



The West Perth Economic Development Committee is an advisory committee that provides recommendations to West Perth Council on matters that will foster and enhance a strong and stable economy, ultimately allowing businesses to prosper, grow, and create jobs in the Municipality of West Perth. The Committee meets five times per year. Members are appointed by Council and bring the business perspective to the table for discussion. The Committee is supported by staff from West Perth and Perth County Economic Development and Tourism Department. The terms of reference of the West Perth Economic Development Committee can be found at the following link: <https://www.westperth.com/en/municipal-office/board-and-committee.aspx>

In recent years, the top issues of discussion at the Economic Development Committee have included the need for employees, youth attraction and retention, transportation, a need for more diverse housing choices and broadband connectivity.

The Economic Development Committee hosts an annual Business, Industry and Agriculture Breakfast to provide the West Perth business community with a forum for networking and exchange of information.

With the challenges presented by the COVID-19 Pandemic, the 2020 breakfast was cancelled and this newsletter has been prepared as a way to share information about economic development activity in the past year as well as information about new and upcoming programs. The Economic Development Committee continues to meet virtually, and the January 20, 2021 meeting is being dedicated to an open forum where businesses are invited to participate to see presentations on the past year and allow for questions and discussions.

THE BUSINESS, INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY

IS INVITED TO ATTEND THE
WEST PERTH ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL MEETING ON
JANUARY 20, 2021 FOR AN
UPDATE ON ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AND A
Q & A SESSION

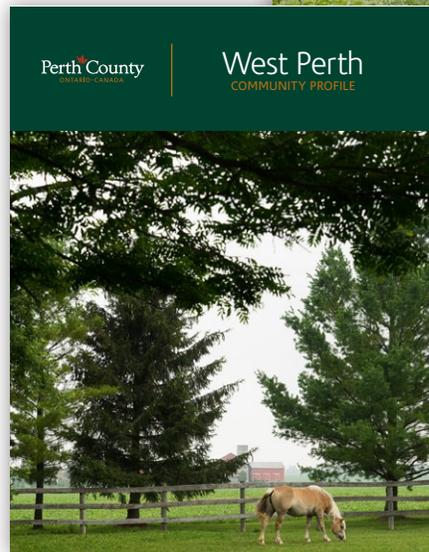
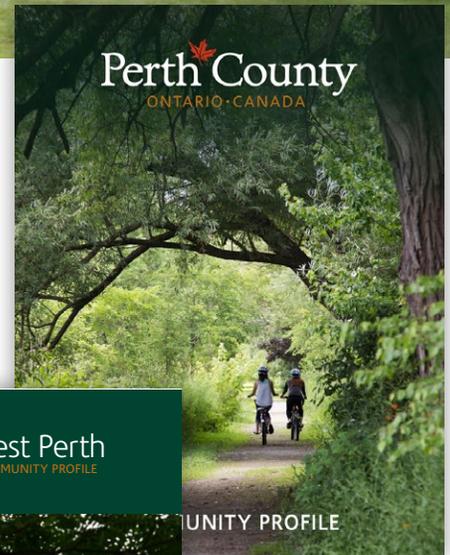
If you are interested in attending, please register in advance by contacting Kristen Drost by email at executiveassistant@westperth.com or by calling 519-348-8429 ext. 221



ABOUT WEST PERTH

The Municipality of West Perth was incorporated in 1998 with the amalgamation of the former Townships of Logan, Hibbert and Fullarton and the Town of Mitchell. West Perth is home to a vibrant farm community characterized by fertile land that provides the foundation for the local economy. Located at the intersection of Highway 8 and Highway 23, Mitchell is a growing fully serviced community which is home to just over half of West Perth's 8,900 residents. Bustling retail, service, commercial and industrial activities in Mitchell support residents and businesses in the community. The shopping in Mitchell and nearby Dublin showcases superior home furnishing and décor stores, along with unique treasure and fashion boutiques.

West Perth is a paradise for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts. Along with the Thames River, West Perth has many other natural assets including a 65 acre restored wetland complex where visitors can see many species including the Great Blue Heron. The community has extensive recreation assets and active community organizations.



