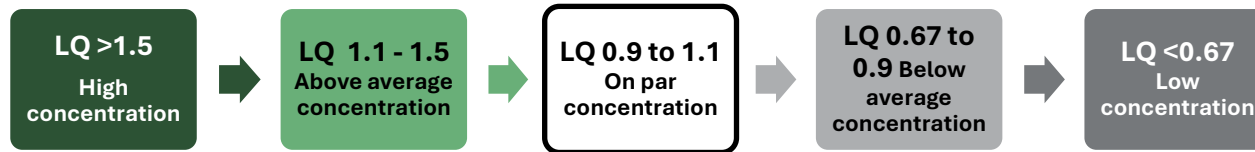
The December 2024 Canadian Business Counts were used to determine the total number of registered businesses in the City of London. Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts Data provides a record of business establishments by industry and size. This data is collected from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). The business data collected includes all local businesses that met at least one of the three following criteria: Have an employee workforce for which they submit payroll remittances to CRA, or have a minimum of \$30,000 in annual sales revenue, or are incorporated under a federal or provincial act and have filed a federal corporate income tax form within the past three years.

¹²³ Deloitte leverages data from Lightcast for socio-economic analysis. Lightcast provides a comprehensive dataset on Canadian industries, occupations, and demographics by integrating multiple data sources into a single, consistent platform, updated biannually. This combined dataset, which includes Canadian Business Counts, enables us to assess the most current and relevant information on local and regional economic performance. For detailed information on Lightcast's data collection methodologies and assumptions, please refer to: [CA - Canada Methodology | Lightcast Knowledge Base](#)

The 2021 Census of Population is the latest and most widely available data product offered by Statistics Canada. To the date (May 2025) the data available through the Census profiles include population, age of population, dwelling trends, income trends, commuting patterns, immigration, status of population and educational attainment.

LOCATION QUOTIENT ANALYSIS

As part of this economic baseline analysis, the Location Quotient (LQ) Analysis was completed to determine the concentration of industries (businesses) in the City of London relative to the Province of Ontario. It reveals what makes a region unique. The LQ's Classifications are as follows:



While the LQ is a valuable tool for benchmarking London's industry mix against the broader provincial context, it is important to recognize its interpretive limits. Specifically, the LQ indicates the current relative concentration of industries in London but does not prescribe "what ought to be" in terms of ideal sector composition. Each city has a unique economic history, demographic profile, and set of strategic priorities, meaning there is no universally optimal industry mix.

Instead, the LQ should be viewed as a starting point for deeper analysis and strategic discussion. High LQ values may point to sectors where London has competitive advantages, while low LQ values may reveal opportunities for diversification or targeted growth. Ultimately, the LQ provides a factual basis for comparing London's industry strengths and weaknesses to the provincial average, supporting evidence-based decision-making in the development of economic strategies tailored to the city's unique context.

SHIFT-SHARE ANALYSIS

Shift-share analysis is a valuable tool used to understand the dynamics of employment changes within a specific region by decomposing these changes into three distinct effects: the national growth effect, the industrial mix effect, and the regional competitive effect.

The national growth effect quantifies the number of jobs an industry is expected to gain or lose based on its national employment trends, suggesting that industries experiencing net job growth at the national level will likely see similar trends in various regions.

- **The industrial mix effect** assesses the expected job changes within a region's industries, reflecting the national growth or decline patterns of those industries. This effect assumes that if an industry is expanding or contracting nationally, similar trends should manifest in smaller regions.

The regional competitive effect captures the job changes attributable to the unique competitive advantages of a region. This effect isolates the portion of employment change that cannot be explained by national trends or industry-specific dynamics, highlighting the region's distinctive attributes that contribute to its economic performance.

Together, these components provide a comprehensive view of how and why employment shifts occur in a region, offering insights into both external influences and intrinsic regional strengths.



Demographic Characteristics

HISTORIC POPULATION GROWTH

In 2021, the City of London recorded a population of 422,324, reflecting a 10.0% increase since 2016. This growth translates to an addition of 38,502 residents over the five-year period. When compared to the previous five-year span from 2011 to 2016, which saw a population increase of 17,671 (or 4.8%), the recent data indicates a significant acceleration in population growth. This surge has notably outpaced the provincial averages, underscoring the city's expanding development.

Figure 4 - Population Growth, 2011 - 2021, City of London (Census Subdivision)

Census Year	London (City, Census Subdivision)	Ontario
2011 Census	366,151	12,851,821
2016 Census	383,822	13,448,494
2021 Census	422,324	14,223,942
5-year change (2016-2021)	38,502	775,448
5-year % change (2016-2021)	10.0%	5.8%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021 Census, 2016 Census, 2011 Census

Recent estimates from Statistics Canada indicate a continued upward trend in population growth for the City of London. Unlike census figures, these estimates for 2022 to 2024 are not dependent on responses to the census survey, providing a different perspective on demographic changes. It is projected that London's population will grow by 15.70% from the 2021 census figures to the estimated figures for 2024¹²⁴, surpassing the provincial growth rate of 13.4%.

Figure 5 - Population Estimates, 2022 - 2024, City of London (Census Subdivision)

Census Year	London (City, Census Subdivision)	Ontario
2021 Census	422,324	14,223,942
2022 Estimate	455,319	15,141,455
2023 Estimate	472,539	15,623,207
2024 Estimate	488,640	16,124,116

¹²⁴ The Census of Population, conducted by Statistics Canada every five years, provides a comprehensive statistical portrait of Canada's demographic, social, and economic characteristics. In the years between each census, Statistics Canada produces annual population estimates through its population estimates program. These estimates, known as postcensal estimates, are based on the most recent census counts (e.g., 2021 Census), adjusted for factors such as census net undercoverage and incompletely enumerated reserves and settlements. As a result, tables may display "estimates" and "projections" for years between and following census periods.



Census Year	London (City, Census Subdivision)	Ontario
4-year % change (2021-2024)	15.7%	13.4%

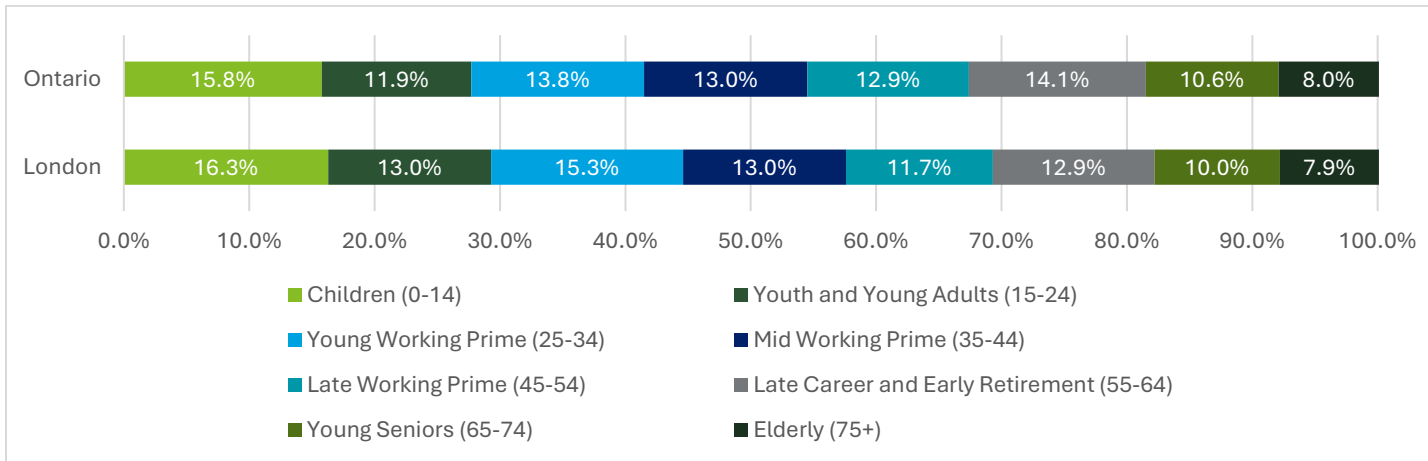
Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021 Census; Population estimates, July 1, by census subdivision, 2021 boundaries

POPULATION AGE

The population age distribution in the City of London shows some distinct trends compared to Ontario. London has a higher percentage of younger residents, with 16.3% being children (ages 0-14) compared to 15.8% in Ontario, and 13.0% are youth and young adults (ages 15-24) compared to 11.9% provincially. The city also has a higher proportion of young working prime individuals (ages 25-34) at 15.3%, versus 13.8% for Ontario, suggesting a strong presence of early-career professionals.

