

Healthcare in Port Colborne

Presentation by Bryan Boles, CAO
Healthcare Advisory Committee



PORT COLBORNE

July 9, 2025

Today's Presentation Outline

Recent Community Engagement Recap

1

Establishing a Healthcare Advisory Committee

2

Our Strategic Plan & Community

3

Overview: Health System in Port Colborne & Niagara

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Healthcare Legislation, Roles & Responsibilities

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Conclusion & Next Steps

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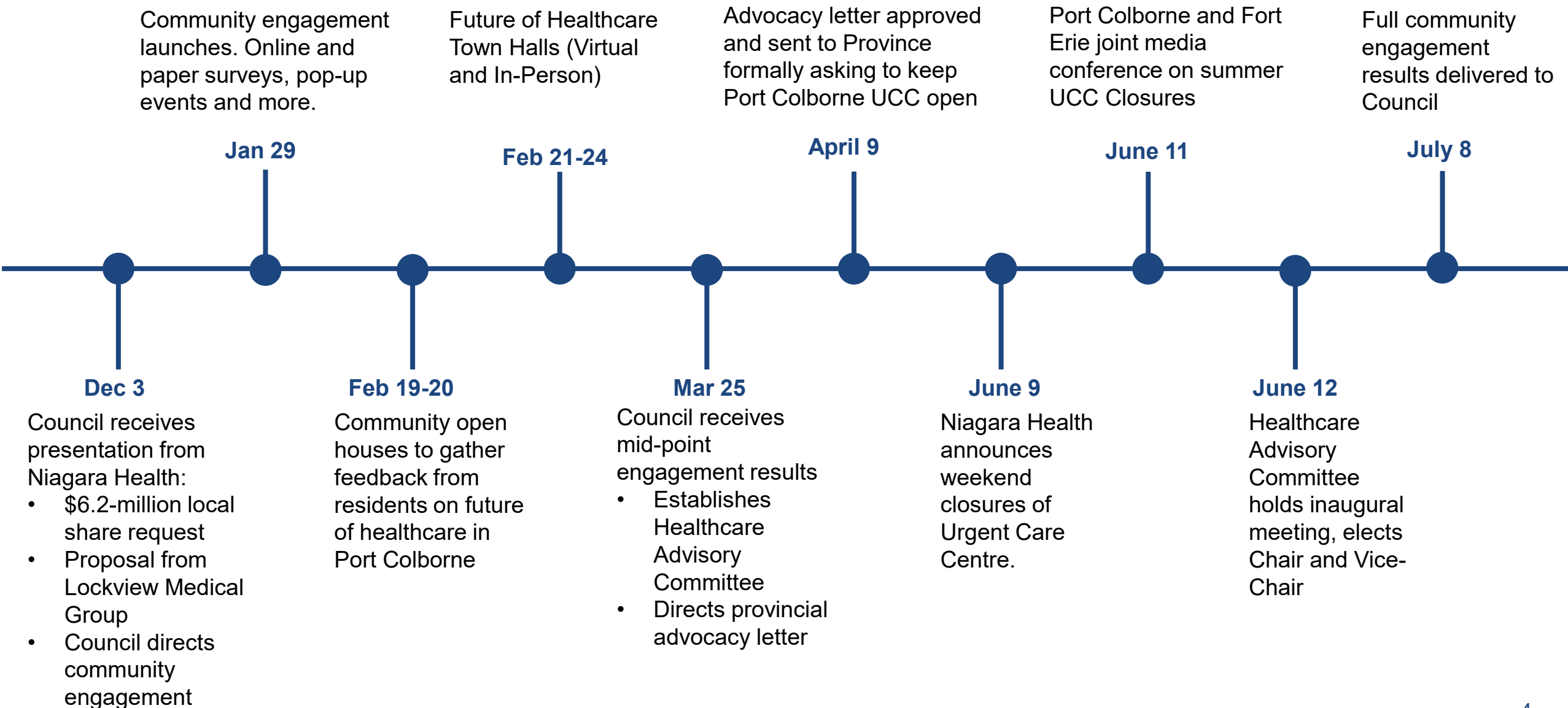
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PORT COLBORNE

Timeline since December 2024



Engagement Plan Goals & Objectives



Inform the community

Ensure the community has clear, transparent, and accessible information about the proposed partnership.



Gather feedback

Provide residents with a wide range of in-person and virtual channels so they can freely share their thoughts and ideas.



Promote inclusion

Actively involve diverse community voices to facilitate conversations and representation from often underrepresented groups.



Identify concerns and opportunities

Review feedback to highlight areas of alignment and identify potential improvements or alternatives to the proposal.



