

GETTING TO WORK: EXPLORING LABOUR MARKET DYNAMICS IN SAUGEEN SHORES, ONTARIO

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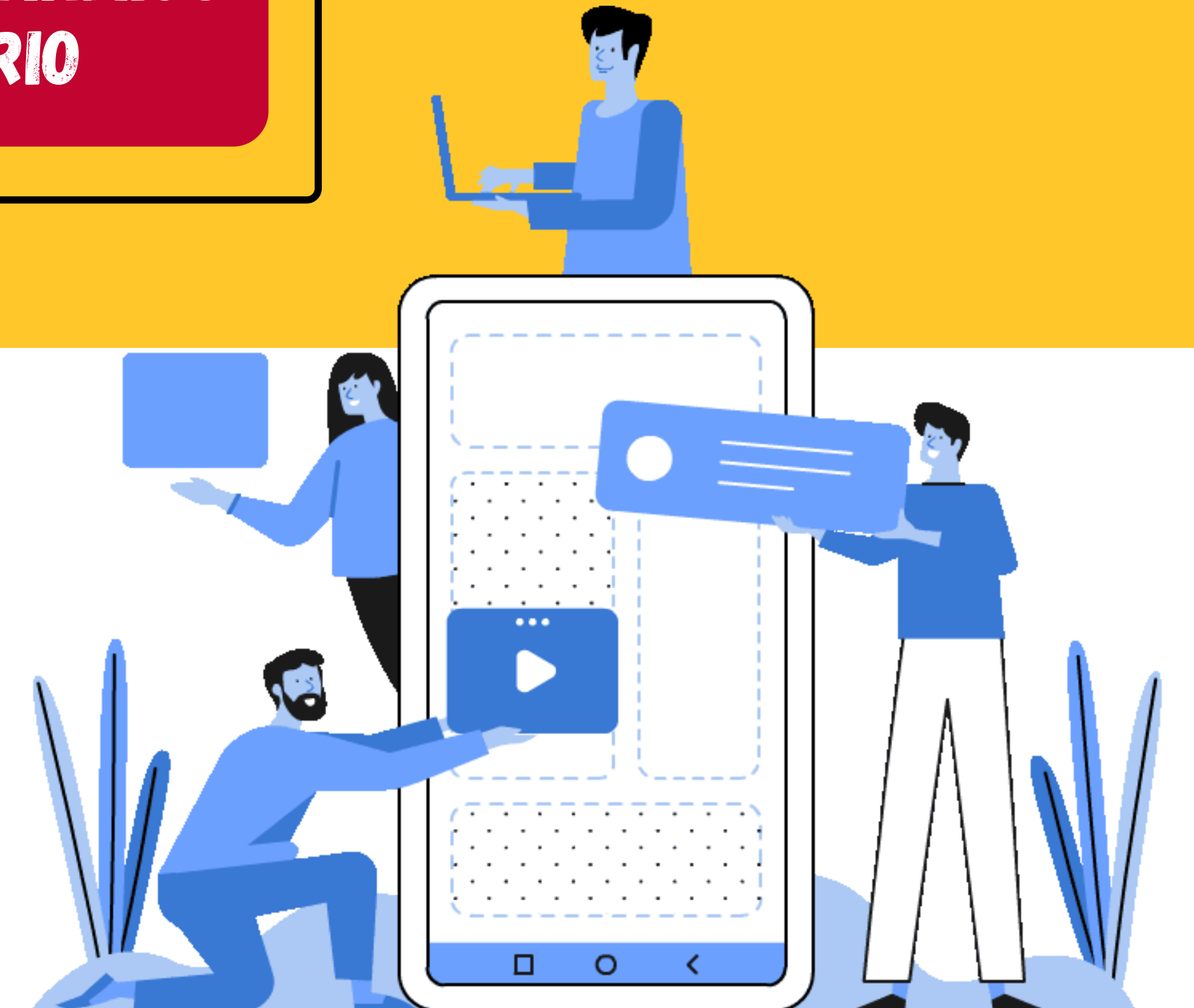
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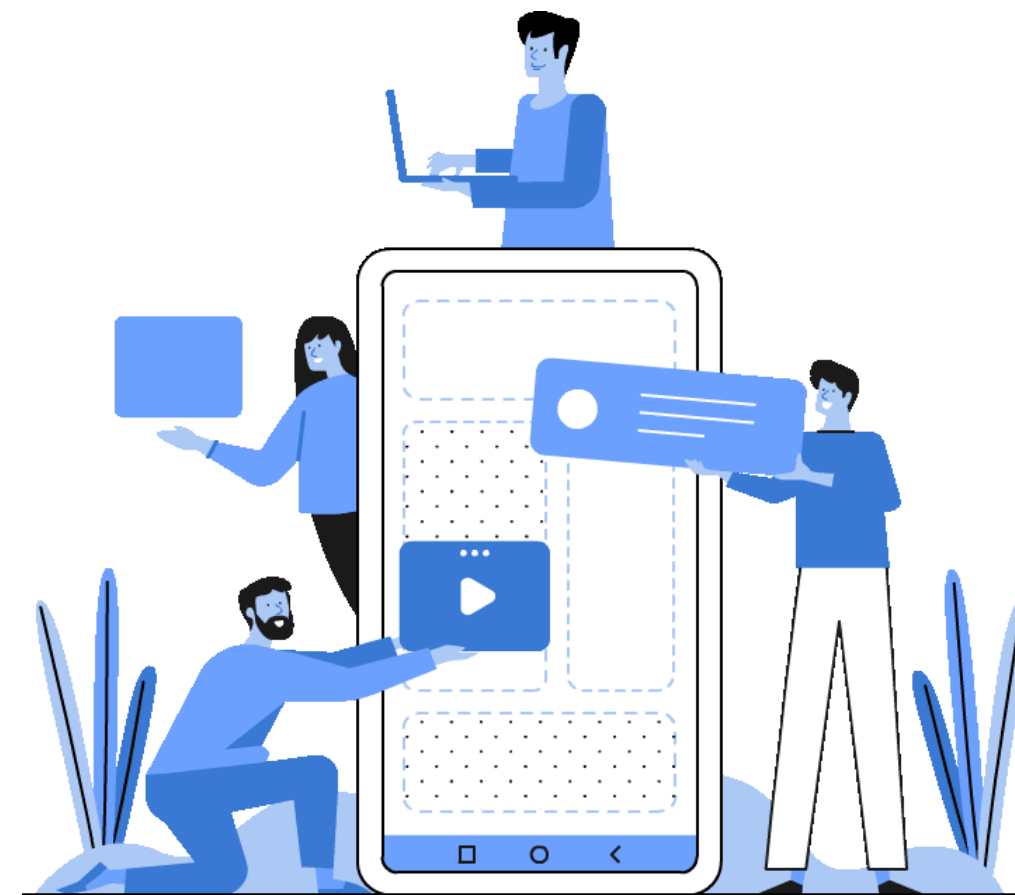
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GETTING TO WORK:

EXPLORING LABOUR MARKET DYNAMICS IN SAUGEEN SHORES, ONTARIO

- Completed as a six-month Mitacs Accelerate Internship, funded by Bruce Power and the University of Guelph, directed by the Town of Saugeen Shores
- Supported Advisory Committee Members:
 - Heather Hyde, Economic Development Officer, Town of Saugeen Shores
 - John Peevers, Director of Corporate Communications, Bruce Power
 - Gemma Mendez-Smith, Executive Director, Four County Labour Market Planning Board
 - Kimberley Inniss-Petersen, Executive Director, Saugeen Shores Chamber of Commerce
 - Karen Foster, Associate Professor & Canada Research Chair in Sustainable Rural Futures for Atlantic Canada, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Dalhousie University

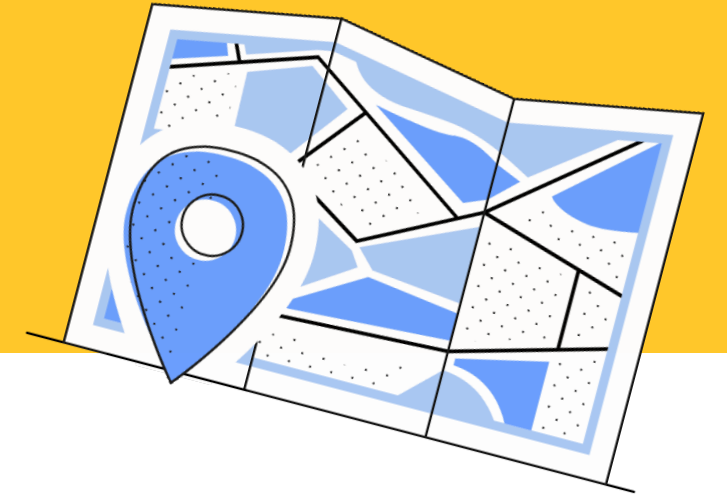


SAUGEEN SHORES IS EXPERIENCING GROWING PAINS...



What happens in a rapidly growing community that's been recognized as one of the best places to live as it tries to keep up with labour demands, changing demographics, and challenges to the enabling infrastructure that support a strong labour market and economic development?

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY?