In contrast, London has a lower percentage of late working prime individuals (ages 45-54) at 11.7%, compared to 12.9% in Ontario, and fewer residents in the late career and early retirement group (ages 55-64) at 12.9% versus 14.1% provincially. The city's share of young seniors (ages 65-74) and elderly (75+) is also slightly lower than the provincial averages.

Figure 6 - Population Share by Age Group, 2021, City of London (City, Census Subdivision)



Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021 Census

INCOME

The average total income in London among Census recipient was \$50,440 in 2020, which is lower than Ontario's average of \$56,350. In 2015, London's average income was \$43,663, also below the provincial average of \$47,915. Over the five years, London saw an income increase of \$6,777 (15.5%), while Ontario's grew by \$8,435 (17.6%). Despite positive growth in both regions, London's average income remains consistently below that of Ontario.



Figure 7 - Average Total Income among Census Recipient, 2021 and 2016, City of London (Census Subdivision)

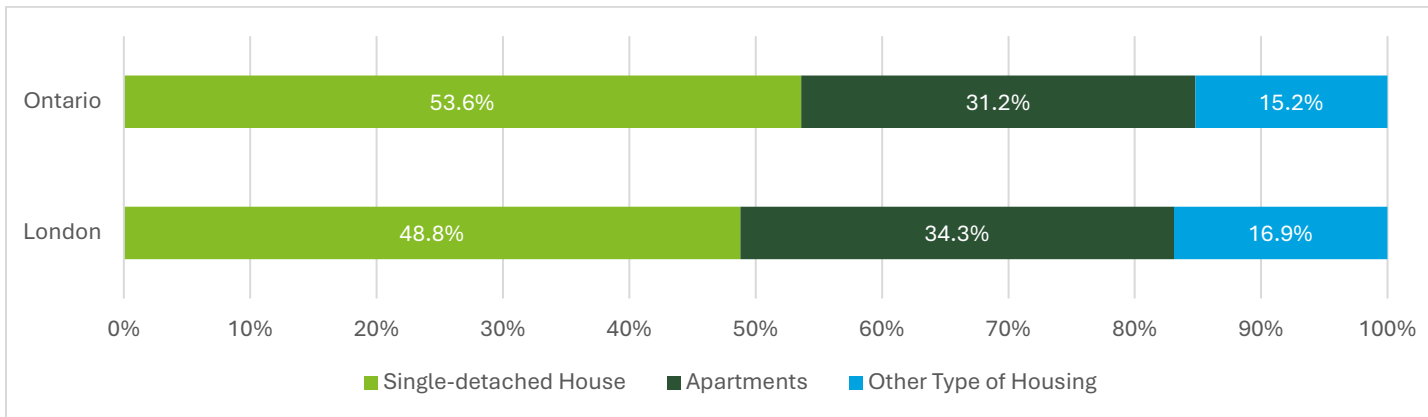
Year	London (City, Census Subdivision)	Ontario
2020 (2021 Census)	\$50,440	\$56,350
2015 (2016 Census)	\$43,663	\$47,915

Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021 Census, 2016 Census

DWELLINGS

According to the 2021 Census data from Statistics Canada, London's housing stock consists of a diverse range of dwelling types. Single-detached houses make up 48.8% of the housing in London, which is slightly lower than the provincial average of 53.6% in Ontario. Apartments account for 34.3% of dwellings in London, surpassing the provincial figure of 31.2%, indicating a significant presence of medium to high-density housing options. Additionally, other types of housing comprise 16.9% of London's dwellings, compared to 15.2% in Ontario.

Figure 8 - Occupied Private Dwelling by Type, 2021, City of London (Census Subdivision)



Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2021 Census



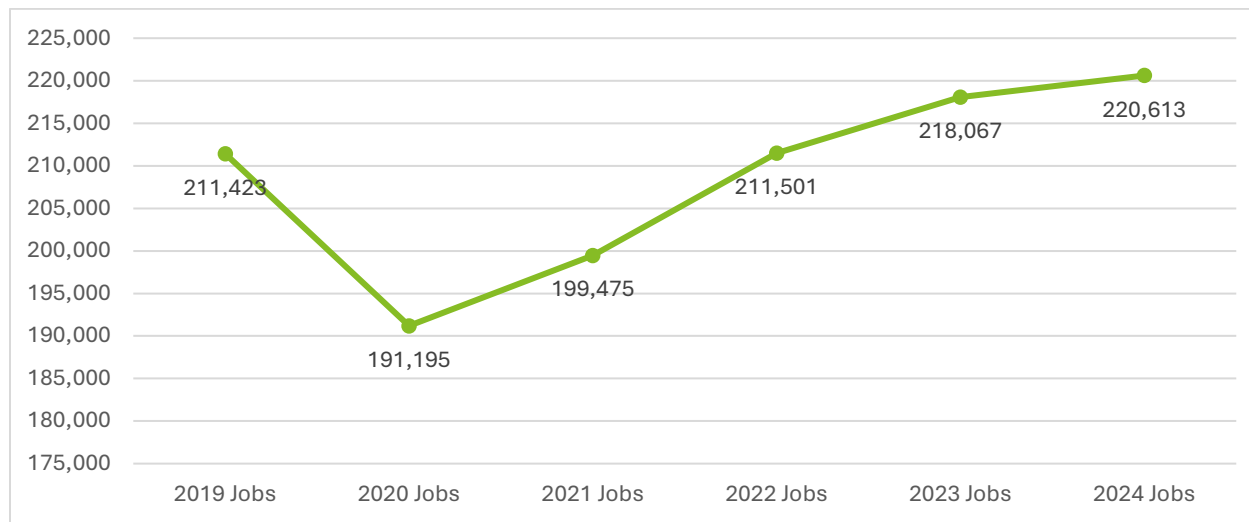
Employment Characteristics

HISTORIC GROWTH

In 2019, total employment in the City of London was 211,423 jobs. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led to a significant decline in employment, with the total dropping to 191,195 jobs, a decrease of approximately 9.6% from the previous year. By 2021, the city's employment figures began to recover, reaching 199,475 jobs, marking a 4.3% increase from 2020.

The recovery continued into 2022, with employment surpassing pre-pandemic levels at 211,501 jobs. From 2022 to 2023, total employment increased by 6,566 jobs, reaching 218,067 jobs. This positive trend continued into 2024, with employment rise to 220,613 jobs.

Figure 9 - Employment in City of London (Census Subdivision), 2019 - 2024



Source: Lightcast, datarun, 2025.5

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY SECTOR

In 2024, the employment landscape in London is characterized by a diverse range of industries, each contributing significantly to the city's economic fabric. Leading the employment sectors is Health Care and Social Assistance, with 35,308 jobs. Educational Services also play a pivotal role, with 23,936 jobs. Manufacturing remains a cornerstone of the local economy, supporting 19,985 jobs across a diverse array of activities, while the Accommodation and Food Services sector employs 17,397 people, highlighting the city's vibrant hospitality and tourism industry.



Figure 10 - Employment by Industry Sector, City of London (Census Subdivision), 2-digit NAICS, 2024

NAICS	Description	2024 Jobs	Employment by Industry Sector (2024)
62	Health care and social assistance	35,308	16.0%
44-45	Retail trade	24,796	11.2%
61	Educational services	23,936	10.8%
31-33	Manufacturing	19,985	9.1%
72	Accommodation and food services	17,397	7.9%
54	Professional, scientific and technical services	13,484	6.1%
52	Finance and insurance	11,664	5.3%
91	Public administration	11,509	5.2%
23	Construction	11,473	5.2%
56	Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	10,526	4.8%
41	Wholesale trade	9,802	4.4%
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	8,272	3.7%
81	Other services (except public administration)	6,619	3.0%
	Unclassified	3,843	1.7%
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	3,616	1.6%
71	Arts, entertainment and recreation	3,256	1.5%
51	Information and cultural industries	2,720	1.2%
55	Management of companies and enterprises	894	0.4%
22	Utilities	793	0.4%
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	528	0.2%
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	190	0.1%
	Total Employment	220,613	

Source: Lightcast, datarun, 2025.5

The Location Quotient analysis provides further insights into the employment concentration in London compared to the broader Ontario. The Educational Services sector in London stands out with an LQ of 1.38, indicating a significantly higher concentration of employment compared to the provincial average. This suggests that London is a hub for educational activities, likely driven by major institutions such as Western University and Fanshawe College. Similarly, the Health Care and Social Assistance sector has an LQ of 1.36, reflecting its critical role and robust presence in the city, possibly due to a strong network of healthcare facilities and services.

