

Welcome to Meaford

A NEW BUSINESS GUIDE



Table of Contents

1

WELCOME TO MEAFORD

Messages from our Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer, and Growing our Economy Advisory Committee

7

ABOUT YOUR NEW COMMUNITY

Council, the area, and local history

13

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Snapshot

15

LICENSING AND BY-LAW

Common licensing, permits, applications, and by-laws for businesses

17

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Services we provide to help with your business

19

EVENTS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Events, ways to get involved, community groups, and more

21

SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Local supports and recourses, accessibility, and checklist

From the Mayor



Welcome to Meaford, a community where people and possibilities grow together!

Supporting entrepreneurs and small business owners is a cornerstone of our Council's priority to Grow Our Economy. Whether you're restoring a storefront in our heritage district, continuing the legacy of your family-run farm, or bringing a new service to town, your business adds to the energy and resilience of our local economy.

Here in Meaford, you will find more than scenic trails and stunning shoreline; you will find a community that believes in collaboration, creativity, and shared success.

Our partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce and local organizations are developed to ensure that your business has the tools and support it needs to thrive.

With a supportive municipal government, a strong sense of community, and a steady flow of visitors and new residents, Meaford offers the right balance of lifestyle and opportunity for business growth. From our historic downtown to the vibrant rural villages of Bognor, Annan, and Leith, every part of our municipality is full of potential.

Thank you for choosing Meaford. We are excited to support your journey and look forward to building a prosperous future together.



MAYOR, MUNICIPALITY OF
MEAFORD



Get in Touch

Ross Kentner, Mayor

21 Trowbridge Street West, Meaford



mayor@meaford.ca



519-373-6378



From the Chief Administrative Officer



Welcome to the Municipality of Meaford, and thank you for choosing to do business in our community.

As Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), I have the privilege of leading a dedicated team of municipal staff who are here to support you.

Our Council has identified “Growing Our Economy” as a strategic priority, and we’re committed to delivering on that priority through responsive service, accessible information, and support for local businesses. From permits and licensing to planning and building, we aim to provide a clear and collaborative experience for entrepreneurs and investors alike.

We understand that time, transparency, fairness, efficiency, and clarity matter. That's why we're working continuously to enhance the way we deliver services and connect with business owners like you. Whether you need help navigating a process or simply want to talk through an idea, our team is ready to assist you.



CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER, MUNICIPALITY OF
MEAFORD



Get in Touch

Shawn Everitt, CAO

21 Trowbridge Street West, Meaford



cao@meaford.ca



519-538-1060 extension 1121



Growing our Economy Committee

On behalf of the Meaford Growing Our Economy Advisory Committee, I am pleased to welcome you as you begin this exciting new venture.

The Growing Our Economy Advisory Committee works to strengthen the local business environment by advising Council on economic development priorities, championing initiatives that support business retention and growth, and identifying opportunities to improve how the Municipality serves its business community.

We encourage you to participate in community events, connect with other local businesses, and share your insights with us. Your success contributes to Meaford's vibrancy and resilience, and we're excited to see your business grow.

We look forward to supporting you on your journey.

Robert Uhrig, Councillor
Chair (2022-2026)
Growing Our Economy Advisory Committee



Learn more about the Growing our Economy Committee and other committees in Meaford by visiting meaford.ca/committees.



Meet your Council

2022-2026 COUNCIL MEMBERS

From left to right: Councillor Rob Urhig, Councillor Harley Greenfield, Deputy Mayor Shirley Keaveney, Councillor Brandon Forder, Mayor Ross Kenter, Councillor Eric Ennis, Councillor Tony Bell



Meaford's Council plays a vital role in creating the conditions for business success. Through leadership, policy development, and strategic planning, Council works to ensure that our community remains a welcoming and supportive place for businesses to grow and thrive. Council is made up of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and five Councillors, which are elected to represent the interests of the community. Council actively considers the needs of the business community in decisions related to land use planning, infrastructure investments, downtown revitalization, tourism, workforce development, and economic growth.

