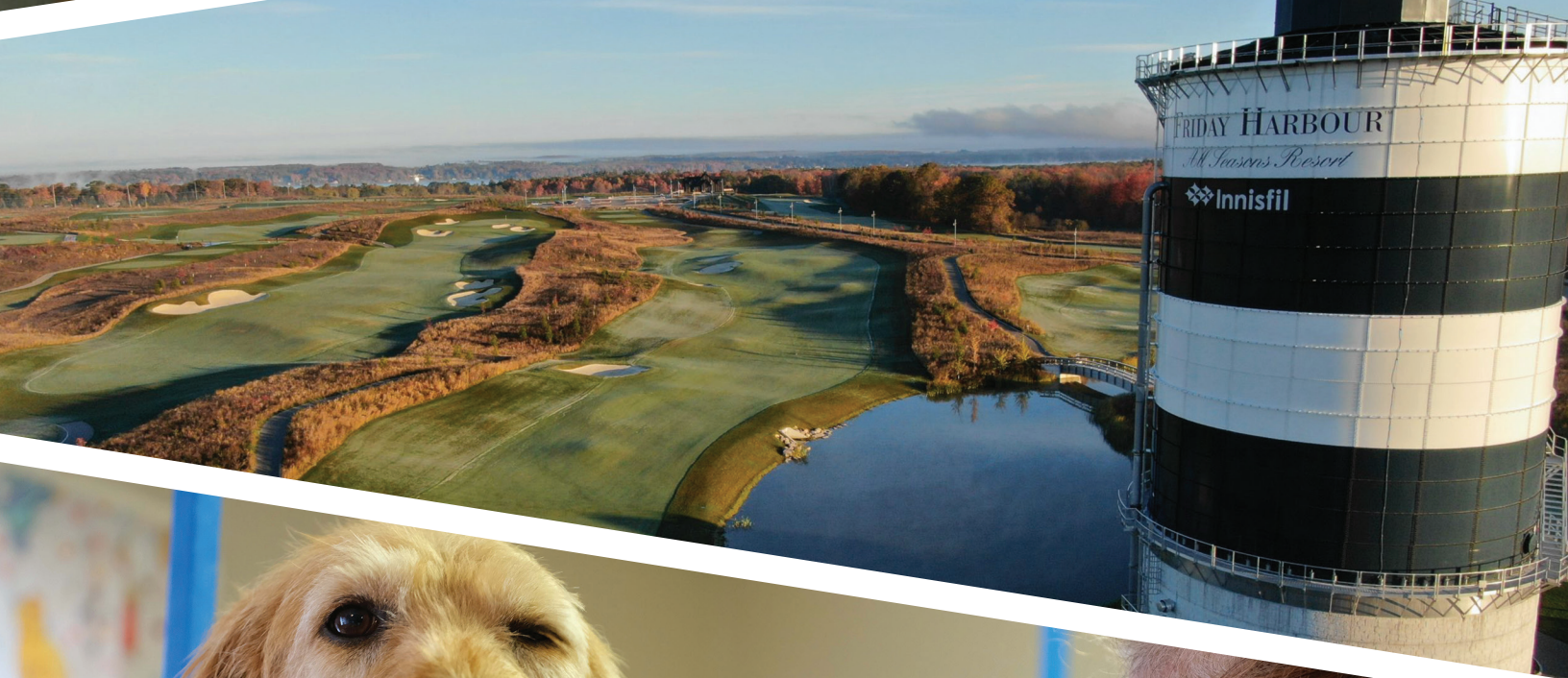


Town of Innisfil Economic Development

# Annual Report 2023







# Introduction

The Town of Innisfil Annual Economic Development Year in Review provides a summary of our achievements, programming and initiatives over the past 12 months. Our mission is to foster a vibrant and prosperous community that supports innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainability.

The Economic Development Team welcomed new leadership and the economic development portfolio was diversified to encompass 5 key goals in 2023:

- 1 Building a strong economic development foundation
- 2 Business Creation & Investment Attraction
- 3 Business Retention & Expansion
- 4 Marketing of Innisfil as a place to live, work and invest
- 5 Supporting corporate priorities which impact economic growth

*It's been a productive year and we look forward to building on these efforts in 2024!*

## Meet the team

Back row:  
**Dean Gillis**  
Marketing &  
Content Strategist

**Morteza Gharaee**  
DMZ Innisfil Program &  
Community Coordinator

**Jelmer Stegink**  
Economic Development  
Project Manager

Front row:  
**Laura Thompson,**  
Manager of Economic  
Development

**Mary Reinhart;**  
Economic Development  
Support

**Brenda McBratney**  
Legal Assistant/Economic  
Development Administrative  
Support

**Kate Quigley**  
Economic Development  
Officer







## Building a strong economic development foundation

### Economic Development Strategic Plan

The Innisfil Economic Development Team conducted a comprehensive and collaborative process to develop a strategic plan that aligns with the town's vision and goals. The process involved extensive consultation with more than 300 stakeholders, including community members, business owners, industry experts, and municipal staff.