The Accommodation and Food Services sector also shows a higher concentration with an LQ of 1.18, underscoring the importance of tourism and hospitality in London's economy. Retail Trade, with an LQ of 1.09, indicates a slightly higher concentration, suggesting a vibrant retail market catering to both residents and visitors.

Conversely, several sectors in London have a lower employment concentration compared to Ontario. The Utilities sector has an LQ of 0.50. Similarly, the Information and Cultural Industries sector, with an LQ of 0.59.

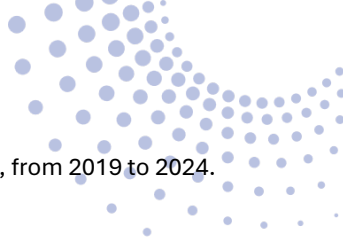
Figure 11 - Location Quotient Analysis, City of London (Census Subdivision) and Ontario, 2024

NAICS	Description	London		Ontario		LQ
		Employment	Employment Distribution (%)	Employment	Employment Distribution (%)	
61	Educational services	23,936	10.8%	562,544	7.8%	1.38
62	Health care and social assistance	35,308	16.0%	847,543	11.8%	1.36
72	Accommodation and food services	17,397	7.9%	481,384	6.7%	1.18
44-45	Retail trade	24,796	11.2%	737,258	10.3%	1.09
X0	Unclassified	3,843	1.7%	125,884	1.8%	0.99
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	3,616	1.6%	121,971	1.7%	0.96
31-33	Manufacturing	19,985	9.1%	680,547	9.5%	0.96
52	Finance and insurance	11,664	5.3%	402,225	5.6%	0.94
56	Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	10,526	4.8%	372,799	5.2%	0.92
23	Construction	11,473	5.2%	406,664	5.7%	0.92



NAICS	Description	London		Ontario		LQ
		Employment	Employment Distribution (%)	Employment	Employment Distribution (%)	
81	Other services (except public administration)	6,619	3.0%	238,912	3.3%	0.90
41	Wholesale trade	9,802	4.4%	358,652	5.0%	0.89
71	Arts, entertainment and recreation	3,256	1.5%	120,094	1.7%	0.88
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	8,272	3.7%	311,918	4.3%	0.86
54	Professional, scientific and technical services	13,484	6.1%	544,811	7.6%	0.81
91	Public administration	11,509	5.2%	534,330	7.4%	0.70
55	Management of companies and enterprises	894	0.4%	48,494	0.7%	0.60
51	Information and cultural industries	2,720	1.2%	149,284	2.1%	0.59
22	Utilities	793	0.4%	51,813	0.7%	0.50
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	528	0.2%	50,619	0.7%	0.34
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	190	0.1%	29,552	0.4%	0.21

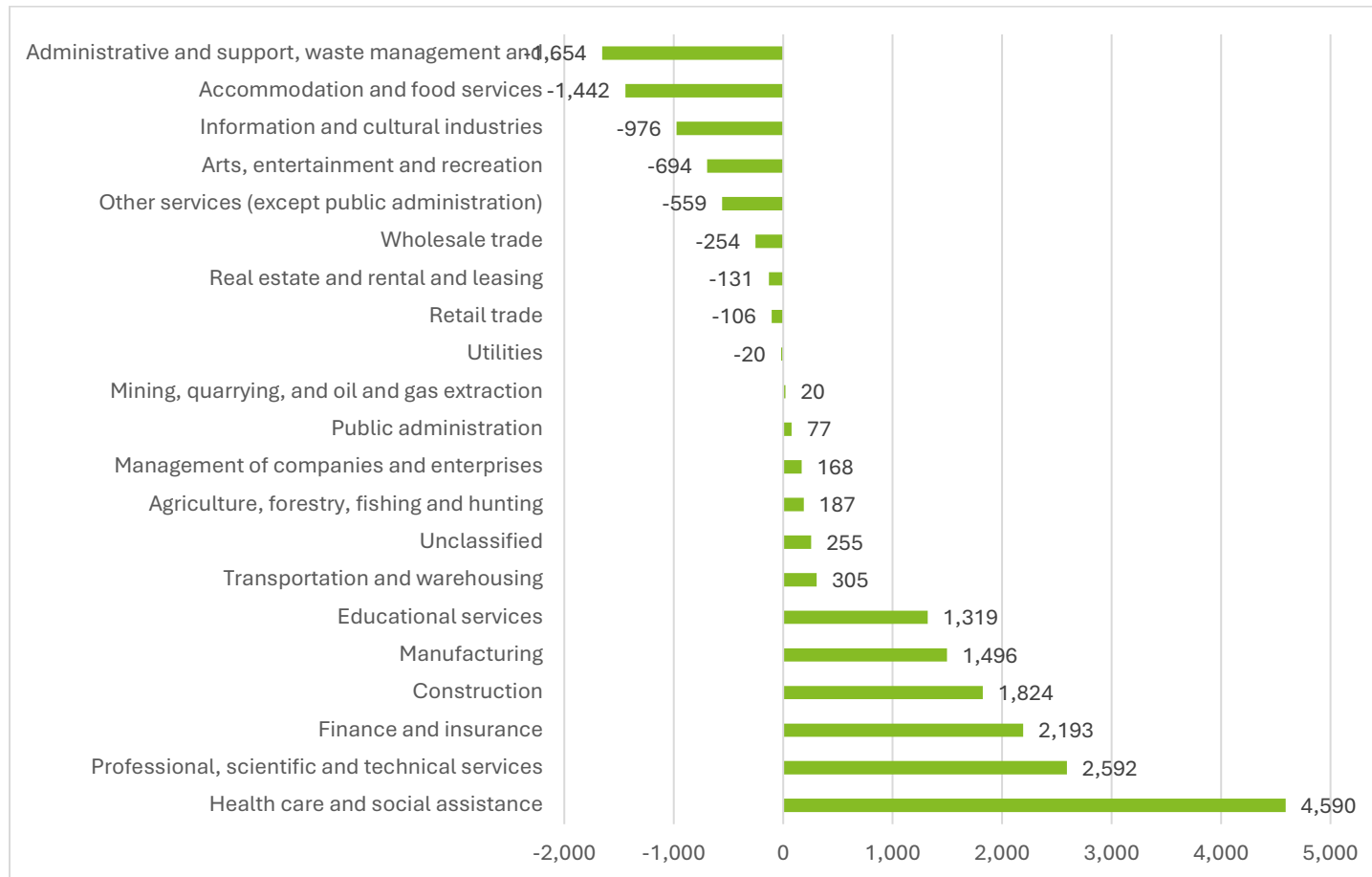
Source: Lightcast, datarun, 2025.5



The Health Care and Social Assistance sector experienced the greatest growth among 2-digit NAICS industries in London, increasing by 4,590 jobs, or 15%, from 2019 to 2024. Similarly, the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sector grew by 2,592 jobs, marking a 24% increase.

Conversely, several sectors faced employment declines. The Information and Cultural Industries sector experienced the most significant reduction, losing 976 jobs, or 26% relative to the number of employed in this sector. The Accommodation and Food Services sector saw a decrease of 1,442 jobs, or 8%, reflecting the impact of the pandemic and subsequent recovery efforts. Administrative and Support, Waste Management, and Remediation Services experienced the most significant decline in employment, decreased by 1,654 jobs.

Figure 12 - Historical Employment Changes, City of London (Census Subdivision), 2-digit NAICS, 2019 - 2024



Source: Lightcast, datarun, 2025.5

EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

The following employment data for London (City, Census Subdivision) from 2019 to 2024, categorized by occupation using the 1-digit National Occupational Classification (NOC) code, provides insights into the evolving workforce landscape.

From 2019 to 2024, the Natural and Applied Sciences and Related Occupations (NOC 2) category experienced the most substantial growth, increasing by 5,633 jobs, or 41%. Health Occupations (NOC 3) also saw significant growth, adding 2,816 jobs, a 15% increase. These trends underscore the expanding healthcare and life science sector in London.