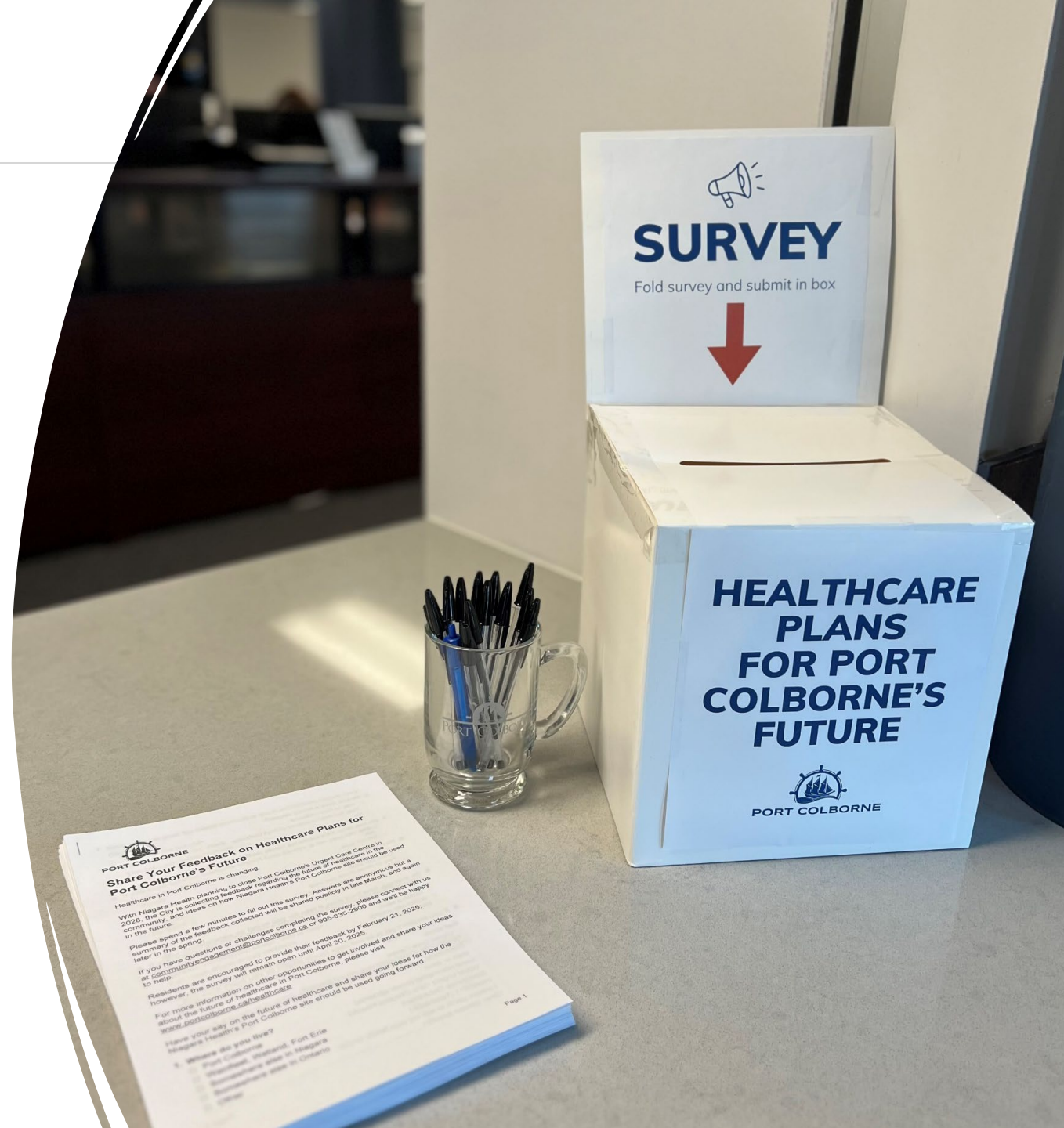
Ensure transparency

Provide the community with access to the feedback collected to demonstrate how this information informs Council's decision-making.



