

## Town launches business retention and expansion outreach

Business retention and expansion is a key pillar in the Town's Economic Development strategy, and now officials are getting down to making that happen.

On Monday, the Town launched its Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) initiative, which will see officials from the Economic Development team interview businesses to share their views on Aurora as a place to do business.

Interviews will shine a light on the current and future needs, as well as the future plans, of businesses.

Results from the interviews will support future economic development activities, programs and services, says the Town. The Town has retained MDB insight, an economic development consulting firm, to assist with the project. MDB Insight will be working with Town staff to review the completed interviews and online feedback for challenges and opportunities that the local business community is facing.

The first interviews were set to be carried out on Monday, April 26, with an estimated completion by May 17. Businesses, say organizers, will be randomly selected for phone interviews which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

We know that there is a bit of survey fatigue right now. However, we also know that reaching out directly to gather information, via phone or online, is the best way to connect with our businesses who are integral to the well-being and prosperity of our Town, said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. Through this initiative we are taking the Town's business engagement to another level in partnership with key business support organizations including [the] Aurora Economic Development Corporation, Aurora Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Aurora BIA.

Added Lisa Hausz, Manager of Economic Development and Policy for the Town: This next stage of connection is critical in developing the programs and services needed to provide ongoing support for our local businesses. More than a simple survey, this interview initiative will provide key insights and help us make connections that may not be as obvious unless we ask our businesses.

**By Brock Weir** Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter