## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

















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### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD





Tom Bain, Chair of the Board, Invest WindsorEssex and Mayor of Lakeshore

Invest WindsorEssex continues to prosper throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. During these extremely difficult times, they have forged ahead providing ongoing support to businesses by helping them stay on top of cross-border changes and working to attract new business to the region.

This pandemic has taught us to pivot and change the way we conduct business. SBEC (Small Business Entrepreneurship Centre) was rebranded and recognized as the COVID-19 recovery network across the province, providing thousands of entrepreneurs with training and support to start and grow successful businesses.

Continuing this trajectory, Invest WindsorEssex provided businesses with the support necessary to sustain and grow their operations during these unprecedented times. The SBEC delivered nearly \$1.8 million in funding to 379 women-led small and medium

sized businesses in southern Ontario. Women-led businesses often face unique challenges, which have been amplified by the impacts of COVID-19.

Despite affordability barriers, the University of Windsor has found a way for graduates to stay in this region as they begin their careers through a partnership with Invest WindsorEssex and the Canadian Career Apprenticeship Initiative. Grants provided will help offset salaries as an incentive to potential employers.

Invest WindsorEssex has contributed to the economic evolution of our region. In collaboration with St. Clair College, Canada's first Automobility Hub was launched. Offering a variety of resources and programs, including a state-of-the-art-ramp-up factory, to help support a network of innovative entrepreneurs and businesses interested in advancing the market for electric, zero-emission, automated vehicle technology and infrastructure.

With the price of homes skyrocketing and interest rates on the rise, affordable housing has never been more important, especially for young people in the Windsor-Essex region. This April, Leamington will be the site of the first 3D printable residential home project. The Virtual Reality CAVE speaks to Windsor's innovation and partnerships that have found a way to solve that problem.

Although the pandemic continues, the one constant that remains is the driving force of Invest WindsorEssex. They have positioned this region to become more diversified with private and public partnerships, advancing innovation and technology and providing local businesses the support they need to get through this pandemic. Invest WindsorEssex has shown us how to overcome adversity, inspire optimism and make this region a great place to live, work and play.

## MESSAGE FROM THE WARDEN, COUNTY OF ESSEX





Gary McNamara,
Warden, County of Essex and Mayor of Tecumseh

The pandemic may have put our lives on pause for another year, but it did not put our economic future on hold in 2021. The residents and businesses of Essex County and Windsor came together to support each other through the ups and downs. They stepped up to prepare for a new normal and behind the scenes, the building blocks for new economic opportunities were put in place.

Our agriculture and agri-tech industries remain strong, and we have learned lessons during the pandemic that will make them stronger. The towers for the Gordie Howe International Bridge are up and construction is on pace for the 2024 opening of our new border crossing. Detailed functional planning is underway for a regional hospital system that will put Windsor-Essex at the forefront of health care.

In November, we announced the establishment of the Canadian Automobility Hub, a partnership that

will make this region a national leader in the future of cleaner and smarter transportation. The County of Essex, the City of Windsor, St. Clair College, the University of Windsor, Enwin Utilities, Invest WindsorEssex and private sector companies came together to make this vision a reality. We are starting small but thinking big about this region's potential to develop and build smart, zero-emission vehicles.

Invest WindsorEssex has been diligently laying the groundwork to attract investments in the future of transportation. That work often involves all three levels of government and multiple private sector players. The culmination can be a spark, like the Automobility Hub. It can have the potential to fire bigger investments, like the planned Flex-Ion Battery and Innovation Centre.

Sometimes it is a game-changing investment that will ignite new development and create thousands of jobs. The announcement by Stellantis and LG Energy Solutions that they will build a \$5-billion battery manufacturing plant in this region is one of those investments. Without the hard work and cooperation of many partners, it could not happen.

We are grateful to our federal and provincial representatives for promoting our region's strengths and bringing their governments to the table to ensure investments come here. We appreciate municipal governments in our region for coming together to benefit us all. And we are most thankful to our business leaders, entrepreneurs and business-supporting organizations for their vision and dedication to building a bright economic future for our region.

## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR, CITY OF WINDSOR





Drew Dilkens, Mayor, City of Windsor

As 2021 began, we all hoped the pandemic would end soon and that an economic rebound would happen quickly. Instead, Windsor-Essex remained in the grips of COVID-19 and so we kept our focus on adapting our lives and businesses to face the unprecedented challenges being felt around the world. We continued pulling together however and wherever we could.

Invest WindsorEssex (IWE) rebranded to reflect their continued effort to promote Windsor-Essex as a competitive location for investment, growth, and prosperity. IWE played a pivotal and essential role in helping businesses navigate uncertainties, setting-up our region for a positive economic rebound. The team worked to deliver COVID relief funding, connect businesses with government supports and facilitate new investments. They worked to help our region make informed, data-driven decisions as we focused on forging a new, stronger path forward.

In lockstep with IWE's efforts, the City of Windsor approved Windsor Works - our economic development roadmap to leverage our strengths and capitalize on new opportunities to take our economy to the next level of growth and prosperity. This strategy came following my inaugural address where I insisted we needed to focus on diversifying our economy now to secure our strong economic future. To that end, Windsor Works encouraged us to focus on Location, Infrastructure, Future Economy, and Talent (LIFT), and became an integral piece of the economic development puzzle. It primed the pump for the municipality to help drive the region toward the economic diversification, talent attraction and retention, and advancement in infrastructure required to attract EV and automobility investments. The bold vision also signaled and solidified our region's growing importance to Ontario and Canada.

Last year, we laid the groundwork for monumental progress. Now, we are starting to see the rewards. With an investment of over \$7.5 million from FedDev Ontario, IWE launched a five-year plan to provide programming, training and facilities to support the upskilling of over 1,300 automobility entrepreneurs and firms and attract \$40 million in foreign direct investment. Later, IWE announced the launch of Canada's first Automobility Hub, forming a cluster of partners to compete in the global marketplace, and declaring our region is perfectly situated to become the frontrunner in electric and automated vehicles. This commitment to tech development and investment attraction is exactly what the Windsor Works strategy outlined as our path forward.