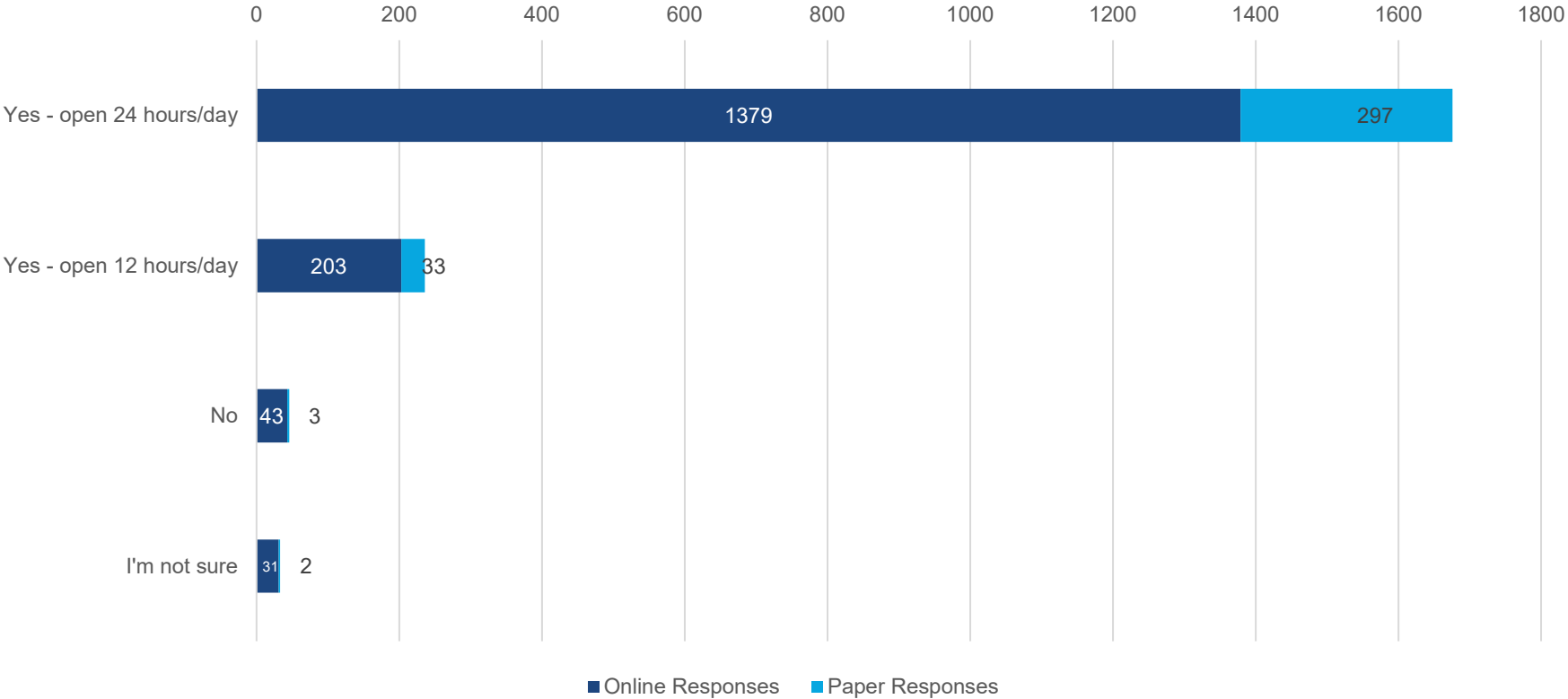
Survey Quick Stats

- Between January 29 – April 30
- **2,012** people completed the survey
 - **1,669** online surveys completed
 - **343** on paper surveys received
- **10,836** open-field comments
- Average time to complete:
13 minutes (online survey)
- Estimated completion rate:
72.5% (online survey)
- **86%** of respondents were residents of Port Colborne



Survey Highlights

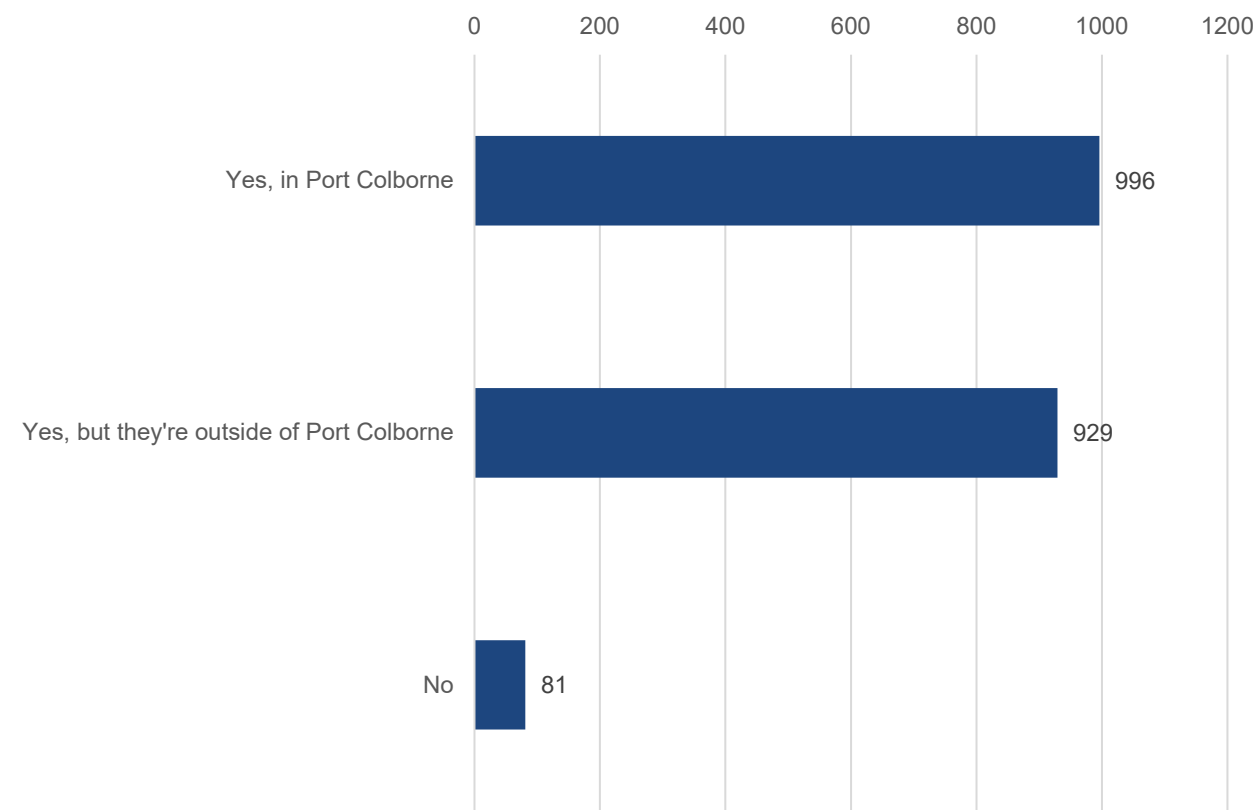
Q11. Do you think Port Colborne requires an Urgent Care Centre?