#### The consultation process consisted of four phases:

**Phase 1:** Background research and analysis of Innisfil's economic profile, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

**Phase 2:** Online survey and interviews with approximately 250 stakeholders to gather their perspectives, needs, challenges, and aspirations for Innisfil's economic development.

**Phase 3:** Visioning workshop and focus groups with selected stakeholders to validate the findings from phase 2 and generate ideas for strategic priorities and actions. Validation with a further 100 business stakeholders through the Mayor's Business Breakfast.

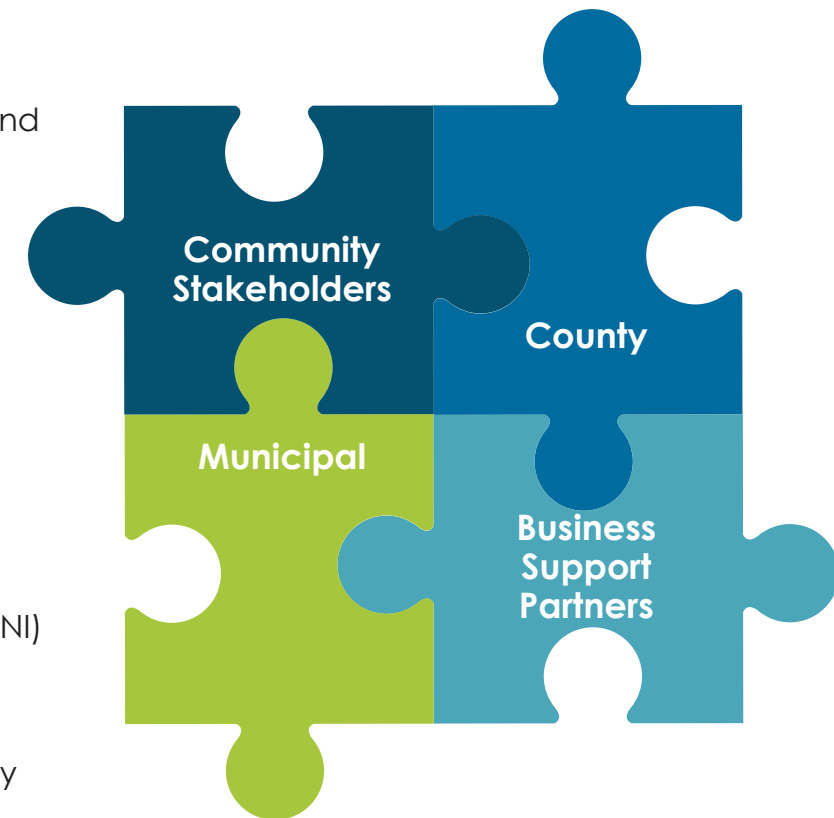
**Phase 4:** Drafting the strategic plan and implementation plan.

The strategic plan provides a clear direction and roadmap for Innisfil's economic development over the next five years. The Draft Economic Development Strategic Plan will be presented to Council for consideration in December.

The Innisfil Economic Development Team is committed to fostering a vibrant and innovative business community in the town. A number of factors influence the economic health of a community, including workforce development, talent attraction, planning processes and policies, entrepreneurial support and more. Innisfil's Economic Development Team works alongside a regional ecosystem of entrepreneurial and business support partners, each with their own mandates and areas of expertise, to ensure that local businesses have access to a robust network of mentors and advisors.

Over the past year the Town has continued fostering partnerships with a number of partners, including, but not limited to;

- ✦ The County of Simcoe Economic Development Office
- ✦ The City of Orillia, City of Barrie and Municipal Economic Development Offices throughout the County of Simcoe
- ✦ Georgian College and Lakehead University
- ✦ Toronto Metropolitan University and DMZ
- ✦ Nottawasaga Futures
- ✦ Agilec
- ✦ Futurpreneur
- ✦ Business Network International (BNI)
- ✦ County of Simcoe Local Immigration Partnership



The following are a sample of the many events and initiatives we sponsored or supported in collaboration with partner agencies:

- ✦ Xcelerate Conference
- ✦ DMZ Panel, Collision Conference
- ✦ Agilec Fall Job Fair
- ✦ Nottawasaga Futures Business Coaching & Consulting Program
- ✦ Nottawasaga Futures Film Education Workshop Series



## Business Creation & Investment Attraction

### DMZ Innisfil

DMZ Innisfil delivers business incubator and accelerator programming to Innisfil and Simcoe County area entrepreneurs through a partnership with DMZ, Toronto Metropolitan University's leading tech accelerator. The program aims to support local entrepreneurs and innovators by providing them with customized mentorship, resources, and access to a network of experts and investors.