That work led to the recent announcement of a \$5-billion investment from LG Energy Solutions, and Stellantis to bring the first domestic EV battery manufacturing facility – the largest investment in Canada's auto industry – to the City of Windsor. This



game-changing facility, the over 2,500 jobs it will create, and the spin-off economic impacts to supporting sectors, solidifies our position as the "Automobility Capital of Canada". As the world pivots to EVs, we will soon be home to a battery manufacturing facility that powers it all.

At the same time, IWE's WE Can't Wait campaign to help advocate to upper levels of government to ensure financial and other supports for our new regional acute care hospital paid off. Premier Ford vowed to make our hospital his "No. 1 priority," and then announced a nearly \$10-million investment to move us to the planning and design phase. These two community-changing facilities are happening because Windsor-Essex has the local talent and logistics to attract these kinds of investments.

At the outset of 2020, we said the pandemic would test us, and that our success would be measured by

how we united to address complex situations in our region. We have proven that Windsor-Essex stands strong when we all stand together. I've never been more committed to economic diversification than I am today. I'm not daunted by the challenge; I'm excited by the opportunity to keep delivering results for the City of Windsor, in partnership with Essex County.

On behalf of the City, I would like to thank the board and dedicated staff at Invest WindsorEssex for their continued work to support local businesses, and for helping to ensure our community continues to thrive as we begin our long-awaited recovery phase. Our future is looking very bright!

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO





C. Stephen MacKenzie,
President and CEO, Invest WindsorEssex

On behalf of our Board of Directors and team members, it is my pleasure to present the 2021 Annual Report for Invest WindsorEssex (IWE); the first report published under our new name and branding. Our rebrand reflects the continued efforts to promote Windsor-Essex as a competitive location for both foreign and local investment. The agency continues to serve the region and its stakeholders through advancing economic growth and sustaining prosperity.

Invest WindsorEssex launched a new corporate website at **investwindsoressex.com**. These past two pandemic years have further stressed the need for online data tools and platforms to effectively communicate information to clients and partners. The new website allows for easier access to data and information relevant to site selectors and local businesses for the purpose of investment, expansion and talent attraction.

Two divisions within IWE, the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre (formerly WindsorEssex Small Business Centre) and the Automobility and Innovation Centre (formerly Institute for Border

Logistics and Security) also rebranded. This includes the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre new website, **webusinesscentre.com**.

It was another year dominated by the COVID-19 virus that wreaked havoc on our health, lifestyle and the economy. However, despite the challenges presented, the Windsor-Essex industries and businesses were both resourceful and resilient. Through innovative programming, refocused strategies and targeted government support, many companies survived and continued to thrive over the past year.

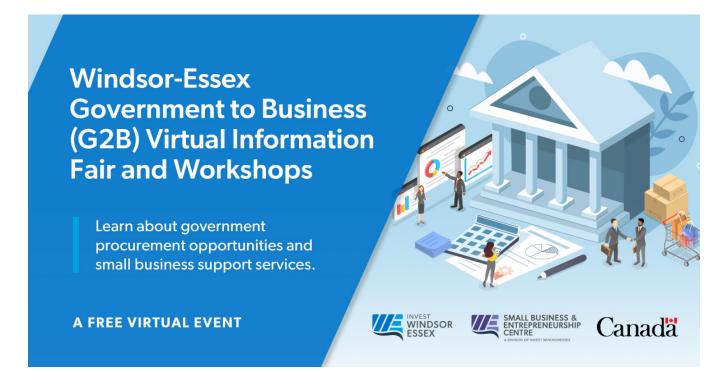
The same can be said for Invest WindsorEssex. IWE supported \$102,913,834 in combined investment from start-ups, expansions and new companies that set up operations in Windsor-Essex. This investment led to the creation of 776 new jobs as reported by the entrepreneurs and companies involved.

As the lead economic development organization for Windsor-Essex, our team continues to work with regional and international economic ecosystem partners to implement, and where applicable, update the **Five-Year Strategic Plan**. In 2021, IWE was successful in attracting \$9.9 million in government grants to support economic development initiatives for the region. This includes \$7.5 million from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario for Invest WindsorEssex to establish Canada's first world-class automobility accelerator. This project brings together key stakeholders in the Windsor-Essex region to support the development of secure, zero-emission vehicle technologies.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of our Board for their leadership and support, and to express our appreciation to our key funders – the City of Windsor and the County of Essex. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the IWE team. It is a privilege to work with such a dedicated, professional and passionate group who are committed to driving economic prosperity to the Windsor-Essex region.

## 2021 HIGHLIGHTS BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

### **Doing Business with Government events**



On March 30, 2021, the Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) team, along with their federal and municipal government partners, hosted a virtual webinar "Doing Business with Government" for the Windsor-Essex business community. Public Services Procurement Canada (PSPC) and its Office of Small and Medium Enterprises, the City of Windsor, and the County of Essex, provided details on how each level of government does its purchasing, from the fundamentals of the procurement process, bidding on opportunities, to how small and medium-sized businesses across many sectors, can include these groups as their customers. This virtual information session was well attended by 55 people, who gained insight into accessing a multimillion-dollar marketplace that offers many opportunities to diversify their customer base and build a relationship with a known stable entity to help grow their business.

The BRE team also supported an "Innovation Information Forum" hosted by WEtech Alliance and the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises within PSPC. Attendees heard from representatives from federal departments and agencies on what the Government of Canada is doing to bolster innovation and how their programs and services are available to support our businesses to grow and succeed.

A second event, "Government to Business (G2B) Information Fair and Workshop", took place in November of 2021 in partnership with Procurement Assistance Canada (PAC). This event welcomed 270 attendees who heard from local community partners and federal and municipal government representatives who collaborated to deliver a procurement themed session.

Representatives from the City of Windsor and the County of Essex delivered up-to-date insights into their procurement processes and opportunities for businesses of all sizes to grow and diversify their customer base. The event concluded with drop-in virtual cafés where attendees could meet one-on-one with various organizations and agencies.

#### **Emerging Technologies in Automation Virtual Conference**



Invest WindsorEssex, National Research Council of Canada's Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP), Automate Canada and Innovation Guelph invited SMEs and entrepreneurs to take part in Emerging Technologies first virtual conference held on March 22. The participants heard from renowned speakers and women entrepreneurs who shared their journeys to success and showcased the technologies, skills and solutions they developed and implemented.

The lifelong entrepreneur and former CBC "Dragon" Bruce Croxon and Paul Zikopolous IBM's VP, Technology Group Skills Vitality & Enablement,

professional speaker and author shared their wisdom, advice and experience. Participants also heard from five inspiring women pioneers from across Canada. Two hundred and twenty attendees were enlightened with stories of their journey to success including all the ups and downs along the way. This program is being offered as part of the region's Women Entrepreneurship Strategy, funded by the federal government.

On Oct. 26, the BRE team hosted a second "Emerging Technologies in Automation Virtual Conference: How automation shapes the post-pandemic world" in partnership with the National Research Council of Canada's Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP), Automate Canada, the Canadian Association of Moldmakers (CAMM) and Ontario Centre of Innovation (OCI). This half-day event was well attended by 230 people. Corporate sponsors were the University of Windsor, St. Clair College, Laval International and The Eltromex Corporation. Main stage speakers Christy Michalak of NGen and Joris Myny of Siemens Canada focused on Canada's history



in automation and how companies are developing technologies to deal with today's challenges. Keynote speaker Jim Beretta of The Robot Industry Podcast provided a lens on the future in his presentation. Breakout sessions included topics such as artificial intelligence, robotics, cybersecurity and augmented reality/virtual reality.

### **Emerging Technologies Speaker Series**

#### **Community Cybersecurity**

Invest WindsorEssex in partnership with Libro Credit Union hosted a cybersecurity webinar for businesses and entrepreneurs on March 23, 2021. The event provided a local, regional, and global review of how the problems solved by new technologies and the internet of things can create new security risks and complexity for businesses and the community. Over 80 participants heard from world-class speakers on the topic of cybersecurity covering a broad range of information from necessary technologies to global trends.



#### **Data Analytics and Rapid Prototyping**

On Aug. 18, 2021, the BRE team along with the National Research Council's Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP), hosted a webinar that featured Dr. Manjari Maheshwari from the Data Analytics program at St. Clair College and Joel Hodgon of the Lambton College Manufacturing Innovation Centre. Manjari spoke about data sources and how businesses can focus on collecting the data they need to become more productive and efficient. She also discussed how data analytics students can help companies with their data requirements. Joel's presentation focused on emerging trends in rapid prototyping, digital technology integration, and the support network that Lambton College, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and National Research Council of Canada (NRC) can provide to manufacturers. Watch the recording.

#### **Business Resources**

#### Crossing the Border Guidebook update - assistance for Windsor-Essex manufacturers

The ongoing COIVD-19 pandemic has resulted in many changes to imposed restrictions related to land and air travel, including the continued Canada-United States border closure to non-essential travel. As a result of these on-going developments, the previous edition of the "Cross-Border Tips for Manufacturing Sector Employees During COVID-19" guidance document required updated information to align with the current rules and regulations. The June 2021 revisions reflect the latest information related but not limited to such topics as: crossing the border tips for business travellers, additional information for industry, quarantine exemptions, pre-entry testing and quarantine requirements, air travel, the mandatory ArriveCAN app and template letters. The document will continue to be a resource for industry and will be updated as cross-border restrictions are eased.

## 2021 HIGHLIGHTS INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

### IT solutions company – Research Into Internet Systems (RIIS) chooses Windsor-Essex

Michigan-based IT solution provider RIIS is establishing a Canadian headquarters in the Windsor-Essex region. The company specializes in delivering Al-based drone mobile applications, web development and IT professional services to financial institutions, agribusiness, automotive, healthcare and other industries.

RIIS looking for talent to join the team.



### **Axile Machine establishes North America headquarters in Windsor-Essex**



AXILE is the high-end brand which is conceived to cover the premium market of three-axis and five-axis high-tech machining centres, focusing on technology and performance.

Axile Machine is a subsidiary company of Buffalo Machinery based in Taiwan, one of leading technology manufacturers. The company is bringing the leading technology in machine tools with world leading Industry 4.0 capability to Windsor-Essex to better support their distributors network and customers across Canada, the United States and Mexico. By embracing Industry 4.0 technologies, the product reliability is upgraded and Mean Time Before Failure (MTBF) is predicted so that maintenance costs are minimized and downtime is avoided. The company has set up its Canadian headquarters on Rhodes Drive in Windsor. Axile Machine is currently working with the Investment Attraction team to establish a Foreign Trade Zone bonded warehouse as their distribution hub and North American training facility.

## P3 Group Green-Hydrogen Charge Park feasibility study completed



WE CAN GREEN | ZERO EMISSION TARGET PICTURE

Feasibility Study Charging Park

WINDSOR ESSEX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

r3 group rris Heiler | Simon Buderath | Surendra Ghimire Since 2020, P3 Group, a consulting company headquartered in Germany, has been assisting Invest WindsorEssex in conducting a feasibility study on a zero-emission - green hydrogen charging park. The study is now completed and has provided the Investment Attraction team tools to further develop the region's zero-emission, e-mobility ecosystem.

## **Germany company PEM Motion plants flag in Windsor-Essex**

As a result of the Investment Attraction team's trade mission to Germany in 2019, PEM Motion has officially announced their investment in Windsor-Essex.

PEM Motion is an engineering service provider with consulting and development solutions focusing on batteries, fuel cells and electric motors as well as the industrialization of mobility products. PEM Motion, together with Windsor Mold Group and Integris, has formed Automobility Enterprises (AE) which is the private branch of the newly announced Canadian Automobility Hub. AE operates a ramp-up factory for entrepreneurs, startups and industry that combines the required infrastructure for the industrialization of components and full mobility solutions. The Windsor-Essex region's market access and strong history and experience in advanced manufacturing is what drew PEM Motion to this opportunity.



Christoph Lienemann, managing director of PEM Motion North America, is interviewed by media at the launch of Canada's first Automobility Hub at St. Clair College on Nov. 24, 2021.

## 2021 HIGHLIGHTS AUTOMOBILITY & INNOVATION

### Invest WindsorEssex unveils Canadian Automobility Hub



Stephen MacKenzie, president & CEO at Invest WindsorEssex, with the Streetscooter electric vehicle at the launch of the Canadian Automobility Hub.