84% of respondents reported they thought Port Colborne requires an Urgent Care Centre open 24 hours per day.

Survey Highlights

Q2: Do you have a family doctor?

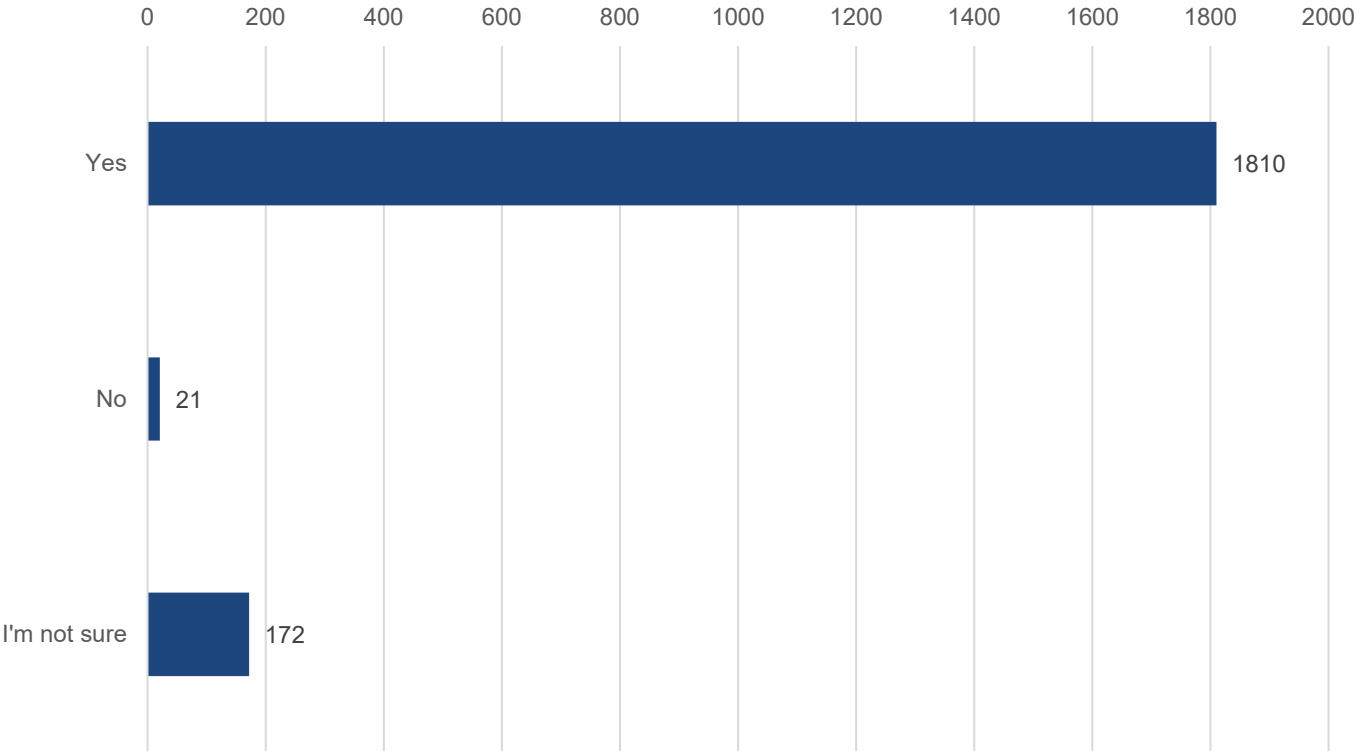


50% of respondents reported they had a family doctor in Port Colborne.

46% of respondents reported their family doctor was located outside Port Colborne.