+ **27**  
businesses  
**14**  
alumni

**41 businesses**  
were actively  
supported by  
DMZ Innisfil in 2023

The DMZ Innisfil space at 8000 Yonge Street in Stroud has been reactivated through the delivery of a new series of DMZ All Access workshops which is open to all business professionals in Innisfil and Simcoe County.

The team also hosts regular Coffee & Coworking events to bring together like-minded entrepreneurs and DMZ participants.

### Dragons Den Tourism Event

The Innisfil Economic Development team was invited to participate in a "Dragons Den" pitch event at the Ontario Investment and Trade Centre in Downtown Toronto. Innisfil was selected as one of 10 communities to present tourism investment opportunities to a panel of potential investors, including developers, hoteliers, and other stakeholders.



### Simcoe County Labour Market Research Study with the County of Simcoe Economic Development Office

The County of Simcoe Labour Market Research Study analyzes workforce, industry, and education assets in priority sectors, such as manufacturing, agriculture, agri-food, tourism, and professional services.

### Reignite Conference

The Town of Innisfil Economic Development team sponsored the Reignite conference in partnership with DMZ and Toronto Metropolitan University. The event provided our community with the opportunity to network with entrepreneurs, ecosystem partners and investors from across the province.

### Innisfil Business Support Showcase

Hosted at the Innisfil IdeaLAB & Library, the Innisfil Business Support Showcase planned for December 2023 will bring together business leaders, entrepreneurs and business support providers from across the region to showcase the resources available to local businesses.

## Supporting corporate priorities which impact economic growth

### Innisfil Heights Investment Readiness Update

The Innisfil Heights Strategic Employment Area is a Provincially-designated industrial and commercial area located along Highway 400. These lands will play an important role in Innisfil's economic and employment growth, as they have the potential to accommodate hundreds of acres of new development and more than ten thousand new jobs.

Over the past year the Economic Development Team has developed and is implementing a new Innisfil Heights Investment Readiness project designed to better prepare these lands for investment by identifying potential development barriers, and working with Town colleagues, InnPower and InnServices and other agencies to proactively address these.





## Business Retention & Expansion

### Mayors Breakfast

The Innisfil Economic Development Team co-hosted the annual Mayor's Breakfast at Friday Harbour. The event was a success, with more than 113 individuals representing 57 businesses across a range of sectors and industries participating. Mayor Dollin provided a keynote address with a focus on Innisfil's economy and the many efforts Council are leading to support this, and an update was provided on the Economic Development Strategic Plan which included draft goals developed through consultation with the community.

## Business Achievements

We are proud of Innisfil's business community, whose remarkable achievements continue to drive our town's growth and prosperity.

### Friday Harbour Be our Guest

The Be Our Guest co-op hospitality program is a new initiative by Friday Harbour Resort to provide high school students with an opportunity to learn and work in the hospitality industry.

### AGEMA Work LIP Award

AGEMA Work, a hospitality and services company that connects professionals with reputable employers that require temporary staffing solutions, has won a LIP award for its innovation and excellence in supporting newcomers.

### MuniPaas Award

MuniPaas Corporation has won the Salesforce 2023 Global Partner Innovation Award in the Government & Public Sector industry solution category.

### Tempo Flexible Packaging "Best in Class" PAC Global Leadership Award

Tempo Flexible Packaging won the "best in class" award in 2023 and 2022 for its outstanding and eco-friendly designs.

### Grand Openings

This year, the Town was invited to support grand openings for many new businesses. The Economic Development Department supports awareness of these milestones through the Town's business communication channels.



### Week of Welcome

The Town of Innisfil, as part of the County of Simcoe's first annual Week of Welcome, hosted a community fair that served as a platform for newcomers and long-standing residents to connect with local resources.





## Business Retention & Expansion

### Council Business Tours

The Economic Development Team initiated a new business tour program for Mayor and Council. This initiative provides an opportunity for the Town's leadership to gain firsthand insight into the operations of local businesses, and learn more about the economic trends, challenges and potential opportunities facing the Innisfil business community.