On Nov. 24, 2021, Invest WindsorEssex (IWE) announced the launch of Canada's first Automobility Hub. Together with local elected officials, global industry leaders, post-secondary education institutions and guests, IWE unveiled one of the region's new centres for automotive innovation and collaboration at St. Clair College, Windsor Campus. The Canadian Automobility Hub will serve as an innovation center for startups, SMEs, OEMs and research institutions to bring ideas and know-how to position the Windsor-Essex region and Canada as leaders in the development and production of zero-emission vehicles. With continued efforts to spur the adoption of automotive technologies and mobility innovations, this initiative will help transition Windsor-Essex from Canada's Automotive Capital to Canada's Automobility Capital.

Key partners include Invest WindsorEssex, PEM Motion, Windsor Mold Group, Integris, St. Clair College, University of Windsor and the City of Windsor.

By building the Canadian Automobility Hub, Windsor-Essex is attracting investment and creating long-term, high-paying and high-value tech jobs for the region for years to come.

## FedDev Ontario invests in Canada's first automobility accelerator in Windsor-Essex



FedDev provided \$5 million over 3 years to IWE which generated 312 partnerships and projects, more than 1,900 jobs were created/maintained and leveraged \$11.7 million in funds from private sector partners since 2019, this program ended in March 2022. IWE has secured a renewal grant of \$7.5 million from FedDev to provide continued programming in the region until March 2025.

As a centre for automotive and advanced manufacturing excellence, the Windsor-Essex region is harnessing momentum to strengthen its developing automobility cluster. The Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) announced a five-year commitment and \$7.5 million to Invest WindsorEssex and regional partners including the University of Windsor, St. Clair College and WEtech Alliance to offer a full spectrum of first-in-Canada training and other programming to support the upskilling of 1,350 automobility entrepreneurs and scaling firms.

Tailored to the needs of startups and scale-ups in the automobility ecosystem, with a focus on electric vehicles (EVs), connected and autonomated vehicles (CAVs) and cybersecurity firms, this support will help entrepreneurs to accelerate the commercialization of their technologies while positioning the region as a hub for automobility innovation and investment.

This investment builds on an initial \$5 million by FedDev Ontario, announced in September 2019, to help Invest WindsorEssex establish and catalyze the growth of a next generation automobility cluster, attract investment to the region and create jobs of the future.

## **Smart Corridor Feasibility Study for ISED** and Transport Canada



IWE Automobility & Innovation team members Mackenzie Habash, Grant Administrator & Matthew Johnson, Executive Director presented findings of the feasibility study.

Invest WindsorEssex was contracted by Innovation, Science, and Economic Development (ISED) to conduct a feasibility study for a proposed cross-border smart corridor. The study was completed in March of 2021 and outlined the economic opportunities for a Windsor-Essex-Detroit smart corridor and presented information to help determine smart corridor options to support the vehicles of today and the future.

Both Canada and the United States have ambitious automotive policy agendas that promote the deployment and adoption of innovative technologies, including connected and automated vehicles (CAVs) and smart-roadway infrastructure. Windsor, Essex County and Detroit's combined regions serve as an ideal location for cross border testing of the smart vehicle, roadway and infrastructure planning.

The Windsor-Detroit trade corridor is the busiest commercial border crossing between Canada and the United States and is built upon strong existing ties and partnerships across various sectors.

### Digital Twinning program expands software offerings



Digital Twin Engineer, Linsey Pecile, shows Unity Pro capabilities to Mike Hoppe from GeoPogo.

In an ongoing effort for the Invest WindsorEssex Virtual Reality (VR) CAVE to become software agnostic, the simulation team acquired and implemented Unity Pro software which allows for additional support to local companies. In the last couple of years, the software has expanded into design and development in other areas including automotive, mechanical and more. Unity Pro is open-source software, meaning there are no restrictions or limitations to 3D file types that can be imported to the VR CAVE. During this implementation, the team also acquired a plugin software called Interact which allows for physics-based simulations and deployment into the VR CAVE. These additions allow for the expansion of the digital twinning capabilities and the creation of simulations and not just animations.

## Prototype Pipeline boosts students with entrepreneurial aspirations



Invest WindsorEssex's (IWE's) Prototype Pipeline program is helping students in the region to build new businesses. The program is aimed at individuals with great ideas who need support developing working prototypes. Prototype Pipeline has brought together six groups of highly motivated students and recent alumni. Groups presented their ideas in February 2022 in hopes of taking their prototypes to the next level.

### 2021 HIGHLIGHTS SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE

## Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre supports 379 southern Ontario women-led businesses



The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre (SBEC) successfully concluded its delivery of nearly \$1.8 million in COVID-19 relief funding to businesses through the RE3: Rebuild, Reopen, Revive program. RE3 was a Government of Canada funded program that provided non-repayable performance-based contributions of up to \$5,000 to assist women led SMEs to rebuild, reopen and revive their businesses. SBEC approved funding to 379 small and medium-sized women-led businesses in Southern Ontario, under its service area from Windsor to Toronto. Twenty businesses from Windsor-Essex were approved for RE3

funding, representing \$89,863.94 in investment. The program drew 806 applications from businesses looking to rebuild, reopen and revive their operations. Funding was used by businesses for the acquisition of required/mandated Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), workspace reconfiguration to accommodate physical distancing and hardware/software upgrades to enhance online capacity, client servicing and accessibility.

## Digital Service Squad provides extensive marketing support for business owners



The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre (SBEC) was awarded a third Digital Service Squad (DSS) grant from Digital Main Street (DMS). The grant of \$100,000 allowed the organization to continue employing a team of digital marketing specialists to provide support to businesses and promotion of the DMS programs in Windsor-Essex. The Digital Service Squad provided one-on-one assistance to bricks-and-mortar small businesses to help them grow their digital presence and adopt new technologies. SBEC's Windsor-Essex DSS program launched in 2019 and since then has provided advisory services and hands-on technology support to hundreds of

local businesses. In 2021 SBEC expanded its DSS to support more businesses in Essex County, with its service area now including the Municipality of Lakeshore and Municipality of Leamington. Other DMS programs were also renewed during 2021, such as ShopHERE and Digital Transformation Grants. Eligible businesses in Windsor-Essex were able to apply for a \$2,500 grant to leverage new technologies and tools for their businesses, and total of \$177,500 of investment was given to local small businesses in 2021.

