



20
25



Economic Development,
Tourism & Cultural Initiatives Department

YEAR
IN REVIEW

CITY OF
BRANTFORD

Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives



STAFF PHOTO

From left to right: Front row, left to right: Aisha Godbout, Bruce Jacobson, Tara Tran, Natalie Walker, Kara Potter. Back row, left to right: Amber Kane, Adrienne Briggs, Mike Mansfield, Glenn Brown, Joe Muto, Agam Sharma, Kara Davey, Jillian Page, Lindsay House, Chelsey Tobin, Connor Webb, Kevin Dekok. Absent: Mae Legg, Robert Dallaway, Leanne Rich.

Table of Contents

A Few Words About 2025	4
Brantford is Growing Fast.....	5
Brantford’s Economy is Diverse and Resilient	6
Laying the Foundation for New Investment	7
Building Construction Activity	8
Business Investment Highlights	9
Getting to Know Brantford’s Employers.....	10
Boosting Local Entrepreneurs.....	11
Boosting Local Entrepreneurs.....	12
Brantford on the Big Screen.....	13
Sports and Entertainment Centre.....	14
New Downtown Underway	15
Discover Brantford	16
Spotlight on Local Attractions	17
Home Grown Arts and Culture.....	18
Looking Ahead to 2026.....	19

A Few Words About 2025

In 2025 the City of Brantford showed its strength and resilience in the face of economic uncertainty. Brantford was among the top municipalities for housing starts and rental construction, while continuing to strengthen key partnership building and diversification efforts, ensuring we are positioned for continued growth.

Brantford welcomed several large industrial expansions in the food and beverage, packaging and refrigeration sectors with notably quick administration times from application to completion. Brantford continues to demonstrate our city's commitment to a "business first" environment.

Approval for the new state-of-the-art Sports and Entertainment Centre was a highlight of 2025. Plans are underway for construction to begin in 2026, and staff remain engaged with the planning process for a Downtown Entertainment District, which will further Brantford's ambitious objectives to make the Downtown a safe and bustling hub of activity and local flair.

Within these pages, you'll find a snapshot of the successful economic year that we achieved alongside partners, stakeholders, and community organizations.



Brantford is Growing Fast

Positioned and Ready

Brantford is a community poised for significant residential, industrial, and commercial growth. The 2017 expansion lands position Brantford for this evolution. In the areas around Powerline Road, residential planning and development continues following comprehensive block-planning. Environmental assessments and service plans are being completed for the employment (industrial) lands to bring these to market.



Community Improvement Programs

The City's community improvement plans (CIPs) allow the city to offer grants that mobilize private investment to achieve desired goals, particularly housing supply. Programs were revamped in 2021 and have achieved significant results to date.

CIP Stream	Housing Units Built	Total Grants Administered	Total Applicant Investment
Downtown CIP	346, new residential units, 9 affordable	\$5,506,922	\$80,523,450
Greyfields CIP	479 new residential units, 38 affordable	\$10,533,904	\$137,080,000



Brantford's Economy is Diverse and Resilient

Market Statistics

- 8.0% unemployment rate in Brantford in 2025
- 94,000 local workforce in Brantford CMA
- 1,400 net acres of industrial lands being readied for development in the next 3-10 years
- 1.01 million square feet of vacant industrial space as of December 31, 2025
- 1.9% industrial vacancy rate in Brantford area in Q4 2025
- \$627,800 average house price



TOP 6 SECTORS (by number of jobs)

Rank	Industry	2025 Jobs	2025 Median Annual Wage
1	Sales and Services	13,482	\$38,873
2	Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	9,234	\$52,364
3	Business, finance and administration	8,857	\$58,622
4	Education, law and social, community and government services	6,781	\$77,483
5	Manufacturing and utilities	5,641	\$54,348
6	Health occupations	4,269	\$61,915

Source (2026): <https://lightcast.io/>

¹ Statistics Canada (table 14-10-0461-01)

² Statistics Canada (table 14-10-0461-01)

³ City of Brantford

⁴ Brantford Brant Real Estate Association

⁵ CBRE for Brantford/Brant area
Canadian Real Estate Association

Laying the Foundation for New Investment

With funding received from CanExport, Mayor Davis and the Director of Economic Development completed a 1-week trade mission to Europe. The trip took them to the head office of Flora Food Group, and GIZEH Packaging before attending Anuga, the world's largest food trade show. They met with over 40 food and beverage companies, generating follow-up interest from several parties. Additionally, they met with Provincial and Federal Trade Commissioners and other industry partners keeping Brantford "on the map" from an international standpoint. Together they strengthened existing relationships and laid the foundations for new investment in Brantford.