Council regularly collaborates with local organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce regional partners, and Grey County to align efforts and support entrepreneurship. By fostering an environment that values innovation and long-term sustainability, Council helps shape a local economy for everyone.

Business owners are encouraged to stay engaged. Council meetings are open to the public, and there are opportunities to participate in shaping programs and by-laws that impact you.

Learn more and connect with your Council by visiting meaford.ca/council.



Exploring Community Trails & Attractions

Meaford is a dynamic and growing community on the shores of Georgian Bay, where big ideas take root in a small-town setting. Whether you are starting a new business or expanding an existing one, your presence adds to the energy, creativity, and momentum that are shaping our local economy.

Communities Within Meaford

The Municipality of Meaford includes several distinct towns and hamlets, each with its own charm:

Meaford: The largest urban area, home to shops, dining, a waterfront park, and municipal services.

Bognor: A close-knit rural village known for scenic countryside.

Woodford, Balaclava, Annan, and Leith: Smaller historic communities that enrich Meaford's rural identity and showcase heritage sites and natural beauty.

Trails & Outdoor Recreation

Meaford is known for its rich natural surroundings and abundance of outdoor experiences. The Tom Thomson Trail and Bruce Trail provide hiking and cycling routes with panoramic views of cliffs, forests, and Georgian Bay.

Local parks and conservation areas offer scenic lookouts, nature observation points, and peaceful walking paths. The Bighead River and surrounding waterways are ideal for fishing, paddling, and enjoying nature from the water's edge.

Strategic Infrastructure

Key infrastructure supports Meaford's business growth and tourism economy. Meaford Harbour offers regional recreation and marine travel, while Meaford Hall anchors the downtown as a cultural and event hub.

The Canadian Armed Forces' 4th Canadian Division Training Centre provides military training and employment opportunities in the region. Just a short drive away, the Major-General Richard Rohmer Meaford International Airport offers commercial and private air access, helping connect Meaford to wider business and tourism networks.

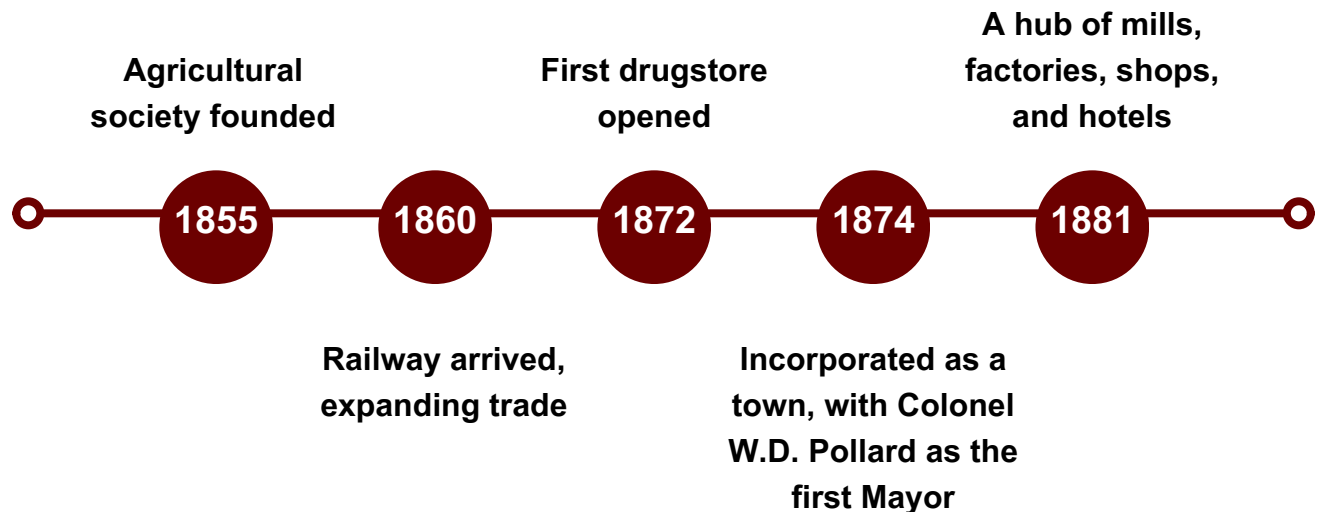
Learn more about what Meaford has to offer by visiting meaford.ca/facilities.

The Making of Meaford

HOW MEAFORD GREW INTO THE HEART OF GEORGIAN BAY

Meaford's story begins in 1833, when surveyor Charles Rankin mapped Township "Zero." In 1834, it was renamed St. Vincent Township, with 200 acres reserved at the mouth of the Bighead River for a future town site. The river would become central to Meaford's development, supporting mills, trade, and early settlement.

By 1841, surveyor William R. Gibbard named the settlement Meaford, after Meaford Hall in Staffordshire, England. Growth followed quickly:



Corner of Sykes and Nelson formerly the Muxlow Drug Store



W.D. Pollard



Railroad station, 1872

Market Square Outdoor Ice Rink, 1938-1960



Interested in learning more? Get in touch with the Meaford Museum by emailing museum@meaford.ca or calling 519-538-5974.

A Growing Market with Real Opportunity

Meaford's population continues to grow steadily, reaching 11,800 residents in 2024, an increase of more than 13% since 2001. This sustained growth reflects confidence in the community and a rising demand for goods, services, and amenities.

A mix of families, professionals, and retirees supports stability with a desire to shop locally. With more than 6,700 households, most in single-detached homes, Meaford offers a strong foundation for growth.

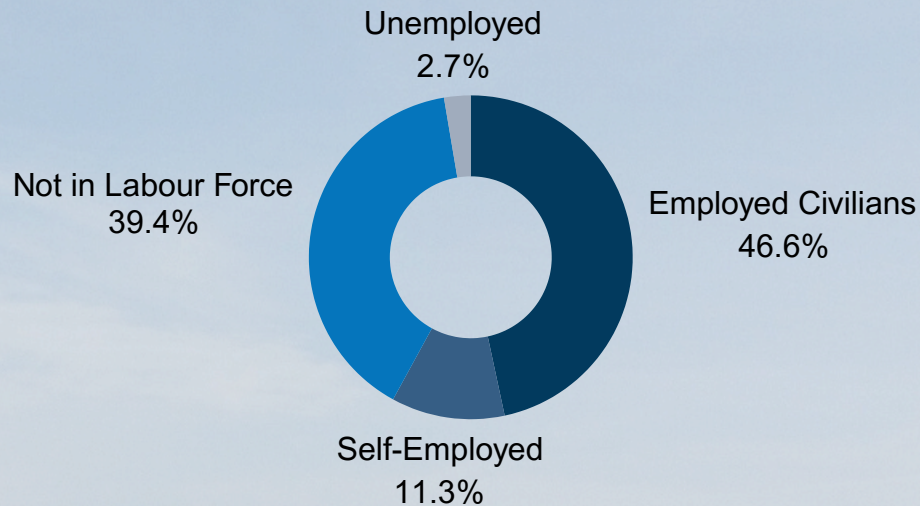
Key Socioeconomic Indicator

Indicator	Value	At a Glance
Population	11,800	+13% since 2001
Median Household Income	\$93,945	Above regional average
Average Household Income	\$124,657	Strong spending power
Labour Force Participation	58%	Stable employment base
Top Employment Sectors	Health Care, Retail, Construction, Agriculture	Diverse workforce
Median Home Value	\$591,250	Affordable & invested community