Survey Highlights

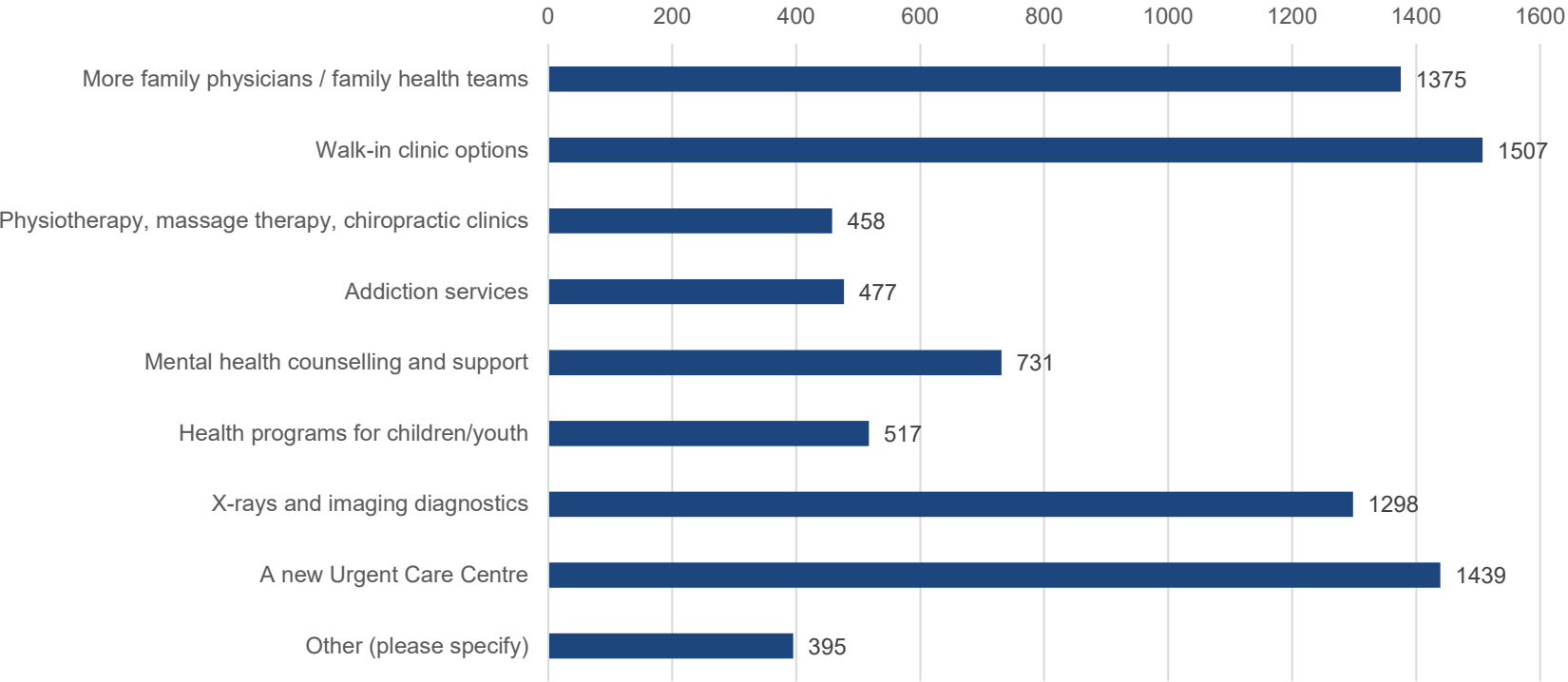
Q3. Do you think Port Colborne needs more family doctors?



90% of respondents reported they thought Port Colborne needed more family doctors.

Survey Highlights

Q14. When the Port Colborne Urgent Care Centre closes, do you think Port Colborne requires more healthcare options? What options would be most beneficial to you and your family?



Respondents supported a variety of healthcare options being available in Port Colborne, including more family physicians and family health teams, more walk-in clinics, more diagnostics, and a new Urgent Care Centre.

Healthcare services in Port Colborne

Comprehensive Healthcare Services

Respondents highlighted the need for a variety of healthcare services, including walk-in clinics, diagnostic imaging (X-rays, MRIs, ultrasounds), and emergency care.

Support for Expanded Services

There was support for incorporating more nurse practitioners, social workers, and mental health services to provide comprehensive care.

Community Health Programs

Respondents expressed a desire for more community health programs, including seniors care, palliative care, hospice, and home care support.

Growing Population

Awareness of Port Colborne's growing population and future need for healthcare resources.



Survey: Additional Insights

- Concerns about travel, long wait times at Emergency Departments and outpatient services and impact on vulnerable populations
- Requests for the expansion of local community healthcare services
- Additional primary care providers-half don't have a primary care provider in Port Colborne
- More Walk-in Clinics/After-hours services, Diagnostic Imaging, and Urgent Care.
- 84% of respondents feel Port Colborne requires an Urgent Care Centre open 24 hours per day.
- 64% of respondents reported that they had used health services at the Port Colborne Urgent Care within the last year

Visit www.portcolborne.ca/healthcare for full survey results and insights.