Conversely, Sales and Service Occupations (NOC 6) experienced a notable decline, losing 5,915 jobs, or 10%. Occupations in Manufacturing and Utilities (NOC 9) decreased by 845 jobs, reflecting a 6% decline.



Figure 13 – Employment by Occupation Category, City of London (Census Subdivision), 1-digit NOC, 2019 - 2024

NOC	Description	2019 Jobs	2024 Jobs	2019 - 2024 Change	2019 - 2024 % Change
6	Sales and service occupations ¹²⁵	62,050	56,135	-5,915	-10%
9	Occupations in manufacturing and utilities	14,690	13,845	-845	-6%
5	Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	3,875	3,631	-244	-6%
0	Legislative and senior management occupations	388	438	50	13%
8	Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations	2,128	2,340	212	10%
X	Unclassified occupation	3,588	3,843	255	7%
4	Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services	26,899	28,924	2,025	8%
7	Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	29,940	31,976	2,036	7%
3	Health occupations	19,365	22,181	2,816	15%
1	Business, finance and administration occupations	34,786	37,954	3,168	9%
2	Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	13,713	19,346	5,633	41%
	Total	211,422	220,613	9,191	4%

Source: Lightcast, datarun, 2025.5

When looking at the LQ analysis of London’s employment by occupation, it is found that Health Occupations (NOC 3) in London have a significantly higher concentration compared to the provincial average, with an LQ of 1.41. This indicates that London is a hub for healthcare-related employment. In contrast, several occupations have a lower concentration in London compared to Ontario. Occupations in Art, Culture, Recreation, and Sport (NOC 5) show a lower concentration, with an LQ of 0.79, highlighting potential opportunities for growth in cultural and recreational activities. Legislative and Senior Management Occupations (NOC 0) have the lowest concentration, with an LQ of 0.49, suggesting fewer high-level management roles in London compared to Ontario.

¹²⁵ Sales and service occupations in the [National Occupational Classification \(NOC\)](#) 2021 include a wide range of roles focused on selling goods or services and providing customer support. These occupations fall under major group 6, and include roles like retail salespersons, customer service representatives, and other sales-related positions.



Figure 14 - Location Quotient Analysis, City of London (Census Subdivision) and Ontario, 2024

NOC	Description	London		Ontario		LQ
		Employment	Employment Distribution (%)	Employment	Employment Distribution (%)	
3	Health occupations	22,181	10.1%	511,702	7.1%	1.41
6	Sales and service occupations	56,135	25.4%	1,719,545	24.0%	1.06
4	Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services	28,924	13.1%	896,547	12.5%	1.05
7	Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	31,976	14.5%	997,871	13.9%	1.04
9	Occupations in manufacturing and utilities	13,845	6.3%	441,862	6.2%	1.02
X	Unclassified occupation	3,843	1.7%	125,884	1.8%	0.99
1	Business, finance and administration occupations	37,954	17.2%	1,423,939	19.8%	0.87
8	Natural resources, agriculture and related production occupations	2,340	1.1%	88,552	1.2%	0.86
2	Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	19,346	8.8%	793,546	11.1%	0.79
5	Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	3,631	1.6%	148,837	2.1%	0.79
0	Legislative and senior management occupations	438	0.2%	29,012	0.4%	0.49

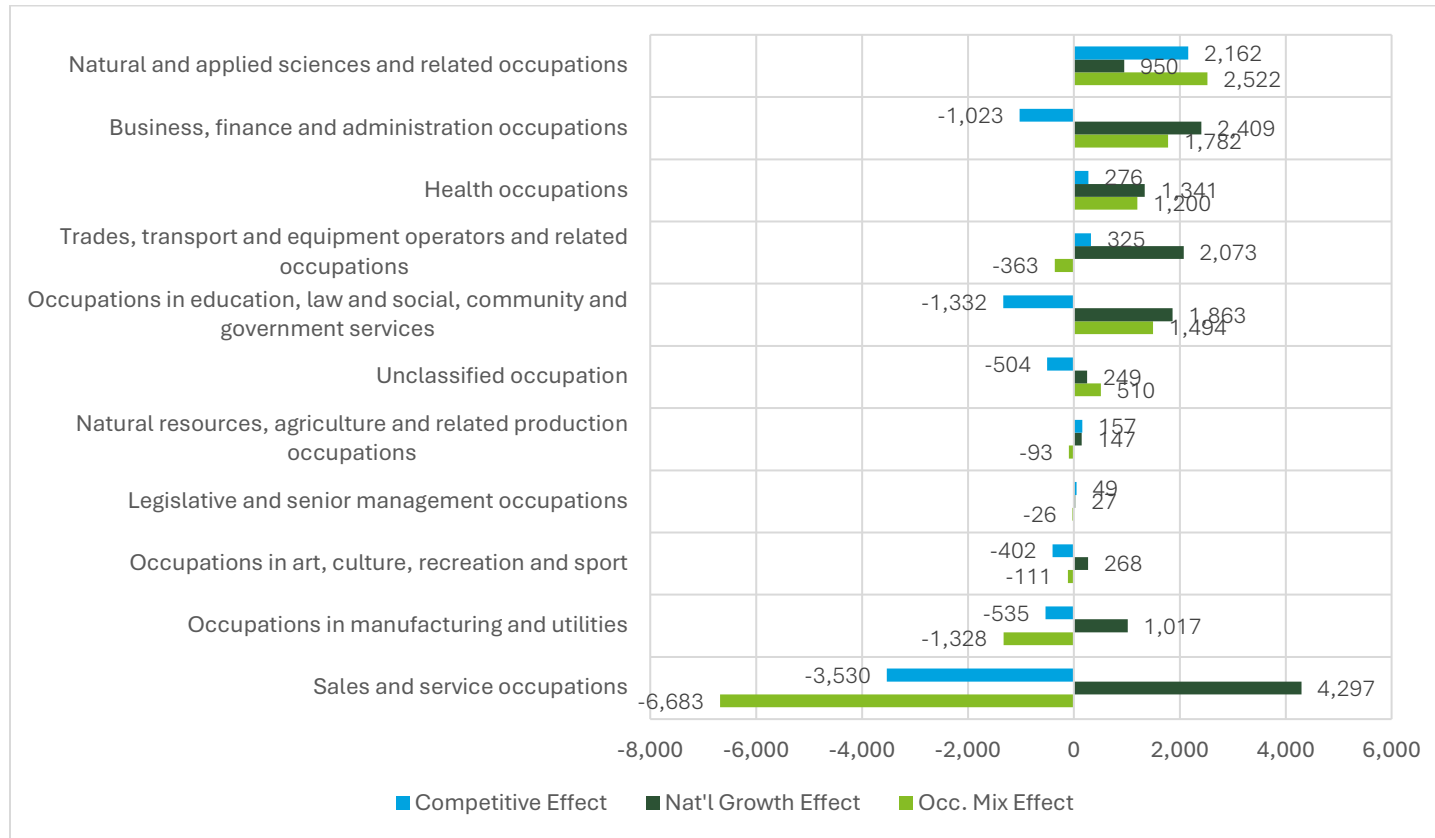
Source: Lightcast, datarun, 2025.5

The shift-share analysis of employment by 1-digit NOC codes in London between 2019 and 2024 reveals a dynamic and evolving labour market. Over this period, London experienced both job growth and decline across different occupational groups, driven by a combination of national economic trends, industry-specific patterns, and unique regional factors.

Notably, the largest absolute job growth occurred in Natural and Applied Sciences (NOC 2), which added 5,633 jobs, a 41% increase. This growth was strongly supported by both positive industrial mix and competitive effects, indicating that London not only benefited from national expansion in this sector but also demonstrated unique local strengths that outpaced broader trends. Health Occupations (NOC 3) and Business, Finance, and Administration (NOC 1) also saw significant job increases, reflecting both national sectoral growth and a favourable local environment.

Conversely, Sales and Service Occupations (NOC 6) experienced the largest decline, with a loss of 5,915 jobs (down 10%). The negative industrial mix effect suggests that this sector faced national headwinds, while the additional negative competitive effect indicates that London’s local conditions further exacerbated these losses beyond what national trends would predict. Similar patterns of decline were observed in Manufacturing and Utilities (NOC 9) and Arts, Culture, Recreation and Sport (NOC 5), where negative competitive effects suggest local challenges beyond sector-wide contraction.