Commercial Grand Opening

asmodee, the global board game powerhouse, marked a major milestone in its Canadian operations opening new offices at 195 Henry Street in Brantford, anchoring their Ontario operations as they work to transform how Canadian players and retailers experience their brand.



Building Construction Activity

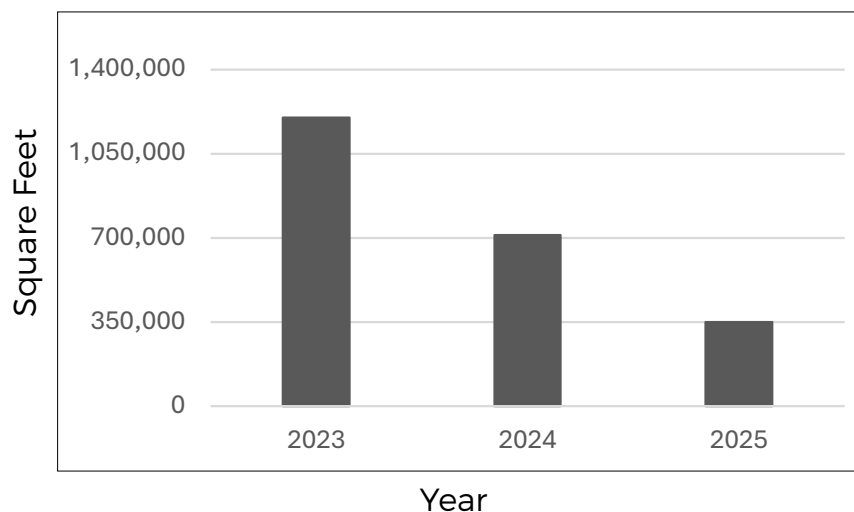


Residential Construction

Brantford earned an 'A+' ranking from the Residential Construction Council of Ontario when comparing 34 municipalities across the GTA and Greater Golden Horseshoe Area. In 2025, Brantford issued permits for 1,281 housing units – nearly doubling the 692 units from 2024.

Source: <https://cms.rescon.com/media/PDFs/2025%20Housing%20Report%20Card.pdf>

Industrial Sq. ft. New or Expanded Space (2023-2025)



Municipality	Starts % Change	Sales % Change	Employment Change	Final Grade
Barrie CMA				
Barrie	-65%	-69%	-767	F
Innisfil	-91%	-92%	-654	F
Brantford CMA				
Brantford	272%	-88%	1555	A+
Guelph CMA				
Guelph	-90%	-82%	-675	F
Hamilton CMA				
Burlington	87%	-82%	222	B
Hamilton	-65%	-86%	-1931	F
Kitchener - Cambridge - Waterloo CMA				
Cambridge	-26%	-78%	-361	F
Kitchener	-16%	-79%	-653	D
Waterloo	-75%	-80%	-640	F
Oshawa CMA				
Clarington	-73%	-82%	-397	F
Oshawa	-87%	-78%	-1484	F
Whitby	-74%	-75%	-1188	F
Peterborough CMA				
Peterborough	-92%	-80%	-237	F
St. Catharines - Niagara CMA				
Niagara Falls	-5%	-80%	-292	D
St. Catharines	35%	-78%	8	C
Welland	-10%	-63%	-329	D



Business Investment Highlights

Major Developments



Ferrero Canada
\$445 million expansion
90,000 sq. ft.
500 jobs.
Announced April 2025



Barry Callebaut
\$135 million new build
409,000 sq. ft.
200 jobs
Opened Fall 2025



Hilton Foods Canada
\$192 million new build
260,000 sq. ft.
150 jobs
Planned opening August 2026

Other Notable Investments

Company Name	Category	Sq Ft	Change Type
Procter & Gamble (BRMC)	Mixing Centre	455,500	Expansion
Brimich Logistics Inc.	Logistics/Warehousing	36,000	New Site
Apex Chain & Cable	Industrial Manufacturing	12,000	Expansion
Aspire Bakeries	Manufacturing/Food Production	1,033	Investment Capital Addition

Industrial Directory

In Q3, Economic Development staff started the process of creating a new industrial directory. The initiative includes visiting over 330 industrial and supporting companies in Brantford to obtain profile information to create the directory and understand patterns, changes, and subsectors. With follow-ups and analysis, the directory is expected to be completed in summer 2026.