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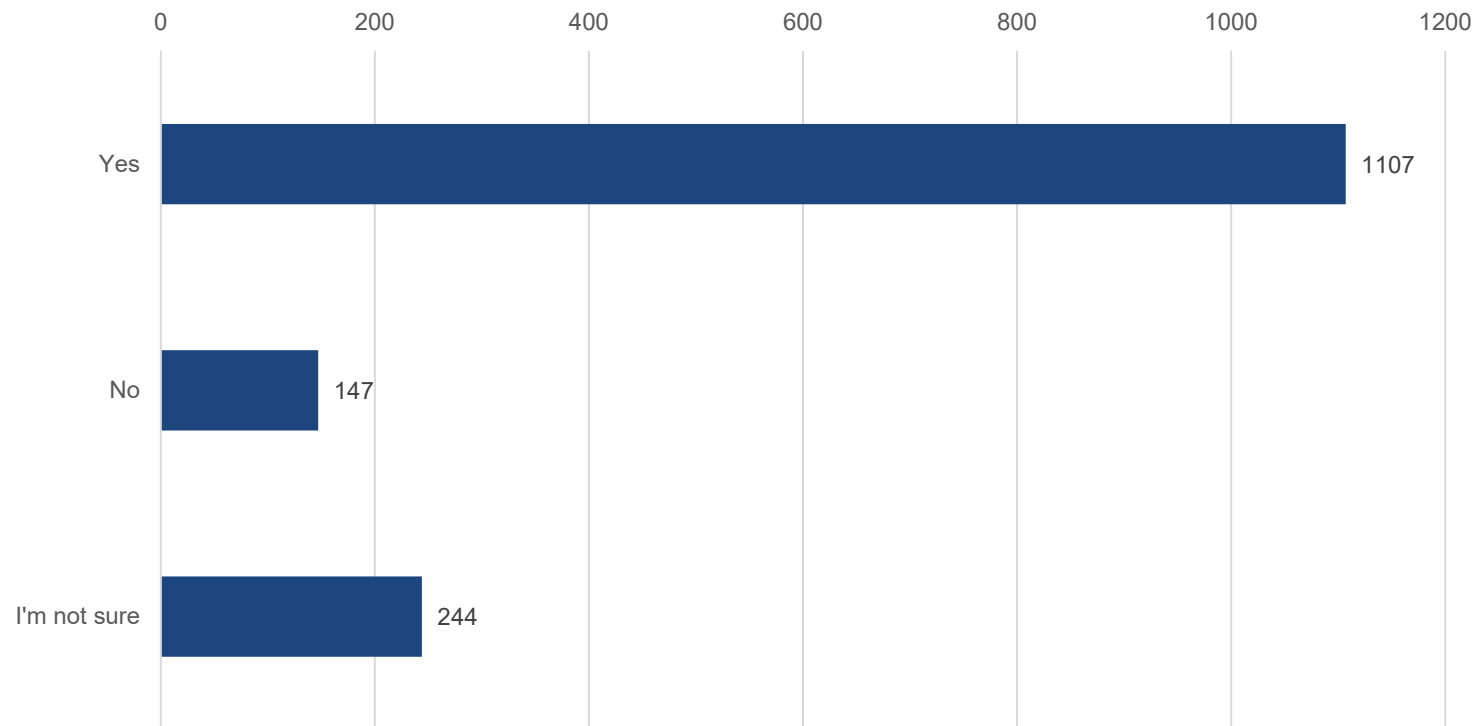
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Survey Highlights: Healthcare Advisory Committee

Q27. Do you think Council should formally establish a committee to advise on healthcare issues in Port Colborne?



74% of respondents supported the establishment of a committee to advise on healthcare issues in Port Colborne



Establishing a Healthcare Advisory Committee

General Support

Respondents thought a committee would provide a platform for diverse voices and would ensure residents' needs are considered.

Representation & Transparency

Respondents want a transparent committee that includes a diverse group of people, including residents, healthcare professionals, and local leaders. The committee will publish key points from meetings and avoid closed-door sessions.

Community Involvement

The importance of involving the community in decision-making processes was emphasized. Residents should have a say, and their input should be valued.

Skepticism & Concerns

Some residents thought the committee could be a waste of resources, noting it may not be positioned to make change at the local government level.