Source: ©2024 Environics Analytics

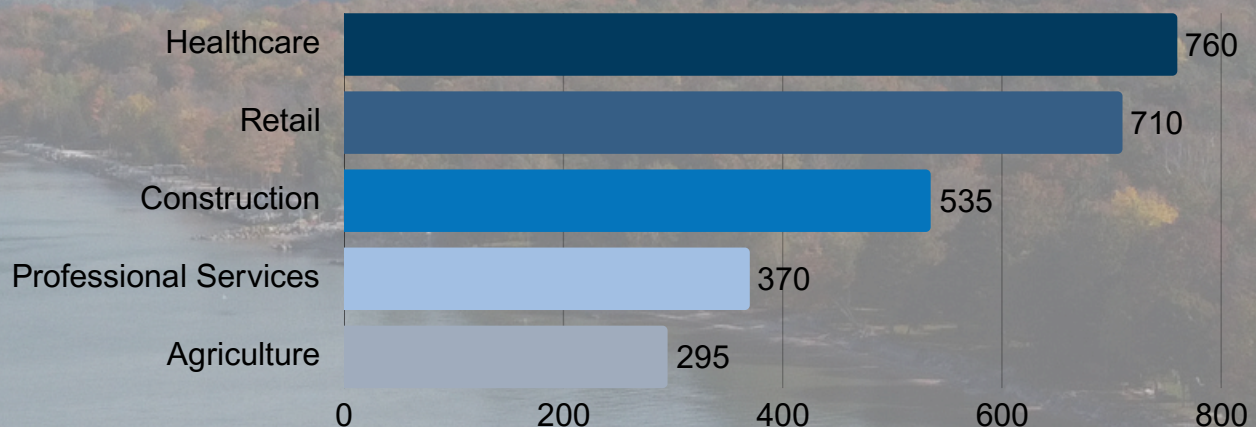
Workforce Participation Overview

Meaford's labour force shows high participation and a strong base of self-employed residents, reflecting a stable and entrepreneurial local economy.



Employment & Labour Force Distribution

A balanced economy supported by leading sectors such as health care, retail, construction, and agriculture provides opportunities across industries.



Learn more about economic development in Meaford by visiting meaford.ca/ecdev.

Licensing & By-laws

Operating a business in Meaford may require specific permits or licences. These ensure safety, compliance, and a smooth experience for both business owners and customers. Our staff are here to guide you through the process.

Sign Permits

Required before installing, modifying, or displaying permanent or temporary signage on public or private property.

meaford.ca/permits

Building Permits

Required for most construction projects, including renovations, additions over 10m², decks, structural changes, plumbing, or solar panels.

meaford.ca/building

Temporary Patio Extension Permit

Needed for patios on municipal property, patios with structural changes, or those involving liquor licence extensions.

meaford.ca/permits

Special Event Permit

Required for public events that involve alcohol or attract large groups. Insurance, site plans, and coordination with municipal services may be necessary.

meaford.ca/permits

Refreshment Vendor Licensing

Required for food trucks and beverage vendors. Applications must include vehicle details and planned operating locations.

meaford.ca/permits



Heritage Permit

If your property is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act or located in Meaford's Heritage Conservation District, you may need a heritage permit before making exterior changes, additions, or demolitions. These permits help ensure updates respect the area's historic character.

meaford.ca/heritage



Zoning

Determines where different types of businesses can operate and what activities are permitted.

meaford.ca/zoning

Parking

Regulations for on-street and off-street parking, including accessible spaces and loading zones.

meaford.ca/parking

Signage

Rules on size, placement, lighting, and appearance of business signs.

meaford.ca/signs

Noise

Limits on hours and volume for amplified sound or business operations.

meaford.ca/noise

Home and Property Standards

Outlines requirements for maintaining buildings and properties to ensure they are safe, clean, and in good repair.

meaford.ca/propertystandards

For guidance, contact our team ecdev@meaford.ca or learn more at meaford.ca/ecdev.

Municipal Services for Businesses

Our team at the Municipal Office is here to help with more than permits and licences. Many core municipal services directly support business operations, from day-to-day essentials to long-term planning.