## Jumpstart Recovery Program provides \$125,000 to Windsor-Essex businesses



The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre adapted its Starter Company PLUS program, funded by the Province of Ontario, to offer the Jumpstart Recovery Program to support local small businesses to adapt their business models to thrive during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The program was open to early stage, independent small businesses located within Windsor and Essex County that were negatively impacted by the pandemic and were able to submit a viable project to sustain, grow or pivot their operations. SBEC accepted 26 Windsor-Essex businesses into the Jumpstart Recovery Program and awarded each a grant of up to \$5,000. Jumpstart recipients included businesses in various industries, such as food services, retail, finance, education, professional services, construction, manufacturing, healthcare and personal care services.

## Starter Company Plus program provides training, mentorship and funding to 15 entrepreneurs



The Starter Company PLUS program ran from September to November and provided training and mentorship to 15 startup businesses. Participants successfully pitched their business concepts to a team of judges from the local business and entrepreneurship community and were each awarded a \$5,000 grant. Starter Company PLUS supported businesses from a variety of industries, including retail, food and beverage manufacturing, funeral services, healthcare, technology, construction and education. The program will return in fall 2022.

#### Foodpreneur Advantage reaches Southwestern Ontario food businesses



The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre partnered with its Small Business Enterprise Centre partners in London, St. Thomas and Oxford County to launch Foodpreneur Advantage program in April 2021. The program featured a monthly series of introductory seminars and training opportunities to support entrepreneurs looking to get started in the food and beverage manufacturing industry. SBEC also launched

the Foodpreneur Scale-Up Program that comprised of a comprehensive 10-week program for a select group of businesses that produce consumer packaged goods and have demonstrated high potential to scale operations. Three businesses from Windsor-Essex participated in the inaugural Foodpreneur Scale-Up program, connecting with industry experts and mentoring opportunities, and two of them were awarded a \$5,000 grant. Foodpreneur Advantage is supported by Libro Credit Union and FedDev Ontario.

## Developing the arts and culture economy through Growing Creative Careers

# GROWING CREATIVE CAREERS WINDSOR & REGION

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre partnered with WorkInCulture, a Toronto non-profit arts service organization, and Arts Council Windsor & Region to deliver the first series of a new program. Growing Creative Careers: Windsor & Region is an intensive professional development experience for artists, creatives and cultural workers living in Windsor-Essex. The program is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation and offers participants a training series that includes workshops, access

to online resources and local experts and facilitated peer mentoring circles. Fourteen participants completed the program and came away with a detailed plan of action to move their careers, businesses and organizations forward. The program is delivered four times to four different cohorts over the course of 2021-2023.

## Summer Company program turns ambitious students into entrepreneurs



2021 Summer Company students

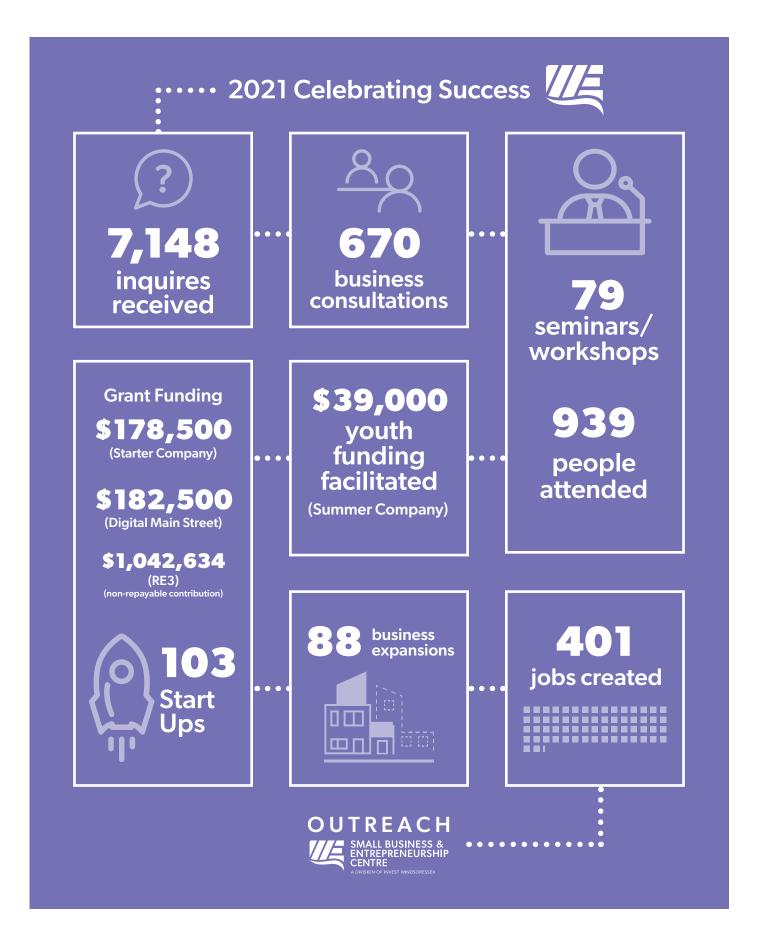
The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre welcomed 13 high school and post-secondary students from Windsor-Essex into its Summer Company program in 2021. Summer Company is an Ontario government program that provides high school and post-secondary students with the resources and training to start a new summer business. Full-time students, aged 15-29, receive handson business education, advice and mentorship from local business leaders, and a grant of up to \$3,000. The 2021 Summer Company startups come from a variety of industries including clothing and hair accessories retailers, drone video production, mobile auto detailing, swimming instruction, landscaping, manufacturers for outdoor furniture and commercial signage and more. Summer Company program participants joined other small businesses in August at the Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market to sell their products and services.

## Women Entrepreneurship Strategy welcomes new program director and celebrates women entrepreneurs at summit



Lee McGrath, Program Director, Women Entrepreneurship Strategy

RISE Windsor-Essex, an initiative of the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES) in Windsor-Essex, held the RISE & Resilience Summit on Feb. 11, 2021. Over 400 people registered for the virtual event which celebrated women entrepreneurs and women in STEM in Windsor-Essex. The summit featured 15 local women who discussed topics around work-life balance, diversity and inclusion and making your money work. In May, the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy welcomed Lee McGrath as its new program director. McGrath most recently was the director of the business retention & expansion department at Invest Windsor-Essex. In her new role, she is overseeing the RISE Windsor-Essex initiative and working with regional WES partner organizations. WES is a \$2-billion investment by the Government of Canada that seeks to double the number of women-owned businesses by 2025.