### Business Coaching & Consulting Program





The Economic Development team has partnered with Nottawasaga Futures to establish the Innisfil Business Mentor Program. The program features 14 mentors that provide support in areas including bookkeeping, accounting, legal, website development, marketing and more. This program provides on-demand mentorship support to entrepreneurs and business owners in our community. In 2023, the program has provided 23 Innisfil businesses with 72 hours of mentor support.





# Success by the Numbers

## KPI & Business Development

<p><b>23</b></p> <p>Innisfil businesses accessed the Business Coaching &amp; Consulting Program</p> 	<p><b>285</b></p> <p>Jobs Support Through DMZ Innisfil</p> 	<p><b>41</b></p> <p>Businesses supported through DMZ Innisfil</p> 	<p><b>118</b></p> <p>New jobs created in supported businesses through DMZ Innisfil</p> 
<p><b>63</b></p> <p>New Leads</p> 	<p><b>50</b></p> <p>Local Business Consultations</p> 	<p><b>67</b></p> <p>Businesses Supported In Programs</p> 	<p><b>36</b></p> <p>Referrals Made to Ecosystem Partners</p> 
<p><b>324</b></p> <p>Hours of Mentorship Provided</p> 	<p><b>247</b></p> <p>Stakeholders providing insights to the Economic Development Strategic Plan</p> 	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>Events Organized</p> 	<p><b>404</b></p> <p>Event Attendees</p> 

## Who do we support?

**Entrepreneurs** drive innovation and growth, creating new businesses and products that meet community needs and contribute to the sustainability of our economy.

**Developers** shape our town's physical infrastructure, enhancing livability and supporting economic objectives by providing quality spaces to live, work and play.

**Investors** fund much-needed community development, projects and initiatives. They are attracted by Innisfil's strategic location, skilled workforce, and supportive business development ecosystem.

**Business leaders and professionals** support the community through the provision of products, services and expertise. These businesses create employment opportunities, drive innovation and often support community groups, charities and local causes.

**Residents** contribute to our vibrant community, culture and diversity. Innisfil residents play an important role in the social and economic wellbeing of our community.

**Mayor and Council** steer the vision for Innisfil's economic growth and oversee the implementation of our Economic Development Strategic Plan and service delivery.

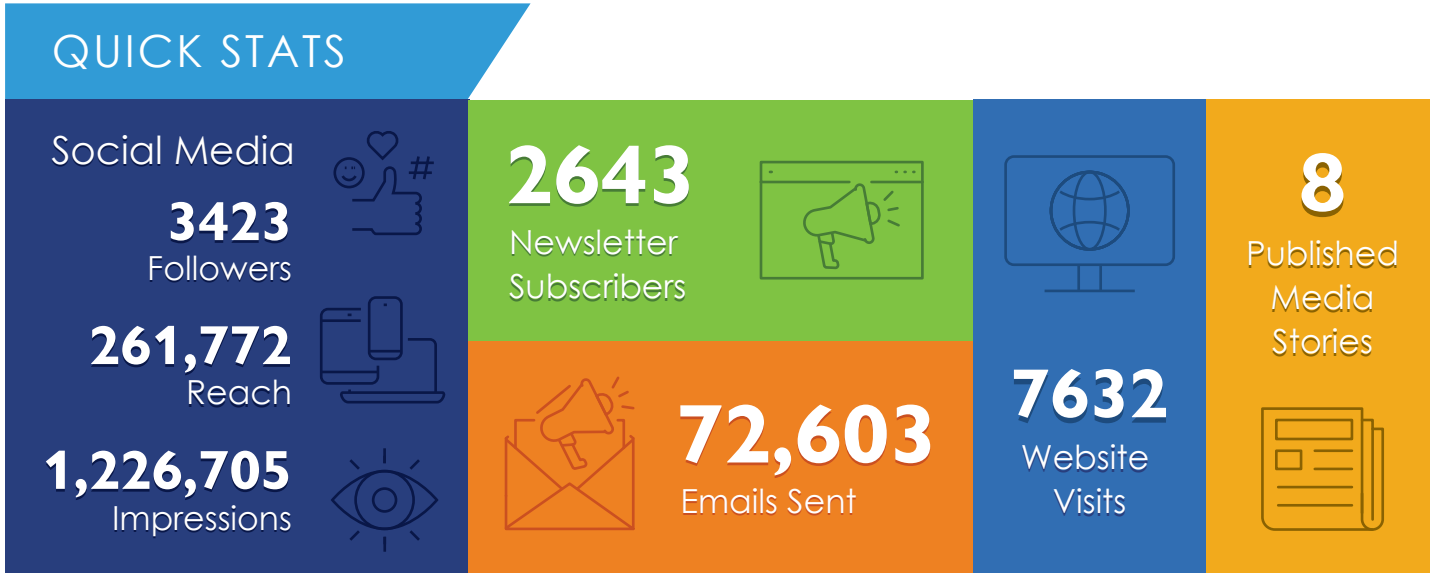




# Marketing Innisfil

This year, we've taken significant strides in marketing the town as an ideal place to live, work, and invest. We've launched new initiatives, leveraged digital platforms, and created compelling content to attract attention and interest.