Detailed community profiles for Perth County and West Perth can be found at the following links:

<https://www.perthcounty.ca/en/doing-business/resources/files/Accessibility-Update-Edited-PDFS/Business/Perth-County-Community-Profile-accessibility.pdf>

<https://www.westperth.com/en/business/resources/West-Perth-Community-Profile-2018.pdf>

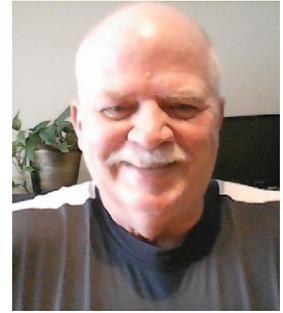
Economic Development Committee Members



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New Electric Vehicle Charging Unit to be Installed in Mitchell



ERTH
CORPORATION

The Municipality of West Perth was approached by ERTH Corporation in late 2019 to partner on a grant application which would include locating a new Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Unit in Mitchell. Through the project, ERTH would lease two parking spaces from the Municipality and install, maintain and operate an EV Charging pedestal that provides two charge points.

ERTH received grant approval and worked with the Municipality to identify locations that would meet a number of technical criteria. The Economic Development Committee, the Mitchell BIA and Council were all consulted on potential locations and all agreed that a downtown location would be most beneficial. A number of downtown locations were considered but were not suitable due to technical limitations. The best location for the dual charging unit was identified as two parking spaces on the southwest corner of Ontario Road and St. David Street. This location provides ready access to the downtown and it meets the required technical specifications including access to hydro and a boulevard configuration.

West Perth signed the parking space lease agreement in late 2020 and the dual charging unit will be installed soon. ERTH Corporation will pay all costs for the operation of the stations and collection of user fees and West Perth will update the parking by-law to limit use of the dedicated parking spaces to electric powered vehicles using the charging services.

SWIFT Releases RFP to Bring Faster Internet to Perth County

On March 23, 2020 Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) announced that it has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for up to \$5.5 million to increase access to highspeed internet for residents living in Perth County. The RFP supports the advancement of critical broadband infrastructure across the County and is part of SWIFT's Southwestern Ontario broadband expansion plan. The initial deadline for proposals was November 20, 2020 but this deadline has been extended to January 8, 2021. West Perth sees the improvement of connectivity as a key strategic initiative to support economic prosperity.



Natural Gas Expansion Proposal | Monkton

The Monkton Natural Gas Expansion Project was included as part of the Enbridge submission of project proposals to the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) for their review under the Natural Gas Expansion Program (NGEP). Resolutions of support were provided by the Municipality of West Perth and the Municipality of North Perth. The OEB submitted its project assessment report to the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines on October 30, 2020. The Ministry will consider the OEB's report before making a decision on which of the proposed projects will be eligible for funding assistance under the NGEP.



Commercial and Industrial Development The Heron Business Park

The Municipality of West Perth has assembled 24 Ha (59 acres) of land for commercial industrial development in southeast Mitchell. The area will be marketed as the Heron Business Park and provide a mix of lot sizes for varying scale commercial and industrial development to support the long-term economic prosperity of West Perth. Engineering design is underway to provide sanitary, potable water and stormwater management services to the area. West Perth is also working with an adjacent landowner to plan services which provide options for future expansion with added uses to the east. A shared stormwater management pond will provide cost effective

stormwater management to meet regulatory requirements and preserve options for custom lot configurations and rail access for a range of commercial and industrial uses.

The first sale from the Heron Business Park was completed in 2020 with the transfer of a 2 Ha (4.8 ac) parcel of land to Hog Slat Holdings Inc. for the construction of a 1,765 m² (19,000 ft²) facility which includes a combination of warehousing, assembly and retail space to serve the livestock equipment market.

Additional land sales will need to await the construction of the stormwater management facility and installation of sanitary and water services. It is anticipated that the design of the stormwater management system will be completed in early 2021 with agreements for the joint stormwater pond to follow. Once agreements are secured and approval from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change is received, the servicing works will be tendered for construction. Lot sales will be promoted once the earthworks and servicing installation schedule is finalized.



Mitchell Business Improvement Area



Founded in 2009, the Mitchell Business Improvement Association (BIA) facilitates the cooperation and coordination of businesses in a defined area of Downtown Mitchell. The BIA is governed by an elected Board of Management and operates with the purpose to collectively market “Downtown Mitchell” and the local area as a shopping and service destination for members of the community and visitors alike. The Mitchell BIA aims to generate value for the broader West Perth community and welcomes Associate Members by way of an annual membership.