Getting to Know Brantford's Employers

Economic development staff regularly connect with and visit industrial businesses. Staff also arrange larger formal tours to learn about operations, future plans, and business needs. The following companies participated in formal tours in 2025.



Grissin Bon



Hotline Apparel



Miura

Networking Events

Growth and stability are built on the foundation of Brantford's business community. Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives staff host and participate in innovative networking opportunities to remain connected with this community, 2025 events included:

- Industrial Development Golf
- Golf and Dinner Networking Event
- Breakfast Event: Accessing Government Program and Supports
- Dubai Chambers Networking Event
- Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours
- Brantastic! Small Business Awards Show
- Enterprise Brant Outreach Committee
- Creative City Network of Canada
- Canadian Sport Event Congress
- World Trails Network
- Farmers' Market Ontario Symposium
- HHBRTA Strategic Destination Alliance Meetings
- Tourism Industry Association of Ontario Event Forums
- Ontario Film Offices Forum



Boosting Local Entrepreneurs

The Brantford-Brant Business Resource Centre (BRC) assists in the creation and growth of small businesses in the City of Brantford, County of Brant, and surrounding communities. For over 20 years, the BRC has offered free business advice and hosted workshops with expert advisors. In 2025, given the economic uncertainty, the BRC provided early-stage support that helped protect jobs, fill commercial space, and keep entrepreneurship local. For more information, visit [Brantford.ca/BRC](https://brantford.ca/BRC).

702 business consultations	237 small businesses started
58 training events and workshops	934 event attendees
6,215 community inquiries	251 jobs created

Student Biz fosters entrepreneurship among high school students who can participate in a hands-on learning experience while earning two high school co-op credits. The program is delivered in partnership with the Grand Erie District School Board and the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board.

26 Student Biz businesses started

14 Summer Company businesses started

26 Students earned co-op credits

\$36K Provincial grants disbursed



Boosting Local Entrepreneurs

Starter Company Plus is designed to support entrepreneurs (18 years and over) looking to start, expand, or purchase a business. Approved participants attend six business workshops and receive unlimited one-on-one guidance with experienced business advisors and local mentors. All participants are invited to pitch their business to a grant committee for a chance to be awarded up to \$5,000.

68 participants approved in 2025
14 businesses started

\$80K grants distributed
29 jobs created

Youth Entrepreneurship Celebration

In June, the Business Resource Centre hosted an impactful and inspiring annual Youth Entrepreneurship Celebration to recognize participants from the Student Biz and Summer Company programs. The event welcomed more than 100 attendees, including student entrepreneurs, their families, staff members, elected officials, and partner organizations.



Local basketball entertainer Q Mack, combined high energy tricks with motivational storytelling to teach students what it means to be a business “ALL STAR.” The event was catered by Mercasa Little Italy Eatery & Catering, featuring their award winning Roman pizzas.

33 local businesses are featured in the annual Visitor Guide

Brantford on the Big Screen

The City welcomed productions including the Terminal List, Reacher, and Karate Ghost.



Film projects	16
Active filming days	48
Estimated cast and crew on filmsets	1,092
Hotel room nights for film crews	1,114
Community donations	\$4,300
Film inquiries	37

Provincial Film Forum

Economic Development staff chaired the planning and emceed the Ontario Film Office Forum in April. Over 40 municipalities and regions participated in the event focused on professional development, establishing best practices, and networking with industry professionals.



Ontario Fam Tour of L.A. and U.K. Studio Executives

At an event hosted by Ontario Creates, Economic Development staff pitched Brantford's unique locations and award nominated support services to 11 global producers and executives.