Property Tax

Pay your bill by cash, cheque, or debit; ask questions about your property assessment; or set up a pre-authorized payment plan.

meaford.ca/taxes



Water & Wastewater

Set up or close an account when buying, selling, or renting a property; arrange payment options; report issues; or request a meter reading.

meaford.ca/water



Waste Collection

Purchase garbage tags and recycling bins, review commercial collection schedules, and learn how to dispose of bulky or special items.

meaford.ca/waste





Planning & Zoning

Confirm your business location complies with zoning by-laws, access site plan approvals, or explore development opportunities.

meaford.ca/planning



Parking & Transportation

Find information on municipal parking permits, accessible spaces, loading zone requirements, and details about winter snow clearing and sidewalk maintenance near your business.

meaford.ca/roads



Municipal Enforcement Services

Access business licence compliance, property standards inspections, parking regulations, and municipal by-law guidance tailored to your operations.

meaford.ca/enforcement



Fire & Emergency Services

Access fire safety inspections, business fire code compliance, and emergency preparedness guidance tailored to your property.

meaford.ca/fire



Business Support & Recognition

Take advantage of ribbon cuttings, milestone recognition, and promotional opportunities through the Municipality.

meaford.ca/ecdev

Get in Touch



21 Trowbridge Street West, Meaford



Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM



info@meaford.ca



519-538-1060

Events in Meaford

BE PART OF MEAFORD'S VIBRANT COMMUNITY LIFE

Meaford is home to a lively calendar of events that celebrate local culture, creativity, and community spirit. From seasonal markets and family festivals to major attractions like the Scarecrow Invasion and Christmas on the Bay, these events draw visitors, boost traffic, and create valuable opportunities for businesses.



Bognor Canada Day



Christmas on the Bay



Farmers' Market

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Host a Pop-Up

Showcase your products or services during high-traffic events and introduce new customers to what you offer.

Sponsor an Activity

Support community programming while increasing your brand's visibility. Sponsorship opportunities are available for a variety of events throughout the year.

Volunteer

Give back by sharing your time and talents. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people and build lasting relationships in the community.

Create Your Own Event

Bring your ideas to life by launching a signature experience that draws people together and highlights your business.

Some businesses also align with event themes, extend their hours, or offer special promotions to take advantage of increased visitor traffic.

Scarecrow Invasion



View the latest event calendar at meaford.ca/eventcalendar or contact our team by emailing events@meaford.ca.

Establish Your Network

Building strong local connections is key to business success. Community involvement boosts your visibility, builds relationships, and shows your commitment to the place you call home. From volunteering and joining associations to networking with other business owners, there are many ways to connect and make an impact.

Why it Matters



Community involvement builds trust, recognition, and loyalty



Customers remember businesses that invest in their town



Networking opens doors to mentorship, partnerships, and collaboration

BUSINESS NETWORKING & SUPPORT

Meaford Chamber of Commerce

Monthly networking events, resources, and promotional opportunities.

 meafordchamber.ca

Open Fields, 2025



Municipality of Meaford – Business Support & Recognition

Ongoing communication, resources, and recognition programs that highlight business achievements in the community.

 meaford.ca/ecdev



COMMUNITY GROUPS & ORGANIZATIONS

Meaford Rotary Club

Network with leaders & support service projects.

Golden Town Outreach (Food Bank)

Volunteer or partner to fight food insecurity.

Community Living Meaford

Support inclusive programs for those with developmental disabilities.

Meaford Culture Foundation

Fundraise and promote arts & culture, including Meaford Hall.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL LIFE

Partner with local farms for markets & farm-to-table promotions.

Join the Meaford & St. Vincent Agricultural Society to support rural heritage.

Get involved by and learn more at meaford.ca/community or by emailing events@meaford.ca

Support for Starting, Growing & Thriving in Meaford

Starting or expanding a business can be both rewarding and challenging. To help you succeed, the Municipality of Meaford and its regional partners offer a range of programs, tools, and services. Whether you're just getting started or scaling up, the following resources are here to support your growth.