DISTANCE AND TIME TO SAUGEEN SHORES

Kitchener/Waterloo	160km/100m ~ 2hr 15min
London	200km/125m ~ 2hr 30min
Barrie	165km/100m ~ 2hr 15min
Tobermory	130km/80m ~ 1hr 45min
Hamilton	210km/130m ~ 2hr 30min
Toronto	230km/145m ~ 2hr 45min
Sarnia	230km /145m ~ 2hr 45min
Niagara Falls	290km/180m ~ 3hr 45min
Windsor	340km/210m ~ 4hr 15min



- economy split largely between seasonal tourism & energy sector
- experiencing uneven economic growth & associated tension between 'haves' vs. 'have nots' as well as between pre-amalgamation community identities
- rapid growth of nuclear sector creates 'company town' vulnerabilities
- lack of clarity/direction for local government actors & institutions in terms of 'what to do' to address perceptions of growing inequality, foster community cohesion, & how to acknowledge, integrate, & address the needs of different stakeholders

NOT YOUR AVERAGE LABOUR MARKET STUDY...

Persistent data gaps make addressing key challenges at the local level challenging, if not impossible – and the focus of existing labour force research on quantitative analysis hides the place-specific relationship dynamics, institutional knowledge, and locally-embedded tacit knowledge. This leaves employers, employees, and governments without adequate information or recommendations about how they might identify and address the opportunities and challenges they face in real time to create strong, place-based economies that meet the needs of both employers and workers.



NOT YOUR AVERAGE LABOUR MARKET STUDY...

From September through November 2020, interviewed:

- 10 employers/entrepreneurs
- 7 individuals currently employed in the area
- 6 individuals looking for work in the area

Included 14 women and 9 men.

- 13 participants identified as having close ties to Port Elgin
- 4 participants identified as having close ties to Southampton
- 2 participants identified as having close ties to Saugeen Township
- 7 participants identified as having close ties to Saugeen Shores (no community specified) and other communities within the region



NOT YOUR AVERAGE LABOUR MARKET STUDY...

- Interviews were conducted with employers, employees, and those seeking entry to the labour market across a broad range of sectors, including: Nuclear Energy & Utilities; Retail; Health; Public Administration; Agriculture; Construction/Trades; Entrepreneurship/Small Business; Hospitality/Food Services; Financial Services; Social/Community Services
- Interviewees were eligible if 18 and over, currently an employer/employee/looking for work in Saugeen Shores, and comfortable completing an interview in English).
- were not asked their age, interviews were completed with individuals across the full spectrum of labour participation, including young professionals, those midcareer, new entrants to the labour market, second or third career entrepreneurs, family business owners, and individuals close to retirement



WHAT WE HEARD...



EMPLOYERS/BUSINESS OWNERS

- Difficult to recruit & retain staff in competitive environment
- 'Soft skills' more of an issue than technical skills
- Local of social & community amenities to appeal to broad range of potential staff
- Challenges in supporting youth in career-path development
- need for more collaborative & coordinated efforts among networks, organizations, and institutions to support businesses, employees, and the local economy

EMPLOYEES/JOB SEEKERS

- (un)affordability of living & working, perceived acuity between high-paying energy sector jobs & other sectors (concerns about commuters in high-paying jobs but not living/investing in the community --> displacement)
- lack of transparency about employment opportunities & how to access them
- connecting new entrants, youth, those re-skilling mid career to opportunities
- need for greater collaboration & coordination among employers & institutions to create a 'one window' Saugeen Shores employment model

WHAT MAKES THIS A PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROJECT?

- Economic Diversification:
 - municipal council + staff have positioned themselves as key intervening factors in local economic development
 - to address & avoid vulnerability of 'single sector' economy tied to Bruce Power, municipal & regional governments must consider diversification strategies
- Investing in Infrastructure:
 - local government needs to lead in development of social & physical infrastructure
 - partner with local businesses & organizations to invest dividends of growth through formal policies that put make equity a core consideration
- Creating a 'Saugeen Shores' Model:
 - growth has limits & economic development plans need to incorporate broader community & social development challenges during a time of rapid change



REFLECTIONS & IMPLICATIONS FOR RURAL POLICY & PRACTICE

- Place matters!
- Government isn't the only one steering the ship - local, regional, intergovernmental and cross-sectoral collaboration is key to addressing 'wicked' policy issues
- Healthy labour market dynamics are about more than just jobs - contingent on diversified, inclusive economies & purposeful socio-economic policy interventions
- Leadership + capacity are key to asking critical questions & developing action plans to address them (this project was initiated by municipal staff, funded by Bruce Power, & immediately actioned by key partners)

"Municipal power is key to translate progressive policies into action."

Renata Avila - Race & Technology Fellow, Stanford



LEARN MORE

WWW.RURALDEV.CA/GETTING-TO-WORK

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