Downtown Mitchell welcomed four new businesses in 2020: Bickell’s Flooring and Complete Decorating Centre; Partners Paint & Paper; Denchy’s Sport Fort, and; The Hub Mitchell. Floral Treasures expanded into neighbouring space to create Floral Treasures & Boutique. Downtown Mitchell will also be welcoming Oasis Spa in 2021.

The Mitchell BIA had a busy 2020 supporting and assisting businesses with pivoting and adapting programming due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Local businesses adjusted quickly by having a stronger online presence or providing added services such as curbside pickup, take-out and delivery. Many businesses had to adjust their public access and operations to meet public health unit directives and keep their employees and patrons safe.

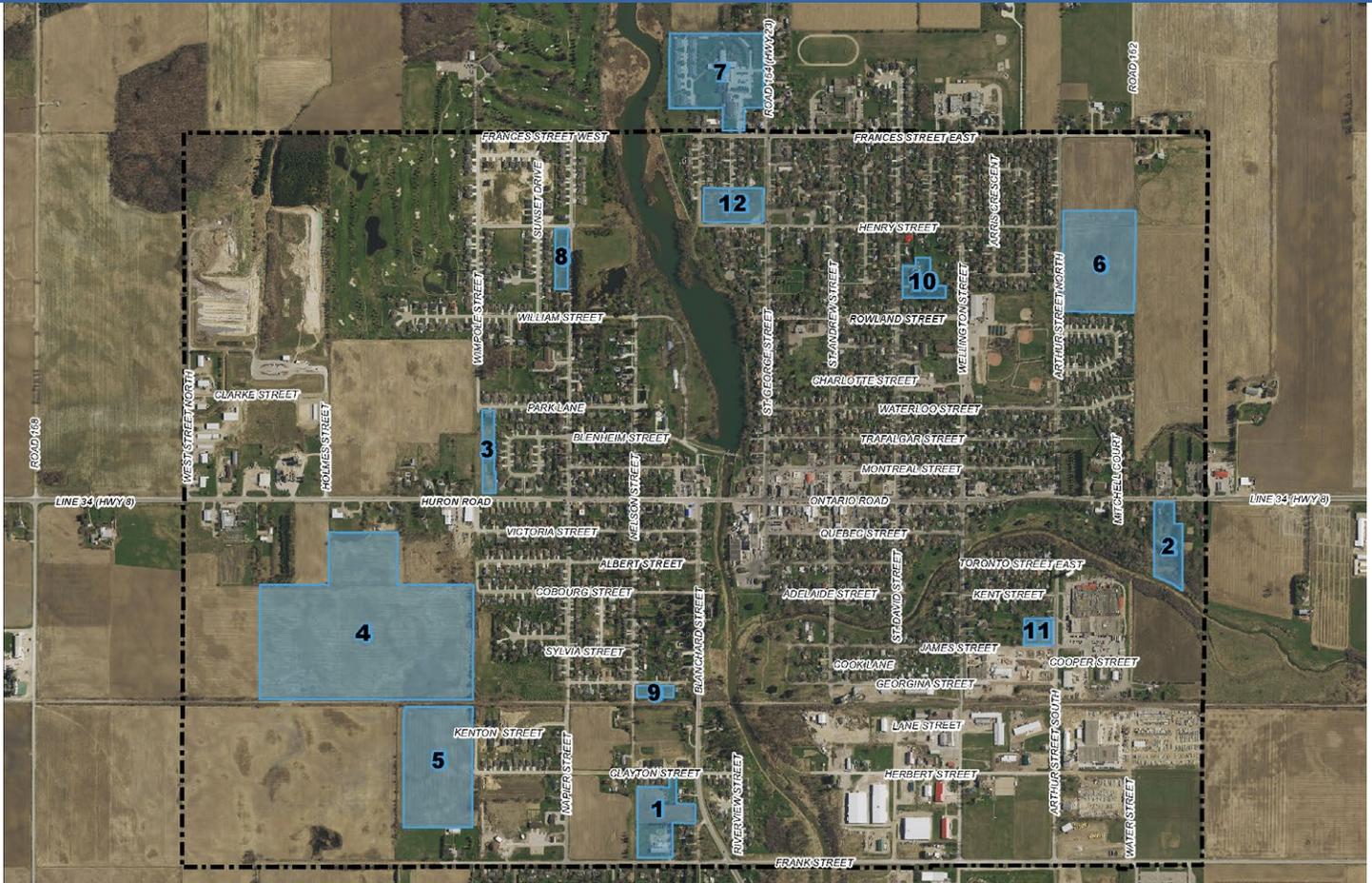
In June 2020, Council approved temporary changes to the Sidewalk Patio & Café by-law to support businesses during the recovery from the pandemic. West Perth waived fees, reduced deposits and expedited applications which allowed three restaurants to host patio seating for patrons.

The Downtown Mitchell Christmas Promotion for BIA Bucks sales started early in 2020 to encourage early and local shopping. The BIA Bucks are available for purchase and use year-round at participating businesses with emphasis on a 10% discount on their purchase of BIA Bucks around Christmas.

The Mitchell BIA offered additional contests and promotions to support businesses through this challenging time. For the six weeks leading up to Christmas, BIA gnomes were hidden for shoppers to find and win BIA Bucks weekly, with a grand prize draw to be held after Christmas. The BIA also held window display decorating contests between businesses to encourage decorating the downtown. The business with the most reactions on the Facebook page received BIA Bucks to host a draw in their store. These promotions help to increase traffic to downtown businesses and encourage residents to shop local.



Residential Development Projects



Discussions at Economic Development Committee meetings have focused on the importance of a robust residential housing market to the economic well-being of West Perth.

It is recognized that West Perth needs to promote residential growth that sustains population and brings qualified and capable employment candidates to the municipality. It is critical that new housing offer a diversity of attainable housing options that enable people at all life stages to make the Municipality of West Perth their home.

The continued promotion of diverse housing growth is a key priority identified in the West Perth Strategic Plan - <https://www.westperth.com/en/municipal-office/resources/Strategies-Plans-/West-Perth--Strategic-Plan.pdf>

Site	Development Name	Information
1	Upper Thames Village	26 Condominium Units
2	Blue Heron Estates	28 Condominium Units
3	Wimpole Street North	28 Medium Density Units
4	West Mitchell Developments	Proposed Mixed Residential Community
5	Mitchell Woods Inc.	23 Semi-detached Lots (46 Units)
6	East Haven Development	60 Single Lots and 11 Semi-detached Lots (Total 82 Units)
7	West Perth Village Seniors Community	128 Long Term CareBed Re-development
8	Thamesview Estates Phase IV	10 Lots - All Built
9	Eleanor Street Rentals	8 Units - All Built
10	Avco Holdings Inc.	38 Apartment Units - Appealed to LPAT
11	CJ Weir Holdings	12 Units - All Built
12	Henry Street at George Street	Proposed Mixed Residential Development

Perth County's Economic Development and Tourism Division

The role of the Economic Development and Tourism Division is to facilitate and implement regional economic development and tourism strategies as a means of promoting the County as an attractive business location and place to live and visit. This is achieved by developing and delivering programs and policies that support, increase and strengthen the business communities of Perth County. We achieve this by engaging and working with our member municipalities, businesses, business organizations, community organizations, provincial and federal government partners, investors and associations. A collaborative approach is taken to ensure timely delivery of projects that will promote Perth County business development and stabilization.

We participate as a key partner in regional initiatives, serving as a resource to Perth County's member municipalities (North Perth, Perth South, Perth East and West Perth) and ensuring responsive action to inquiries and challenges facing business. Our activities include initiatives aimed at retaining existing businesses and creating a business environment that will enable local businesses to expand and prosper. These activities

include business recruitment, investment attraction, strategic alliances and partnerships, entrepreneurship, quality of life, workforce development, downtown revitalization and tourism development.

Tourism initiatives will continue to promote Perth County as a destination area, promoting and strengthening the local economy. Through strategic marketing initiatives, we continue to elevate the profile of the region's tourism offerings with the goal to increase visitor spending and lengthen visitor overnight stays. We also market our region's tourism amenities to visitors and residents. In turn, this helps to create jobs, stimulate supply-chain spending, and enable business owners to prosper.

These factors combine to position a community for growth and long-term economic sustainability. Support for business has never been more evident than during the COVID 19 pandemic. As businesses struggled with unprecedented shutdowns, partial closures and ever evolving health guidelines, the Economic Development and Tourism Division has been there to help ensure that they are supported, have access to the most up to date information and provide a local boost to morale.