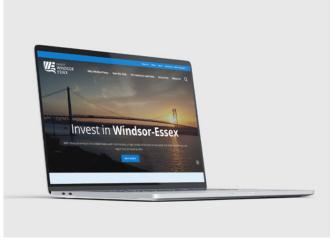
### 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

### MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

The Marketing & Communications department develops strategies that support and leverage business development activities and include the following elements: event management, media/public relations, communications, social media, marketing tools such as videos, brochures and integrated marketing and advertising plans. These strategies are developed for Invest WindsorEssex and its departments - Business Retention & Expansion, Investment Attraction, Automobility & Innovation and Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre.

### Corporate rebrand and new website





On April 28, 2021, the organization changed its name from the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation (WE EDC) to Invest WindsorEssex (IWE). The rebrand reflects the continued efforts to promote the Windsor-Essex region as a competitive location for both foreign and local investment. Invest WindsorEssex speaks to exactly what we do and the name itself is a call to action – Invest WindsorEssex!

Invest WindsorEssex also launched a new corporate website at **investwindsoressex.com**. The new website allows for easier access to data and information relevant to site selectors and local businesses for the purpose of investment, expansion and talent attraction.

Part of the rebrand included the renaming of the WindsorEssex Small Business Centre (SBC) to the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre (SBEC) and included a new website, **webusinesscentre.com**. Lastly, the Institute for Border Logistics and Security (IBLS) now operates as the Invest WindsorEssex Automobility and Innovation Centre.



The marketing department developed a targeted digital campaign that included a **splash video** and organic and paid social media ads that clearly communicated the organization's new brand. All marketing assets were updated including outdoor signage at both the downtown Windsor office and the newly named Invest WindsorEssex Automobility and Innovation Centre.

### ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS

#### Automobility Capital of Canada



The Marketing and Communications department developed a communications strategy to promote the Windsor-Essex region as the Automobility Capital of Canada. This strategy included a robust regional campaign centred around the promotion of several Windsor-Essex announcements in the automobility sector. Launched on Nov. 10, 2021, the campaign included print, digital advertising and media events and will continue into 2022.

Campaign background: Windsor-Essex has a rich history as a North American industrial powerhouse in the development and production of the automobile. With global mobility trends changing at a rapid rate, the region is now looking toward future opportunities including the development and production of connected, autonomous and electric vehicles. Organizations across the Windsor-Essex region and beyond are collaborating to support high-tech development, research and innovation in the automobility space.

A variety of digital and print ads, including an **animated video** were placed in the Windsor Star and across social channels both paid and organic. Messaging included an education piece on what 'automobility' means for Windsor-Essex and the resources available, as well as an invitation to the community to participate in the Nov. 24 **virtual live stream Canadian Automobility Hub announcement**.

The Marketing and Communications team developed a landing page, **automobilitycapital.ca**, highlighting the regional ecosystem, as well as encouraging the public to sign up for news and information in the automobility space.



### **International Women's Day**









The Marketing and Communications department developed a robust marketing campaign for International Women's Day, a global event celebrating the economic, cultural, social and political achievements of women with the following:

- Developed the branding for the Feb. 11, 2021 RISE and Resilience Summit as well as social media and event assets.
- Developed a RISE Windsor-Essex two-page advertisement featuring 12 local women entrepreneurs in a special Windsor Star supplement that highlighted stories of local women and how they make a difference in the region.
- Developed RISE Windsor-Essex social media assets for an organic campaign celebrating local women.
- Supported the Women's Enterprise Skills Training (WEST) International Women's Day Gala by sponsoring and presenting the "Innovation Award: a forward thinking youth".
- Participation in the WEST #ChooseToChallenge campaign with a video from Stephen MacKenzie, President and CEO of Invest WindsorEssex highlighting what equality meant to him.

### **Digital promotion**

The Marketing and Communications department developed the following marketing assets for promotion across digital channels:

- Corporate rebrand
- Economic Development Week
- Forward Thinking series
- Emerging Technologies in Automation Virtual Conference
- Canadian Automobility Hub
- Virtual Reality CAVE located at the Automobility and Innovation Centre
- Learnington Small Business Update
- WE Can't Wait marketing campaign
- Workforce WindsorEssex Annual General Meeting presentation by Stephen MacKenzie
- FedDev Ontario announcement to support an automobility innovation cluster in Windsor
- Eastern Canada Farm Writers Association annual conference – Transforming Trade between Ontario and Michigan presentation by Stephen Mackenzie







### Branding Windsor-Essex locally, nationally and globally

The Marketing and Communications department developed advertisement and campaigns for the following:

- Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association's (APMA)
   Lead, Reach and Connect Magazine advertisement
- APMA's Project Arrow video campaign to promote Invest WindsorEssex Automobility and Innovation Centre as the official virtual simulation partner for the national project
- Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce Business Briefing advertisement
- Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Award sponsor
- Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce WEStaySafe Provincial Antigen Screening Program
- Learnington Chamber of Commerce Business
   Excellence Awards Program advertisement
- Biz X Magazine advertisements
- Ontario Film Directory advertisement
- Canadian Tooling Manufacturing Association View Magazine advertisement
- Partnership with Windsor Regional Hospital on a talent attraction campaign
- Canadian Urban Institute CUI x Windsor Listening Tour partnership







### EVENT PROMOTION

### **I** Emerging Technologies Virtual Conference

The Marketing and Communications department supported the Business Retention & Expansion team with the development of marketing materials including event branding, website maintenance, social media assets as well as launching robust digital advertising campaigns to promote two Emerging Technology in Automation Virtual Conference events. The first event was on held in March of 2021. Participants heard from renowned speakers and women entrepreneurs who shared their journey to success and showcased technologies, skills and solutions they had developed and implemented. The keynote speaker was lifelong entrepreneur and former CBC "Dragon" Bruce Croxon. Also participating was Paul Zikopoulos, professional speaker and IBM's VP, Technology Group Skills Vitality & Enablement.