Sports and Entertainment Centre

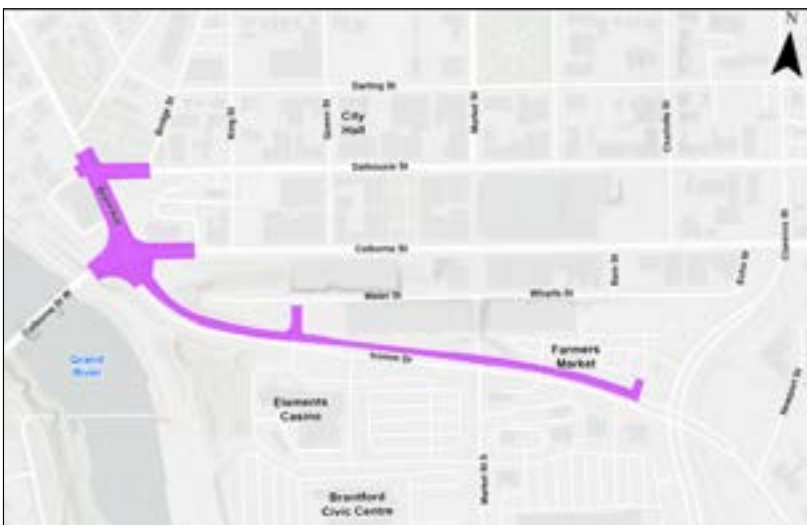
Graham and Stantec have been selected by the City of Brantford to deliver the Brantford Sports and Entertainment Centre through an innovative progressive design-build process. This state-of-the-art, 5,300-seat, multi-use facility will serve as the new home of the Brantford Bulldogs of the Ontario Hockey League and a premier destination for concerts, family entertainment, trade shows, and community celebrations. Construction is underway in 2026, with completion anticipated in 2028. As a cornerstone of Brantford's downtown revitalization strategy, the Brantford Sports and Entertainment Centre represents a transformative investment—energizing the city core and creating a vibrant hub for sport, culture, and community life.



A conceptual rendered drawing of the Brantford Sports and Entertainment Centre

New Downtown Underway

Phase 1 of the Downtown Revitalization project commenced in October 2025. This multi-phase project will transform downtown Brantford into a renewed destination for culture, entertainment, and urban living. Phase 1 includes replacing and upgrading underground infrastructure and reconfiguring the Brant Avenue and Colborne Street intersection to improve traffic flow.



Work to be completed in 2026:

- Brant Avenue: Colborne Street to Dalhousie Street, including the Brant Avenue/Colborne Street intersection.
- Icomm Drive: Colborne Street to Clarence Street South.
- Dalhousie Street: Brant Avenue to Bridge Street.
- Colborne Street: Brant Avenue to King Street.
- Hill Street: Icomm Drive to Water Street.

Supporting local businesses:

Where possible, sidewalks and driveways will remain open during construction. Please continue to shop local.

Stay Updated: visit www.Brantford.ca/NewDowntown and learn more about this exciting transformation. Contact our Downtown Revitalization Ambassador at cobdowntown@brantford.ca with any questions.

Discover Brantford

Discover Brantford had an excellent year both hosting and supporting several large-scale events obtained through competitive bidding processes resulting in the following events coming to Brantford in 2025:

- Southern Ontario Tourism Conference
- Special Olympics Ontario Summer Games partnered with Brantford Police Service
- Economic Developers Council of Ontario Regional Event
- Ontario Business Improvement Area Association Professional Development Day

In addition, the team hosted Doors Open Along the Grand, Brantford Beats and Eats, Culture Days on the Trails, and 10 special events at the Brantford Farmer's Market.

\$731,820 Collected in revenue through the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT).

93 Sport Tourism Events = \$6.9M in Economic Impact.

73 Corporate Events = \$1.1M in Economic Impact

40,000 Number of Visitor Guides distributed.

+38% Increase in Facebook engagements.

The Municipal Accommodation Tax collected on hotel, motel, and B&B stays (including Airbnb, VRBO etc.) is reinvested in community events and tourism to further enhance and attract visitors to Brantford.

Great Waterfront Trails Adventure



Discover Brantford had the pleasure in participating in The Great Waterfront Trails Adventure (GWTA), a multi-day cycling trip from August 8-15, 2025 that spans three Great Lakes. More than 155 participants from 4 provinces stopped in Brantford on August 15th for a visit.