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The Year of the Pivot

The impact of COVID 19 on the Economic Development and Tourism division in 2020 was felt immediately and will persist into 2021. As a result of the pandemic many businesses were forced to close or drastically reduce operations. The tourism industry was one of the first sectors hit and will be one of the last to fully recover as tourists deal with border closures, quarantine periods and reduced consumer confidence. With so much uncertainty, businesses and tourism operators will be looking to the division to continue to provide resources, direct support where possible and innovative promotional and shop local campaigns that support them through the current pandemic and along the road to recovery.

In March, our division sprang into action quickly to respond to business needs in a variety of ways. Below is a brief summary of the campaigns and outreach we provided during this challenging time:

SURVEYS

- Measuring the Impact of COVID-19 on the Business Community – Survey 1
- Measuring the Impact of COVID-19 on the Business Community – Survey 2
- University of Guelph – COVID-19 Impact Resident Survey
- Business Check-in Calls

INITIATIVES & RESOURCES

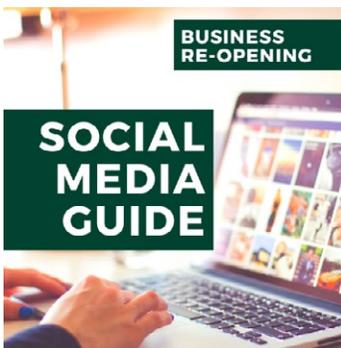
- Business Directory Update
- Virtual Job Fairs
- Newsletters
- The Perth County Podcast
- Roundtable with Minister Ernie Hardeman
- COVID Resource and Training Website
- Social Media Guidebook
- Business Concierge Help Line

MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

- 19 Days and 19 ways to Support Local Businesses
- 19 Days and 19 Ways Action Plan
- Spotlight on Businesses/Meet the Owner Campaign
- Perth County BINGO Challenge
- #SupportLocal Video
- Zoom meeting backgrounds
- Perth County Photo Contest
- How To From Home video series
- Proudly Perth County Video
- Tourism Week Promotions
- Tourism from Home Video
- Chalk it Up Campaign
- Travelling Deal Wheel

TRAINING PROGRAMS & BUSINESS OUTREACH

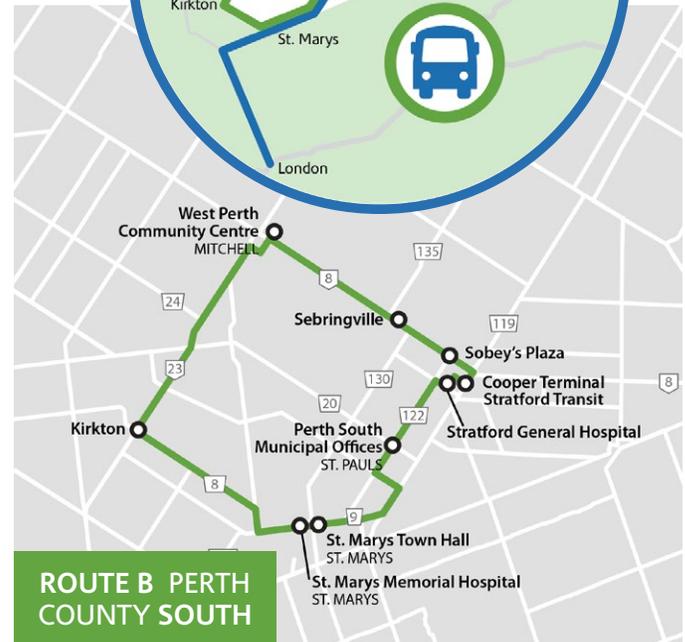
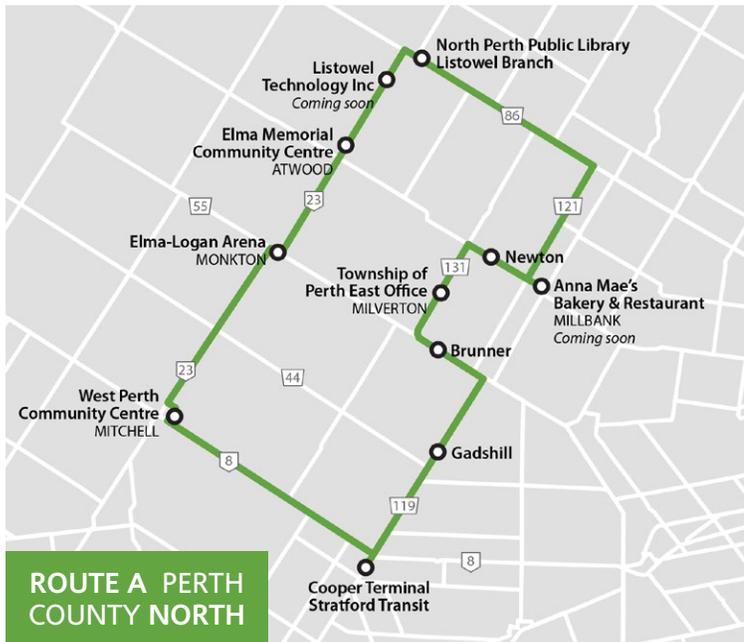
- Get Your Business Online Webinar Series
- Welcoming Communities Training
- Local Love Campaign
- Perth County Care Kits