The second **Emerging Technologies in Automation Virtual Conference** was held on Oct. 26. Participants learned how made-in-Canada automation can help their businesses become more efficient, more productive and more innovative. They heard from leading companies with cutting-edge technologies, many of which were developed during the pandemic, as well as expert speakers discussing how Industry 4.0, robotics, cybersecurity and more will shape many industries.

### Canadian Automobility Hub media event

The Marketing and Communications department organized a media event on Nov. 24 to announce to launch of Canada's first Automobility Hub. The event garnered a lot of media attention with both national and local media representatives covering the unveiling of the region's new Centre for Automotive Innovation and collaboration at St. Clair College, Windsor Campus. Over 75 people attended the in-person event.





### MEDIA RELATIONS

Windsor the First Canadian City with Ford Safety Insights Platform

IT Solutions Company Research Into Internet Systems Chooses Windsor-Essex

WE EDC Board of Directors Welcome New Young Professional Rep

WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation Rebrands as Invest WindsorEssex

**Invest WindsorEssex Announces Organizational Changes** 

**ICT company Soothsayer Analytics Expands to Windsor-Essex** 

Windsor-Essex Automobility Ecosystem Welcomes Ettractive Inc.

Invest WindsorEssex Funds Hundreds of Women-led Businesses through FedDev Ontario RE3: Rebuild, Reopen, Revive Program

Invest WindsorEssex Welcomes Next Generation Economy with Launch of Canadian Automobility Hub

**Leamington's Reinvent This Space competition returns** 

**Supporting Windsor-Essex Small Businesses** 

### WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA STATS





#### @\_investwe

New Twitter followers: 304
Total Twitter Followers: 4,620
Total Interactions: 3,809
No. of mentions: 1,058



#### @wesmallbusiness

New Twitter followers: 134
Total Twitter Followers: 1,775
Total Interactions: 972
No. of mentions: 391





#### /InvestWindsorEssex

New fans: 671 Total fans: 3,311

**Total Interactions:** 1,335 **Total Impressions:** 105,657



/WEBusinessCentre

New fans: 33 Total fans: 3,455

**Total Interactions:** 503 **No. of mentions:** 63,767





#### @InvestWindsorEssex

New followers: 237 Total followers: 868 Total Interactions: 1,135 Total Impressions: 15,536



#### @webusinesscentre

New followers: 94 Total followers: 2,197 Total Interactions: 1,040 No. of mentions: 18,112





#### **Invest WindsorEssex**

New followers: 684 Total followers: 3,916 Total Interactions: 2,752 Total Impressions: 139,589



#### @webusinesscentre

New followers: 108 Total followers: 623 Total Interactions: 216 No. of mentions: 9,606





#### investwindsoressex.com

Users: 38,385 Page Views: 117,991 New Visitors: 87.5% Returning Visitors: 12.5%



#### webusinesscentre.com

Users: 21,301 Page Views: 62,912 New Visitors: 83% Returning Visitors: 17%





Canada 70%



USA 14%



China 4%



India 2%



United Kingdom 0.8%



## PERFORMANCE METRICS 2021

#### What We Do

Invest WindsorEssex advances economic development and prosperity in our region. We are the region's lead economic development agency and a dedicated catalyst for business growth and expansion. We attract new businesses to our region, help strengthen existing businesses and support entrepreneurship in three key ways:

#### **Informing**

We provide the most current and relevant information and data on site selection, market research and available government funding.

#### Guiding

We provide answers and advice on general business practices, expansion planning, multinational branch planning and exporting, as well as training and educational resources.

#### **Connecting**

We help organizations cut through red tape and we connect them directly with key decision makers, potential partners and funders.

investwindsoressex.com

### New Investment Facilitated

\$101,029,200 (IA/BRE) \$1,884,634 (SBEC) \$7,690,000 (AI)

Total amount of new investment to the region, through both public and private investment streams.

105 Expansions Facilitated

766 New Jobs Facilitated
(IA/BRE) 365 | (SBEC) 401

9 Priority Files

103 Business Startups

Funding Applications and Joint Papers Developed

## **Business Support Sessions**

191 Sessions 2232 Attendees

### **Top Economic Priorities**

#### as reported by Windsor-Essex Businesses

Canada-U.S. border closure: limited cross-border business travel by land & air; uncertain rules; COVID testing requirements; mandatory quarantine orders; all heavily impacting the manufacturing sector.

- Navigating government resources, support programs: uncertainty of longevity of support programs; rotating Provincial COVID-19 colour-coded tiers; "re-opening" plans; public health measures: compliance clarity.
- Uncertainty of economic climate: impacting business investment and project planning.
- Labour Challenges: unintended consequences of COVID supports to employees leading to staffing, labour, and talent shortages (talent retention & attraction issue).
- SME business sustainability.

## Regional Economic Indicators †



Population 369,350





Labour Force 223,425





Employment 203,350





Unemployment 20,050



**Unemployment Rate** 9%



Participation Rate 60.5%



**Employment Rate 55.1%** 



 $\dagger$  Notes: The above figures reflect all of Windsor and Essex County, comparing 2021 to 2020

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey custom tabulation.

#### **Building Permits\***

Total 2020	Total 2021	% Increased
\$207,717,526	\$215,659,680	3.82%

<sup>\*</sup> Industrial, commercial and institutional permits only

### 2021 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Extracted from the annual audit reports issued by BDO Canada LLP