Brantford Beats and Eats



Over 2,500 attended Brantford Beats & Eats, a new signature summer festival created in 2025 in Downtown Brantford. The event featured food trucks, live music on two stages from 11am to 7pm, live performances such as a freestyle soccer competition, line dancing, Bollywood dancing, aerial hoop performances, a magic show, a dog show, and much more.

Spotlight on Local Attractions

Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts

The historic 1,125 seat theatre hosted a record number of shows and events in 2025. Regional and local attendees increased 33% at events hosted by the theatre with 3% total increase over 2024. In addition to concerts, theatrical, dance, and children's performances making stops in Brantford, the theatre is frequently rented out for commercial and locally organized events. The 2026-2027 season will be announced June 15. Learn more at www.SandersonCentre.ca



Brantford's Farmers' Market

Open on Fridays and Saturdays, the Brantford Farmers' Market is a 178-year old pillar of the Brantford community. Local butchers and cheese mongers are a staple in the market, along with 24 other indoor stalls selling fresh produce, baked goods, arts and crafts and specialty retail. During the summer months, shoppers can enjoy Trail Mix Live! at the Farmers' Market events, which includes live music and free family programming. In 2025, stalls remained full, which led to a 5% increase in total revenue. Enhanced marketing will promote the Farmers' Market during the revitalization construction period.



Harmony Bakery has been serving customers at the Brantford Farmers' Market since 1995.

Home Grown Arts and Culture

Public Art

The Public Art Policy was updated for the first time in over a decade in February 2025. Brantford continues its dedication to beautifying spaces through Public Art with:

- A new piece at Alexandra Park to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the invention of the telephone;
- A new piece in Jubilee Terrace Park to honour the fallen in WWI and WWII; and
- a three-year plan to paint one utility house and wrap five new traffic cabinets annually from 2025 to 2027.



Doors Open Along the Grand

The City partnered with the County of Brant and Six Nations Tourism to deliver the region’s first Doors Open Along the Grand event, welcoming over 3,500 attendees from all over Ontario. This year’s event is scheduled for May 9, 2026 from 10am to 4pm.



Culture Days on the Trails

In September 2025, Culture Days on the Trails welcomed over 1,300 visitors to stroll 1.5km of our beautiful trails while enjoying 12 mini performances of live music, dance, painting and more.

Cultural Grants Administered	
\$158,470	Granted to 14 not for profit cultural organizations through the Community Cultural Investment Program.
\$70,921	Granted to 2 not for profit cultural organizations through the Cultural & Built Heritage Grant Program.

Looking Ahead to 2026

There's a lot of economic activity to look forward to in 2026:

- A new Downtown Entertainment District will be created to recognize existing attractions such as the Sanderson Centre, Harmony Square, Elements Casino, and the future new Sports and Entertainment Centre.
- Hosting and supporting several large-scale events obtained through competitive bidding processes including, 2026 Canadian Men's Mid-Amateur Golf Championship and 2026 IJL World U18 & U16 Lacrosse Championships.
- Planning to host the 2027 Ontario Parasport Games in Brantford in February 2027, which will result in significant economic impact to the community, including 600 room nights.
- Planning for the new Headwaters Employment Lands (approximately 1,400 acres) to begin.
- Launching a fully updated Industrial Directory, giving Economic Development clear insight into the needs, profiles, and key contacts of over 300 industrial businesses in Brantford.
- Facilitating networking and learning opportunities that support collaboration and best practice sharing across Brantford's industrial sector.
- Hosting the highest number of in person workshops to date at City Hall, expanding our offerings for clients and strengthening community building activities in the downtown.
- Implementing of the new Economic Development Community Improvement Plan.
- Developing a newd Downtown Business Directory.
- Awarding the Inaugural City of Brantford Industrial Award at the 2026 Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards.



City of Brantford Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives Department

519-759-4150

Economic Development & BRC Division

58 Dalhousie Street

www.advantagebrantford.ca

www.brantford.ca/brc

Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts

88 Dalhousie Street 519-758-8090

www.sandersoncentre.ca

Discover Brantford (Tourism Division)

Tourism Information Desk at Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre

254 North Park Street

www.discoverbrantford.ca

Brantford Farmers' Market

79 Icomm Drive

www.brantford.ca/farmersmarket

Brantford Municipal Airport

110 Aviation Avenue

www.brantfordairport.ca