Figure 15 – Shift-Share Analysis, City of London (Census Subdivision), 2019 - 2024

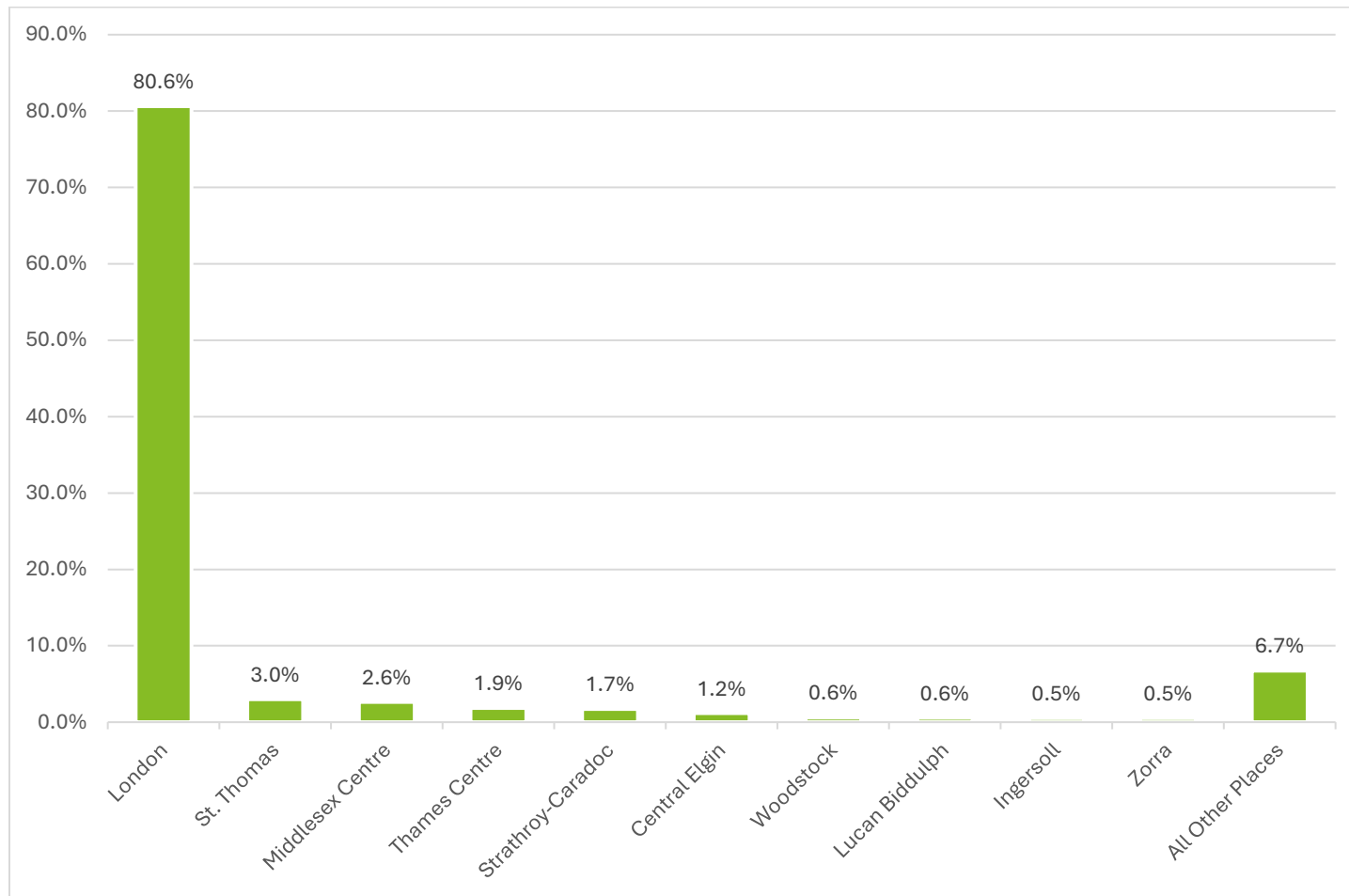




COMMUTING PATTERNS

The majority of individuals working in London, 80.6%, reside within the city itself. This high percentage indicates that London serves as a major employment center for the region. A notable portion of the workforce commutes from nearby municipalities. St. Thomas, Middlesex Centre, and Thames Centre are the top contributors, collectively accounting for 7.5% of London's workforce.

Figure 16 - Commuter Place of Residence, London (Census Subdivision) as Place of Work, 2021

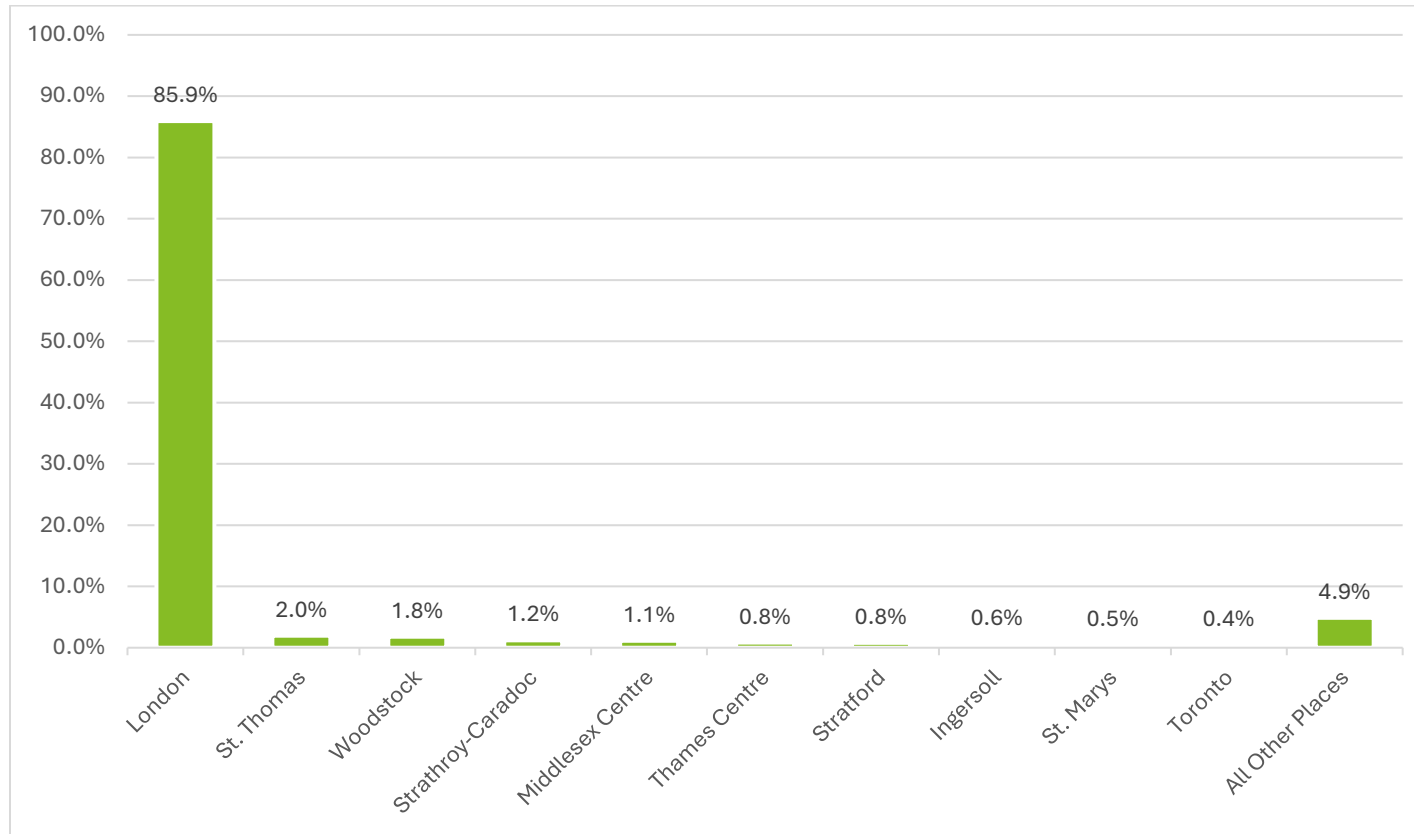


Source: Statistics Canada, Table: 98-10-0459-01, Commuting flow from geography of residence to geography of work by gender



For people who reside in London, a significant majority of them, 85.9%, work within the city itself. This high percentage underscores London's role as a major employment hub. A modest portion of London's workforce commutes to nearby cities for work. St. Thomas (2.0%) and Woodstock (1.8%) are the most common destinations.

Figure 17 - Commuter Place of Residence, London (Census Subdivision) as Place of Residence, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Table: 98-10-0459-01, Commuting flow from geography of residence to geography of work by gender



Business Environment and Structure

A business characteristics assessment was completed to understand the number and type of businesses in London using the Canadian Business Counts data. Specifically, businesses in the city were profiled by total employee number, size of business establishments by employees, and businesses by industry.

BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS

As of December 2024, 45,847 businesses were operating in London (Census Subdivision). The majority of these (33,386) businesses were without employees, representing sole proprietorships or self-employed individuals.

The sectors with the highest proportion of business establishments, including both businesses with and without employees, are:

- **Real Estate and Rental and Leasing:** This sector leads with 10,889 businesses, accounting for a significant portion of the total business establishments. The majority are without employees, indicating a high prevalence of individual real estate agents and small rental operations.
- **Health Care and Social Assistance:** With 4,820 businesses, this sector is prominent, reflecting London's role as a healthcare hub. This includes a mix of small clinics and larger healthcare facilities.
- **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services:** This sector includes 4,232, highlighting a strong presence of consultants and freelancers in technical fields.

The top sectors for businesses without employees are:

- **Real Estate and Rental and Leasing:** Dominating with 10,889 businesses and 10,330 of them are sole proprietorships (30.9% of total businesses without employees).
- **Construction:** With 2,569 businesses without employees (7.7% of total businesses without employees), this sector also has a significant number of sole proprietors.

The leading sectors for businesses with employees are:

- **Health Care and Social Assistance:** This sector has 2,094 businesses with employees (16.8% of total businesses with employees), reflecting a robust healthcare industry providing numerous employment opportunities.
- **Retail Trade:** With 1,593 businesses with employees (12.8% of total businesses with employees), retail is a key employer, supporting London's consumer market.
- **Construction:** This sector includes 1,149 businesses with employees (9.2% of total businesses with employees), indicating ongoing development activities in the city.

London's business landscape is characterized by a mix of micro and small enterprises, particularly in the real estate, professional services sectors, as well as within the "Other Services" industry, which includes many mom-and-pop businesses such as laundromats, car repair shops, and personal care services. The prevalence of businesses without employees suggests a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a significant number of self-employed individuals. Meanwhile, sectors like healthcare and retail provide substantial employment, reinforcing their importance to the local economy.

The diversity in business types and sizes contributes to London's economic resilience, allowing the city to capitalize on innovation and entrepreneurship while providing a stable employment base. This mix ensures that London can adapt to economic fluctuations and continue to attract investment and growth opportunities.



Figure 18 – Canadian Business Counts, City of London (Census Subdivision), December 2024

NAICS Code	Description	With Employees	Without Employees	Total
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	559	10,330	10,889
62	Health care and social assistance	2094	2,726	4,820
54	Professional, scientific and technical services	1265	2,967	4,232
X0	Unclassified	663	3,352	4,015
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	807	3,049	3,856
23	Construction	1149	2,569	3,718
81	Other services (except public administration)	1015	1,958	2,973
44-45	Retail trade	1593	1,135	2,728
52	Finance and insurance	463	1,594	2,057
56	Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	509	1,011	1,520
72	Accommodation and food services	863	340	1,203
41	Wholesale trade	494	376	870
31-33	Manufacturing	429	371	800
71	Arts, entertainment and recreation	147	425	572
61	Educational services	145	370	515
51	Information and cultural industries	131	262	393
55	Management of companies and enterprises	58	267	325
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	45	244	289
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	12	16	28
22	Utilities	5	21	26
91	Public administration	15	3	18
	Total	12461	33,386	45,847

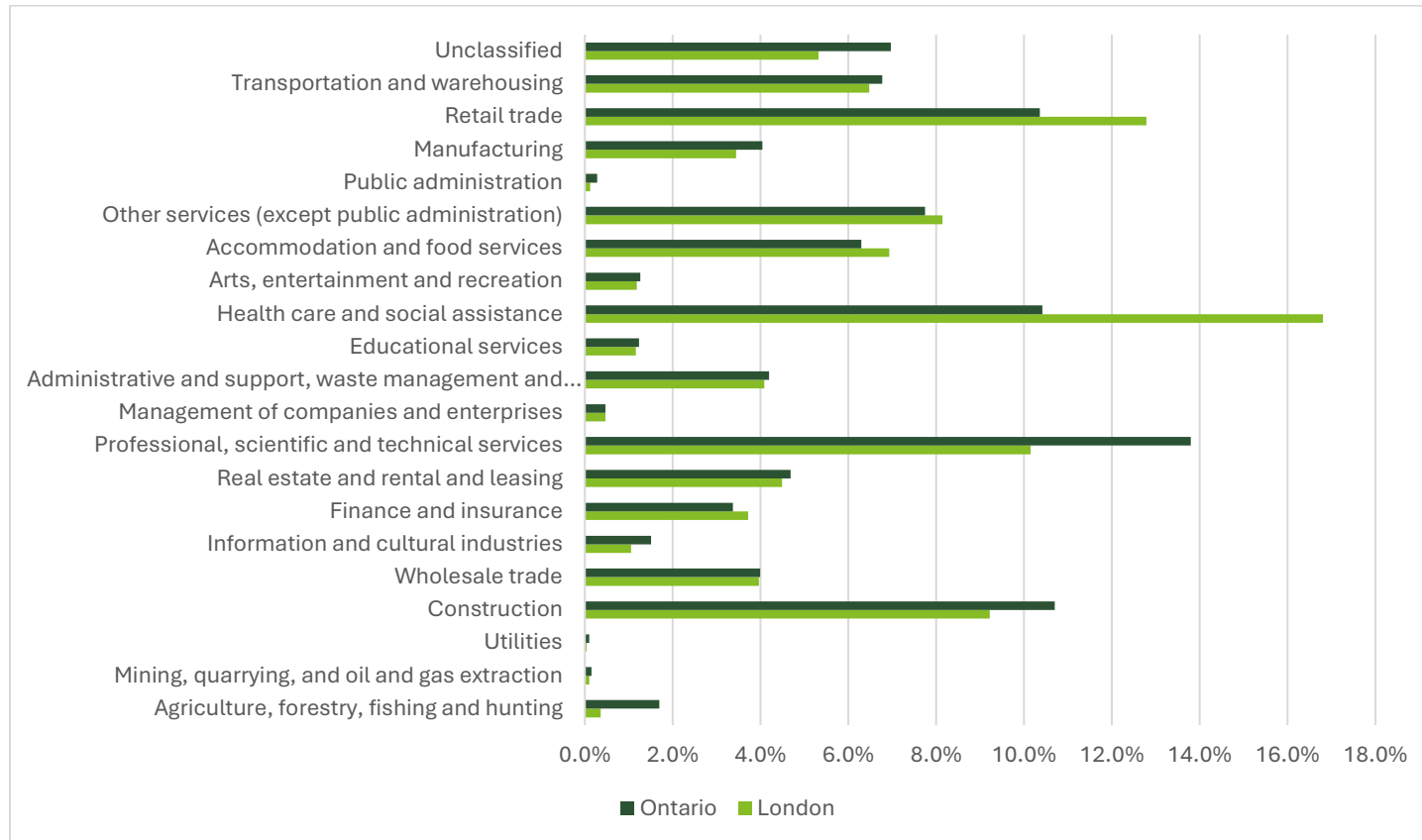
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Counts, December 2024



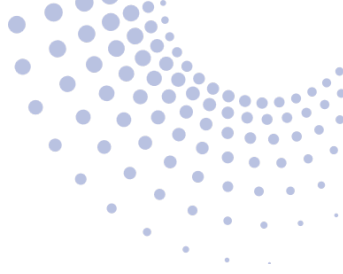
The following chart presents the distribution of business establishments for businesses with employees, by 2-digit NAICS industry. In London, the proportion of businesses with employees in health care and social assistance is significantly higher (16.8%) compared to the provincial average (10.4%), highlighting the city’s strong presence in this sector. Similarly, retail trade represents a larger share of businesses in London (12.8%) than in Ontario overall (10.4%), suggesting a relatively robust retail sector in the city.

Other sectors where London’s business share is notably lower than the provincial average include construction (9.2% vs. 10.7%), information and cultural industries (1.1% vs. 1.5%), and manufacturing (3.4% vs. 4.0%). The city also has fewer businesses in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (0.4% vs. 1.7%), likely reflecting its more urban character.

Figure 19 – Distribution of Business Establishments (Businesses with Employees), City of London (Census Subdivision) and Ontario, 2024



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Counts, December 2024



Industrial and Office Market Characteristics

INDUSTRIAL SPACE TRENDS

The industrial market in London has experienced notable changes over the past year, characterized by shifts in inventory, vacancy rates, and pricing dynamics.

Industrial space inventory increased from 41,663,473 square feet in Q1 2024 to 42,431,072 square feet by Q1 2025. This growth reflects ongoing development, with construction activity peaking at 724,544 square feet in Q1 2024 before declining to 134,800 square feet in Q1 2025. The reduction in construction activity suggests a potential slowdown in new project initiations.

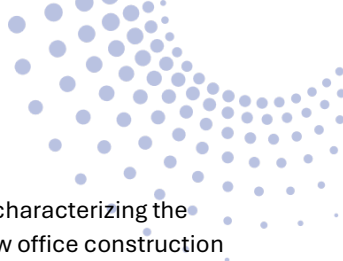
The vacancy rate rose from 0.6% in Q1 2024 to 2.5% in Q1 2025, while the availability rate increased from 1.1% to 3.6% during the same period. These trends indicate a growing supply of industrial space that may be outpacing demand, possibly due to new completions or changes in market conditions. The net asking rent per square foot increased slightly from \$9.62 in Q1 2024 to \$10.21 in Q1 2025, indicating stable demand for leasing despite higher vacancy rates.

Net absorption figures reveal fluctuating demand for industrial space, with significant negative absorption in Q3 2024 and Q1 2025 (-481,225 and -338,870 square feet, respectively). This suggests periods of reduced leasing activity or increased tenant move-outs, impacting overall occupancy levels.

Figure 20 – Industrial Space Market Characteristics, City of London, Q1 2024 – Q1 2025

Period	Inventory (SF)	Availability Rate (%)	Vacancy Rate (%)	Net Absorption (SF)	YTD Net Absorption (SF)	Under Construction (SF)	Net Asking Rent (PSF)	Average Asking Sales Price (PSF)
Q1 2025	42,431,072	3.6%	2.5%	-338,870	-338,870	134,800	\$10.21	\$197.42
Q4 2024	42,431,072	2.8%	1.7%	579,950	-96,530	134,800	\$10.37	\$202.70
Q3 2024	41,872,522	2.9%	1.3%	-481,225	-676,480	558,550	\$10.33	\$216.02
Q2 2024	41,760,348	1.5%	0.8%	-53,638	-195,255	670,724	\$9.57	\$202.26
Q1 2024	41,663,473	1.1%	0.6%	-141,617	-141,617	724,544	\$9.62	\$216.72

Source: CBRE



OFFICE MARKET TRENDS

The London, Ontario office market experienced continued challenges over the past year, with persistently high vacancy rates and negative net absorption characterizing the period from Q1 2024 to Q1 2025. The total office inventory remained relatively stable, fluctuating only marginally around 8.0 million square feet, and no new office construction was reported throughout the year.

Vacancy rates increased from 21.2% in Q1 2024 to 22.4% in Q1 2025, indicating ongoing demand-side weakness. The market saw negative net absorption in four out of five quarters, with Q2 2024 recording the largest quarterly loss at -71,563 square feet.

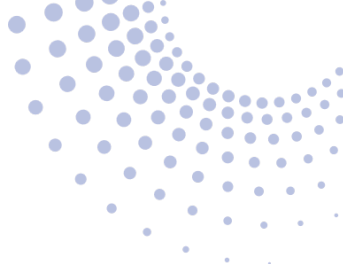
Leasing activity showed some resilience, with a notable increase in Q4 2024 (400,888 SF) and Q3 2024 (338,785 SF), compared to more modest levels in other quarters. However, these spikes in leasing activity did not translate into sustained positive absorption, suggesting that much of the activity may have involved renewals or relocations rather than new market entrants.

Average asking rents for all office classes held relatively steady, with a modest increase from \$13.46 per square foot in Q1 2024 to \$13.55 in Q4 2024, before declining slightly to \$13.35 in Q1 2025.

Figure 21 - Office Market Characteristics, City of London, Q1 2024 – Q1 2025

Period	Inventory (SF)	Overall Vacancy Rate	Current QTR Overall Net Absorption (SF)	YTD Overall Net Absorption (SF)	YTD Leasing Activity (SF)	Under Construction (SF)	Overall Avg Asking Rent (All Classes)	Overall Average Additional Rent (All Classes)
Q1 2025	8,034,722	22.4%	-37,874	-37,874	165,473	0	\$13.35	\$12.08
Q4 2024	8,034,722	21.9%	-12,521	-170,499	400,888	0	\$13.55	\$11.88
Q3 2024	8,044,321	21.7%	8,107	-157,978	338,785	0	\$24.91	\$29.49
Q2 2024	8,022,793	22.2%	-71,563	-166,085	179,149	0	\$13.48	\$11.54
Q1 2024	8,087,330	21.2%	-67,022	-67,022	89,814	0	\$13.46	\$12.38

Source: Cushman & Wakefield



Regional Projections

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The Middlesex census division (CD)¹²⁶ (Standard Geographical Classification 3539) is projected to experience robust population growth from 2023 to 2051, with every age cohort increasing in absolute numbers. The total population is expected to rise significantly, with notable gains among children (0–14), youth and young adults (15–24), and working-age groups (25–54).

The most pronounced growth is observed in the older age cohorts. The population aged 65–74 (young seniors) is projected to increase by nearly 40% (from 54,284 in 2023 to 75,499 in 2051), while the population aged 75 and over (elderly) more than doubles (from 44,006 to 96,942). This shift reflects both increased longevity and the aging of the large baby boomer cohort, resulting in a steadily rising median age for the region.

The “prime working-age” groups (25–54) are also forecast to grow, with the 25–34 cohort rising from 95,256 in 2023 to 128,905 in 2051, and the 35–44 and 45–54 cohorts experiencing similar patterns. This growth suggests continued demand for employment opportunities and housing and underscores the importance of attracting and retaining young talent to support economic vitality. However, when this population growth is considered alongside the current participation rate within this age group, it is clear that it will not be sufficient on its own to address ongoing labour shortages. To maximize the opportunities presented by this growth, ecosystem partners should collaborate to better understand the sentiments and behaviors of this group, implement measures to create an appealing environment in London, and also develop additional solutions to address labour market needs.