Council Recommendations and Action Items

- That Council direct the Healthcare Advisory Committee to propose a draft **Healthcare Services Strategy** by the end of 2025
- That Council approve the motion regarding **Provincial Healthcare Advocacy** as outlined in a [letter sent to the province on April 9, 2025](#)
- That Council direct staff to **forward the petition** regarding the Port Colborne Hospital and Urgent Care Centre received at the March 11, 2025 Council meeting to the Ontario Minister of Health

Mandate & Composition of the Committee

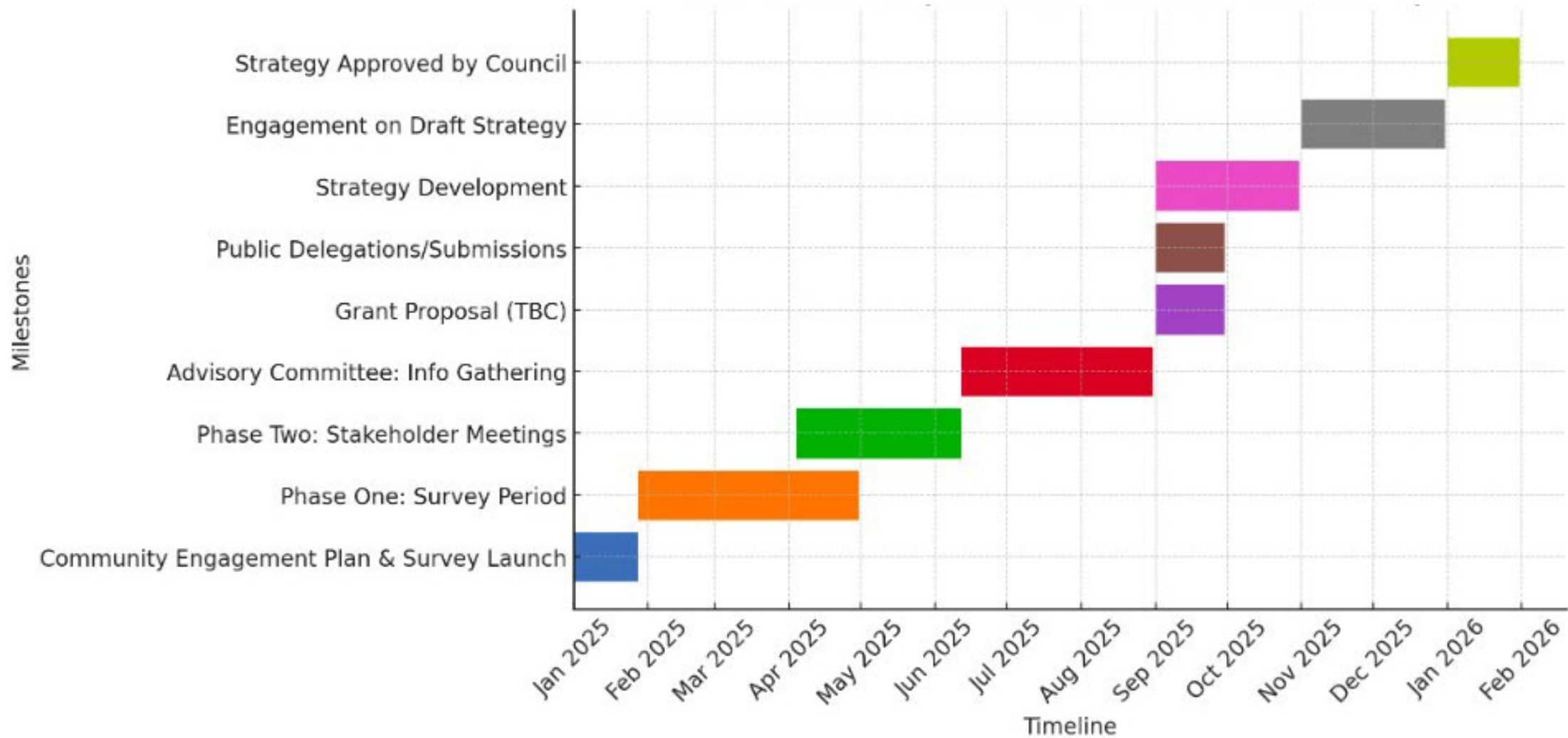
Mandate

- Work to ensure the residents of Port Colborne have access to healthcare and associated community and healthcare services that are required within the community