Statement of Financial Position

31-Dec-21				Actual		Actual
				2021		2020
Total Current Assets			\$	1,689,368	\$	2,275,203
Capital assets			\$	1,033,786	\$	1,202,418
Total Assets			\$	2,723,154	\$	3,477,621
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities			\$	498,578	\$	1,367,455
Deferred revenue			\$	379,948	\$	315,251
			\$	878,526	\$	1,682,706
Deferred contributions			\$	911,535	\$	1,097,934
Total Current Liabilities			\$	1,790,061	\$	2,780,640
Net Assets:						
Invested in capital assets			\$	122,251	\$	104,484
Unrestricted			\$	310,842	\$	92,497
Internally restricted - development			\$	500,000	\$	500,000
Total Net Assets			\$	933,093	\$	696,981
Total Liabilities & Net Assets			\$	2,723,154	\$	3,477,621
				_,,,,,,,,,		-,,
Statement of Operations						
For the year ended December 31, 2022						
		Actual		Budget		Actual
Revenue:						
Grants	\$	3,280,748	\$	3,511,779	\$	4,021,727
Core Funding - City of Windsor	\$	1,291,661	\$	1,291,661	\$	1,291,661
Core funding - County of Essex	\$	1,060,547	\$	1,060,544	\$	1,060,544
Small Business Centre grants	\$	471,449	\$	365,650	\$	234,685
Deferred contributions realized	\$	388,741	\$	295,159	\$	348,272
Miscellaneous revenue	\$	47,755	\$	5,500	\$	46,857
	\$	6,540,901	\$	6,530,293	\$	7,003,746
Expenses:						
Development programs	\$	3,570,911	\$	3,622,511	\$	4,251,647
Salaries and benefits	\$	1,121,323	\$	1,501,743	\$	1,218,156
Office operations	\$	508,337	\$	561,600	\$	483,274
SBC events and special projects	\$	420,065	\$	425,650	\$	125,444
Amortization - Virtual Lab	\$	362,833	\$	295,159	\$	322,365
Media and special events	\$	123,802	\$	130,000	\$	151,969
Amortization - other	\$	89,666	\$	35,770	\$	53,852
Support	\$	81,944	\$	50,000	\$	251,051
Amortization - Equipment	\$	25,908	-		\$	25,907
	\$	6,304,789	\$	6,622,433	\$	6,883,665
Excess of revenue over expenses (expenses over	\$	236,112	\$	(92,140)	\$	120,081
Net assets, beginning of year	\$	696,981	\$	696,981	\$	576,900
Net assets, end of year	\$	933,093	\$	604,841	\$	696,981
ivet assets, end of year	Ç	733,073	Ş	004,041	ڔ	070,90

All financial information contained in the above illustration were extracted from BDO LLP audit report. Readers are encouraged to review full disclosure contained therein on our website.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021-2022

Chair	Mayor Tom Bain, Town of Lakeshore
Past Chair	Tal Czudner, Director of People, Cavalier Tool & Manufacturing Ltd.
Vice Chair	Chris Savard, General Manager, Devonshire Mall, Primaris REIT
Secretary/Treasurer	Kevin Laforet, Regional President & CEO, Caesars Entertainment & Caesars Windsor
Director	Mayor Drew Dilkens, City of Windsor
Director	Robert Gordon, President & Vice-Chancellor, University of Windsor
Director	Paul Mastronardi, Red Sun Farms
Director	Tom O'Brien, Partner, Cooper's Hawk Vineyards
Director	Diane Reko, CEO, Reko International Group
Director	Kyrsten Solcz, Executive Director, Solcz Family Foundation
Director (Young Professional)	Alexandria Tolton, Strategic Consultant

### STAFF 2022

ADMINISTRATION	
Stephen MacKenzie	President and Chief Executive Officer
Holly Connelly	Executive Liaison
Shannon Theroux	Office Management Coordinator
AUTOMOBILITY AND	INNOVATION CENTRE
Matthew Johnson	Executive Director, Mobility Partnerships and Innovation
Akash Charuvila	Engineering Lead-Virtual Reality and Optics
Edward Dawson	Senior Manager, Simulation Team
Mackenzie Habash	Grant Administrator
Bryan Holmes	Software Developer, Simulation Team
Aislyn Lewis-Laurent	Tech Community Liaison Officer
Linsey Pecile	Digital Twin Engineer (on leave)
BUSINESS RETENTION	N AND EXPANSION
Wendy Stark	Director, Business Retention and Expansion
Francisco Contreras	Data Administrator and Analyst
Marion Fantetti	Business Ombudsman
Yashaswini Pagadala	Economic Development Officer
INVESTMENT ATTRAC	TION
Joe Goncalves	Director, Investment Attraction
Na Qu	Investment Attraction Specialist
MARKETING AND CO	MMUNICATIONS
Gina Meret-Dybenko	Director, Marketing and Communications
Katlyn Melnik	Communications and Event Coordinator
Teuta Shabani	Communications and Event Coordinator (on leave)
Lina Williams	Marketing and Communications Specialist, Corporate Marketing

### STAFF 2022

SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTE	REPRENEURSHIP CENTRE
Sabrina DeMarco	Executive Director
Myrtle Donnipad	Youth and Entrepreneurship Advisor
Aparna Krishnamoorthy	Business Advisor
Natasha Marar	Manager, Marketing and Entrepreneurship Programs
Lee McGrath	Program Director, Women Entrepreneurship Strategy
Cristina Melnik	Business and Entrepreneurship Coordinator
Lindsay Renaud	Digital Service Squad
Spencer Willock	Digital Service Squad

### PAST STAFF

Nicole Anderson	Program Director, Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (until Apr 2021)
Kathy Bellamy	Office Management Coordinator (until September 2021)
Noah Campbell	Tech Community Program Manager (until March 2021)
Christa Vadori	Business and Entrepreneurship Coordinator (until June 2021)
Nadia Pizzolitto	Business and Entrepreneurship Coordinator (until January 2022)











#### **LOCATION**

Busiest U.S.- Canada border at the heart of the richest consumer market in the world

#### **TALENT**

Highly educated, skilled & diversified workforce

#### CONNECTED

Seamless connections to U.S. supply chains through air, rail, highway & water

#### **AFFORDABLE**

Attractive land, development & housing costs

519-255-9200 | info@investwindsoressex.com investwindsoressex.com







#### Main Office

119 Chatham St W Unit 100, Windsor, ON Canada N9A 5M7 519-255-9200 | 1-888-255-9332

info@investwindsoressex.com investwindsoressex.com

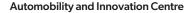












3475 Wheelton Drive Windsor, ON Canada N8W 0A6 519-250-4444



#### Main Office

119 Chatham St W Unit 100, Windsor, ON Canada N9A 5M7 519-253-6900 | 1-888-255-9332

#### **Essex Office**

39 Maidstone Avenue East, Unit 5 Essex, ON, Canada N8M 2J3 519-776-1116

info@webusinesscentre.com webusinesscentre.com