## Highlights of the Year

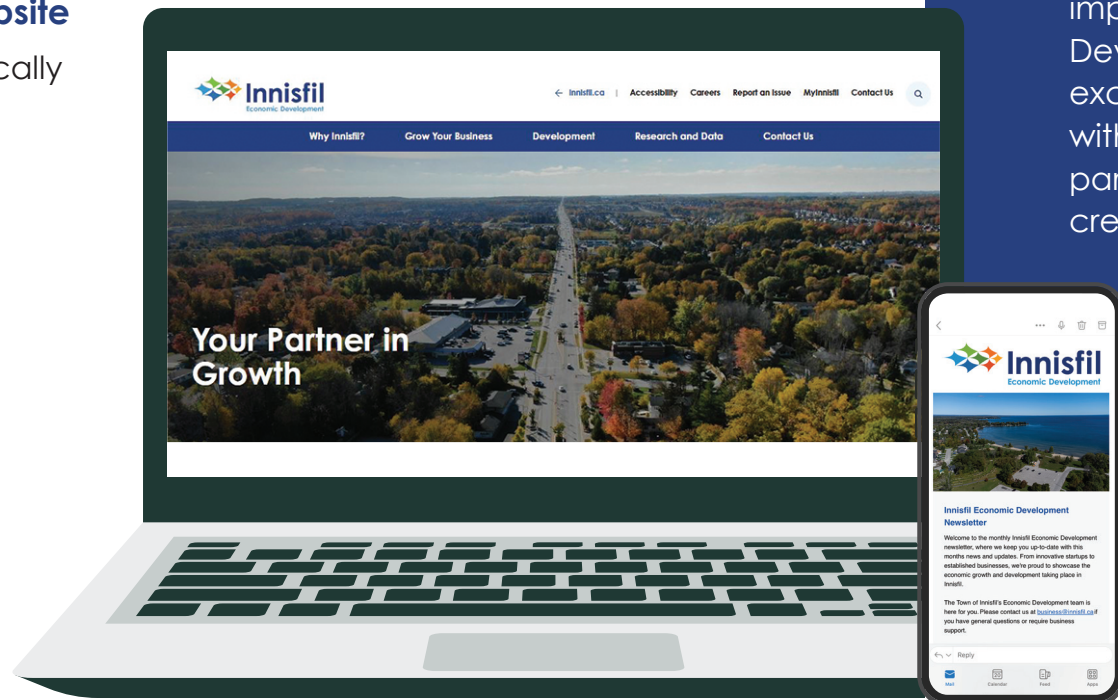


### New Economic Development Website

We launched a new website specifically designed to support businesses. It provides up-to-date information, statistics, and data to aid in business planning.

### DMZ Website and Founder Profiles

We successfully launched new DMZ webpages and founder profiles, providing a platform to serve DMZ founders and celebrate their achievements.



### DMZ Innisfil Cohort Relaunch Campaigns

We developed a double-sided brochure and initiated a DMZ testimonial campaign. This included videos and graphics of our DMZ Innisfil entrepreneurs discussing the benefits of DMZ Innisfil in their own words.

### National Post Articles

In Partnership with the National Post we created sponsored articles showcasing Innisfil's unique workforce opportunities as well as profiling our DMZ Innisfil accelerator programs through the achievement of its members.

### Media Traction

Our marketing initiatives have been picked up by major outlets like CTV, the National Post, and various radio stations. We also had many appearances in local media like Innisfil Today and Simcoe.com. This exposure is beneficial to our local business community as it generates interest and spurs investment in the community.

## 2024 Look Ahead

As we approach 2024 we look forward to continuing to address the priorities of the Innisfil Business Community through the implementation of the 3-Year Economic Development Strategic Plan. We are excited to build on the partnerships already established, create new relationships with entrepreneurs and business leaders and to collaborate with our community partners on meaningful economic development initiatives. Together we can create a prosperous future for Innisfil.



**We invite you to follow and like us on social media and subscribe to our newsletter for updates.**

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- Sign up to our newsletter







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