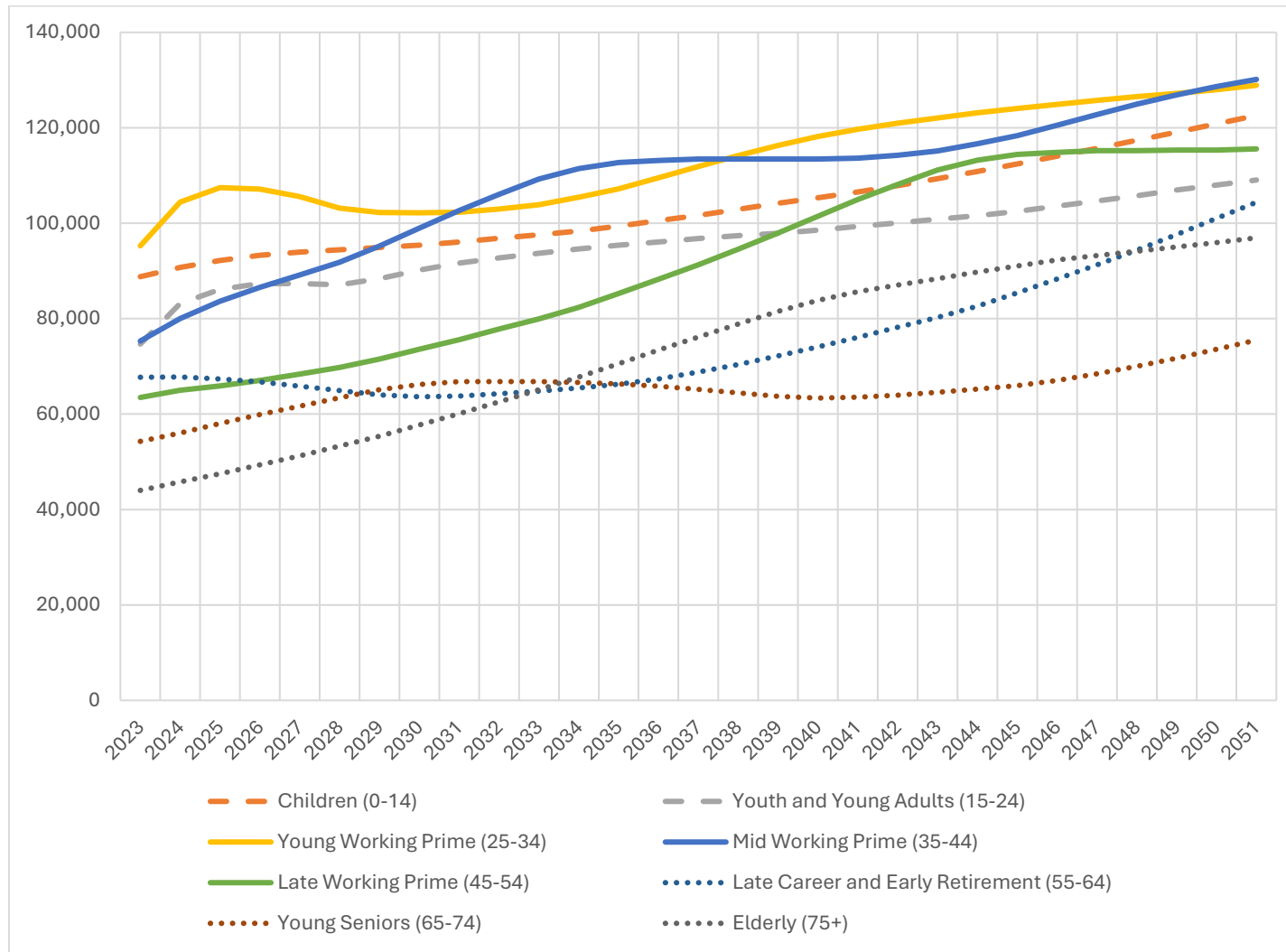
As the population and business centre, London will be at the forefront of accommodating this regional growth. The expansion in both youth and senior populations will intensify demand for diverse services, including childcare, schools, post-secondary institutions, healthcare, and age-friendly infrastructure. The city’s ability to plan for and invest in these areas will be critical to maintaining quality of life and economic competitiveness.

The growth in the prime working-age population offers London a strong base for workforce development and economic expansion. However, the city will need to proactively address talent attraction and retention, skills training, and employment opportunities to fully leverage this demographic advantage.

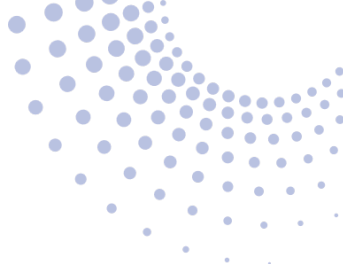
In summary, the Middlesex region’s population is projected to grow steadily and become more age-diverse, with London at the centre of these changes. The city faces both opportunities and challenges: harnessing demographic growth for economic development, while ensuring infrastructure, services, and housing keep pace with evolving needs.

¹²⁶ The Middlesex census division (CD) consists of the county with the City of London and three First Nations reserves. The Middlesex CD (3539) consists of the following census subdivisions (CSDs): Newbury (Village), Southwest Middlesex (Municipality), Strathroy-Caradoc (Municipality), Thames Centre (Municipality), Middlesex Centre (Municipality), London (City), North Middlesex (Municipality), Adelaide-Metcalf (Township), Lucan Biddulph (Township), Chippewas of the Thames First Nation 42 (Indian reserve), Munsee-Delaware Nation 1 (Indian reserve) and Oneida 41 (Indian reserve).

Figure 22 – Population Forecast, Middlesex Census Division, Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2023 – 2051



Source: Government of Ontario



GLOSSARY

This glossary is meant to clarify terminology used in this document.

Community. A cluster of organizations inside an ecosystem that are more densely connected to each other than to the rest of the network. They often share common mandates and interests and have frequent interactions.

Connector. An organization or individual that maintains numerous direct relationships across the economic development ecosystem, helping information and resources flow between different organizations.

Coordinator. An organization or individual that connects members within the same community, facilitating collaboration or communication internally. Without coordinators, silos and duplicated efforts can emerge.

Downtown and commercial areas. Neighbourhoods and commercial corridors within the City that have traditionally hosted significant economic activity.

Ecosystem. A network of interconnected organizations, institutions, and individuals that collectively contribute to economic growth and prosperity. This includes entities such as educational institutions, workforce agencies, business support organizations, industry associations, and government bodies. The ecosystem is characterized by relationships, resource flows, and collaboration patterns.

Gatekeeper. An organization that controls the flow of information or resources from outside the community into the community, screening or translating external information before it reaches the internal group. Without gatekeepers, groups risk being overwhelmed by irrelevant or excessive external information.

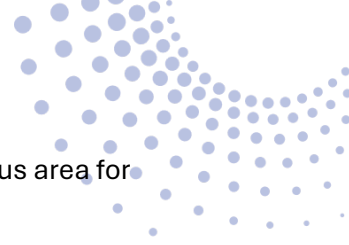
Liaison. An organization that connects two players from different communities but is not a member of either community. Liaisons bridge diverse groups or sectors; without them, cross-community collaboration and knowledge sharing suffer.

Innovation District. A geographical cluster of private-sector and not-for-profit entities, research and development (R&D) institutions, and others that provides a receptive and collaborative environment that attract entrepreneurs, startups, and business incubators for a specific sector (life sciences, creative, etc.)

Vision. A clear, long-term description of what success looks like for London's economy. The vision sets the destination the strategy is working toward and provides a shared sense of purpose for decisions, investments, and partnerships.

Mission. A concise statement explaining why the strategy exists and how the City and its partners will work together to achieve the vision. The mission focuses on the City's role in fostering prosperity through coordinated, evidence-based action.

Guiding Principles. A set of shared values that shape how decisions are made and how partners work together. Guiding principles influence implementation by reinforcing expectations around collaboration, inclusion, accountability, transparency, and results.



Strategic Pillar. The primary areas where the City can have the greatest impact on economic outcomes. Each pillar defines a focus area for municipal leadership and investment. Strategic pillars are intentionally stable and guide long-term direction.

Strategic Direction. A clear statement of intent under each pillar that explains what the City is trying to achieve and why it matters. Strategic directions connect high-level goals to practical areas of action.

Strategic Initiative. A coordinated set of actions that advance a pillar or high-impact strategy. Strategic initiatives are more targeted than pillars and are designed to deliver measurable change within a defined timeframe.

Action. A specific task or activity required to implement a strategic initiative. Actions clarify what will be done, who is responsible, and when it will occur. They are the building blocks of implementation.

Implementation Plan. The section of the strategy that translates priorities into execution. It sets out actions, timelines, roles, partnerships, and performance expectations to move from strategy to results.

System Optimization. Improving how the economic development ecosystem functions by clarifying roles, reducing duplication, modernizing processes, and aligning investments with outcomes. System optimization focuses on performance, coordination, and accountability rather than creating new programs.

Performance Indicator. A measurable signal used to track progress and assess whether actions are delivering intended outcomes. Performance indicators may track inputs (e.g., timelines), outputs (e.g., activity levels), or outcomes (e.g., jobs, investment, participation).

Key Performance Indicator (KPI). A small set of priority performance indicators used to monitor progress at a strategic level. KPIs help Council, partners, and the public understand what is working and where adjustments may be required.

Outcome. The real-world change the strategy is intended to achieve, such as increased employment, improved investment readiness, stronger talent retention, or better system performance. Outcomes focus on results, not just activity.

Shovel-Ready. A term used to describe land, infrastructure, or projects that are fully planned, serviced, and approved so development can proceed quickly with minimal additional approvals.



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