Meaford Public Library

A local resource hub offering more than books. Provides access to business databases, LinkedIn Learning, meeting rooms, free Wi-Fi, printing services, and technology lending. Staff are available to help with research and digital tools.

 meaford.ca/library

Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

The CIP supports revitalization and economic development by offering grants for façade upgrades, signage, accessibility improvements, and energy efficiency. Available to eligible commercial properties in key areas of Meaford.

 meaford.ca/CIP

Business Enterprise Centre

A trusted first stop for entrepreneurs in Grey County. Offers one-on-one support, business planning guidance, training, and access to funding opportunities like Starter Company Plus. Ideal for startups and small businesses in early or growth stages.

 grey.ca/BEC

Learn more the recourses available to your business at meaford.ca/ecdev or contact our team ecdev@meaford.ca

Ontario Business Supports

The Government of Ontario provides a variety of programs for new and expanding businesses, including grants, employee training support, and digital adoption funding. Key programs include Starter Company Plus, the Canada-Ontario Job Grant, and regional development funds.

ontario.ca/start-business

Made in Grey

Grey County's official branding program for local makers and producers. Businesses that build, grow, or manufacture locally can use the "Made in Grey" brand to promote their products, supported by a downloadable toolkit and logo package.

grey.ca/business-supports



Accessibility Resources for Businesses

Ensuring your business is accessible to all members of the community is not only a legal requirement under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), it is also an opportunity to welcome more customers and strengthen your brand. The Municipality of Meaford is committed to helping businesses identify and remove barriers so everyone can access goods, services, and facilities.

Meaford Accessibility Advisory Committee

This committee advises the Municipality on accessibility matters and works closely with the community to enhance inclusion. Businesses can connect with the committee to better understand AODA requirements and explore practical ways to improve accessibility in their operations.

 meaford.ca/accessibility

Municipal Accessibility Plan and Policy

Our Accessibility Plan and Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy outline the steps we are taking to meet and exceed AODA standards. These resources can guide you in developing your own accessibility practices.

 meaford.ca/accessibility

Grey County Accessibility Resources

Grey County offers workshops, training sessions, and toolkits on accessible websites, physical spaces, and customer service best practices to help businesses meet accessibility goals.

 grey.ca/accessibility

Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN)

ODEN connects employers with inclusive hiring strategies, helping you access a diverse talent pool while ensuring your workplace is welcoming for all.

 odenetwork.com

Accessibility Ontario

This platform provides detailed guidelines, checklists, and best practices on accessible design, customer service, and employment for businesses.

 ontario.ca/accessibility

For guidance, contact our team info@meaford.ca or learn more at meaford.ca/accessibility



Are You Ready to Grow in Meaford?

Location & Compliance

- ☐ Confirm your location meets zoning and land-use by-laws
- ☐ Obtain permits for building, renovation, and signage
- ☐ Ensure compliance with fire, health, and safety regulations
- ☐ Determine if your location is within the Heritage Conservation District

Prepare for Operations

- ☐ Open a business bank account
- ☐ Secure business insurance
- ☐ Arrange essential utilities and equipment

Connect and Grow

- ☐ Contact the Meaford Economic Development Office or a Business Enterprise Centre
- ☐ Explore training, mentorship, or local partnerships
- ☐ Stay current with municipal regulations and events

Register & Licence

- ☐ Register your business name with the Ontario Business Registry
- ☐ Apply for required municipal licenses (e.g., food, personal services)
- ☐ Register with WSIB if hiring employees
- ☐ Register for a CRA Business Number & HST/GST (if revenue > \$30K)

Promote & Launch

- ☐ Create a Google Business Profile
- ☐ Launch a website and/or social media
- ☐ Plan a grand opening (ask about Mayor Ribbon Cutting support)
- ☐ Add your business to our directory

November 2025



meaford.ca

Together, We Build Meaford's Business Future

Whether you're starting a new venture, expanding your business, or exploring opportunities in Meaford, our team is here to help. As the Municipality's Small and Medium Business Liaison, I connect entrepreneurs, investors, and partners with the right information, resources, and people, from permits and site selection to marketing and grants. Meaford's business community thrives on collaboration, innovation, and local pride, and we look forward to welcoming you.



Get in Touch

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