Our division will continue to remain responsive to the changing needs of businesses during the pandemic. You can contact us by emailing ecdev@perthcounty.ca

We've launched many of these initiatives via the Perth County and Perth County Tourism social media accounts, but also on Youtube and [our website](#).

To stay in touch and get involved with our programming, be sure to subscribe to our newsletter: www.perthcounty.ca/newsletter



Get where you want to go with the all new Perth County Connect bus service. PC Connect is a reliable, fully accessible and affordable bus system that has been designed to provide residents with alternative transportation options within Perth County, and surrounding areas, including Stratford, St. Marys, Kitchener/Waterloo, and London.

PC Connect is the result of two \$1.45 million grants from the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Community Transportation Program. The County of Perth, and the City of Stratford were each awarded grants to implement complementary intracommunity transportation pilot projects. PC Connect launched on November 16, 2020, and runs as a pilot project until March 31, 2023.

PC Connect is made up of five routes; Routes 1, 2 and 3 are managed by Stratford, and Routes A and B are directly managed and funded by Perth County. Perth County Routes A and B have been strategically designed to connect residents to employment opportunities, and other necessities such as healthcare, grocery stores, social services, and even recreational activities. Both route schedules start at 6am in order to get residents to places of employment before the average shift start time, and operate until 5:00pm (Route A) and 6:30pm (Route B) so that workers can make a round trip.

Through initial feasibility research, the County validated that many local employers urgently need more general labour and production workers, however many workers stated that the lack of affordable community transportation options hinders accessing the employment opportunities available. At only \$6/ride, PC Connect is confident that the new affordable bus system will be the solution to the transportation barrier that many employers and employees face.

Riders must arrive at the marked bus stop location 5 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time with exact change - cash only at this time - for the fare box. Pre-booking the service by calling 1-888-465-0783 is strongly recommended in order to guarantee a seat.

For more information on PC Connect routes and schedules, or to find out about the current COVID safety protocols in place, please visit www.perthcounty.ca/pconnect. If you are a business owner and experience difficulty hiring employees due to transportation barriers, please contact us to see how PC Connect can help.

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Welcome to the Perth County Discover More Flavour Farm Gate Signage Program!

We are excited to help promote all the great local food being produced through the Discover More Flavour promotional program!

What is Discover More Flavour?

In 2019, Perth County launched their inaugural Farm Gate Map to boost agri-tourism and encourage buying local food whenever possible. This program was a success, and Perth County recognized that there is a clear demand for information on where and how to access local food, agriculture experiences, and farm gate shopping opportunities. In response to this demand, the Perth County Economic Development and Tourism team is developing an updated, revitalized Discover More Flavour Farm Gate Map program. The goal is to promote and draw more customers to each of these agricultural businesses.

What are the benefits of participating?

All participating Farm Gate Businesses will receive a signage kit to help raise awareness and presence at the road-side. Promotional kits will be distributed on a first come first served basis. Examples of what the kits will include are below (municipality naming will differ

based on business location). Your business will also be featured on our online and physical Farm Gate Maps, and promoted throughout the year on our website and social media platforms with photography, videography, blog posts, and more.

What is the cost?

Participation in this program is completely free. This project revitalization is being funded through a grant the County received from the Government of Canada's Regional Relief and Recovery Fund through Fed Dev Ontario, administered by the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario.

How do I participate?

Visit www.perthcounty.ca/FarmGate and complete the simple online form. Once we receive your form, a member of our team will reach out to you to confirm information provided and to coordinate delivery of your signage items.

Additional questions?

Email: tourism@perthcounty.ca