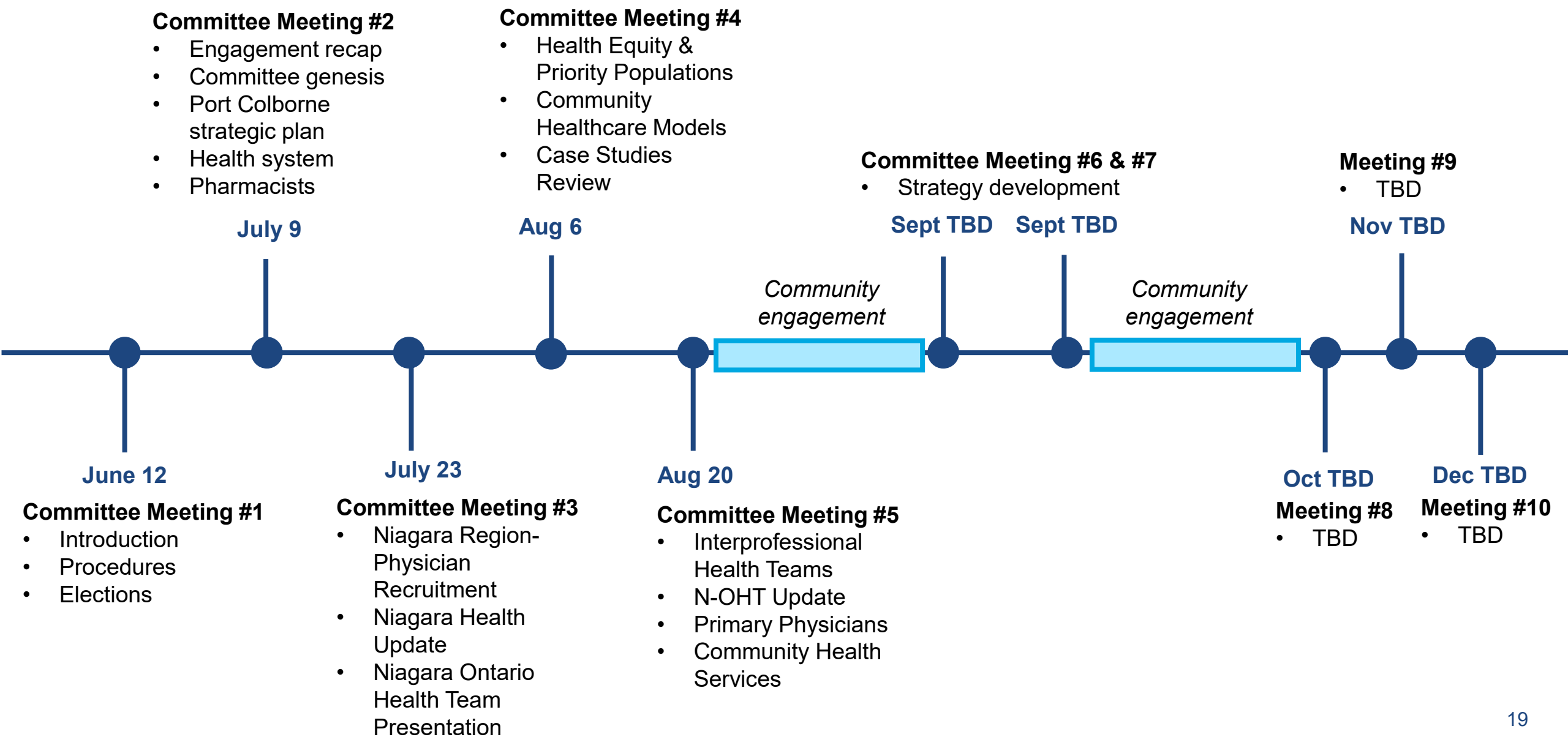
Key Deliverables

- Develop and recommend to Council a comprehensive, evidence-based, and attainable, **healthcare services strategy** that includes core key performance indicators to measure success
- An assessment of the alignment of healthcare service proposals, initiatives and opportunities and their alignment with a Council approved healthcare service strategy
- A comprehensive upper level of government relations strategy to support the achievement of a Council approved healthcare service strategy; and
- Public engagement to support the work of the Committee in fulfilling its mandate

Strategy Development: Potential Timeline



Meetings & Suggested Agenda Overview



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Vision, Mission & Corporate Values

Vision Statement:

A healthy and vibrant waterfront community embracing growth for future generations.

Mission Statement:

To provide an exceptional small-town experience in a big way.

Corporate Values

- **Integrity** – We interact with others ethically and honourably
- **Respect** – We treat each other with empathy and understanding
- **Inclusion** – We welcome everyone
- **Responsibility** – We make tomorrow better
- **Collaboration** – We are better together



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Alignment with the Strategic Plan



**Environment
& Climate
Change**



**Welcoming,
Livable &
Healthy
Community**



**Economic
Prosperity**



**Increased
Housing
Options**



**Sustainable
& Resilient
Infrastructure**

PEOPLE  **SIMPLE**  **VALUE**  **CUSTOMER**



PORT COLBORNE

Welcoming, Livable & Healthy Community



WELCOMING, LIVABLE, AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Goal:

To support our community health

Measures:

- Invest in physician recruitment activities to reach 14 family physicians by 2026
- Facilitate partnerships that provide funding for health and social programs

Insights Primary Physicians

- Today we have 10 family physicians
- We have \$300,000 set aside for family physician recruitment
- We hear space is a constraint to family physician recruitment
- The figure of 14 was determined using a model of approximately 1,400 patients per family physician
- Family physician patient loads can be higher depending on the primary care delivery model and the interprofessional health team they have available



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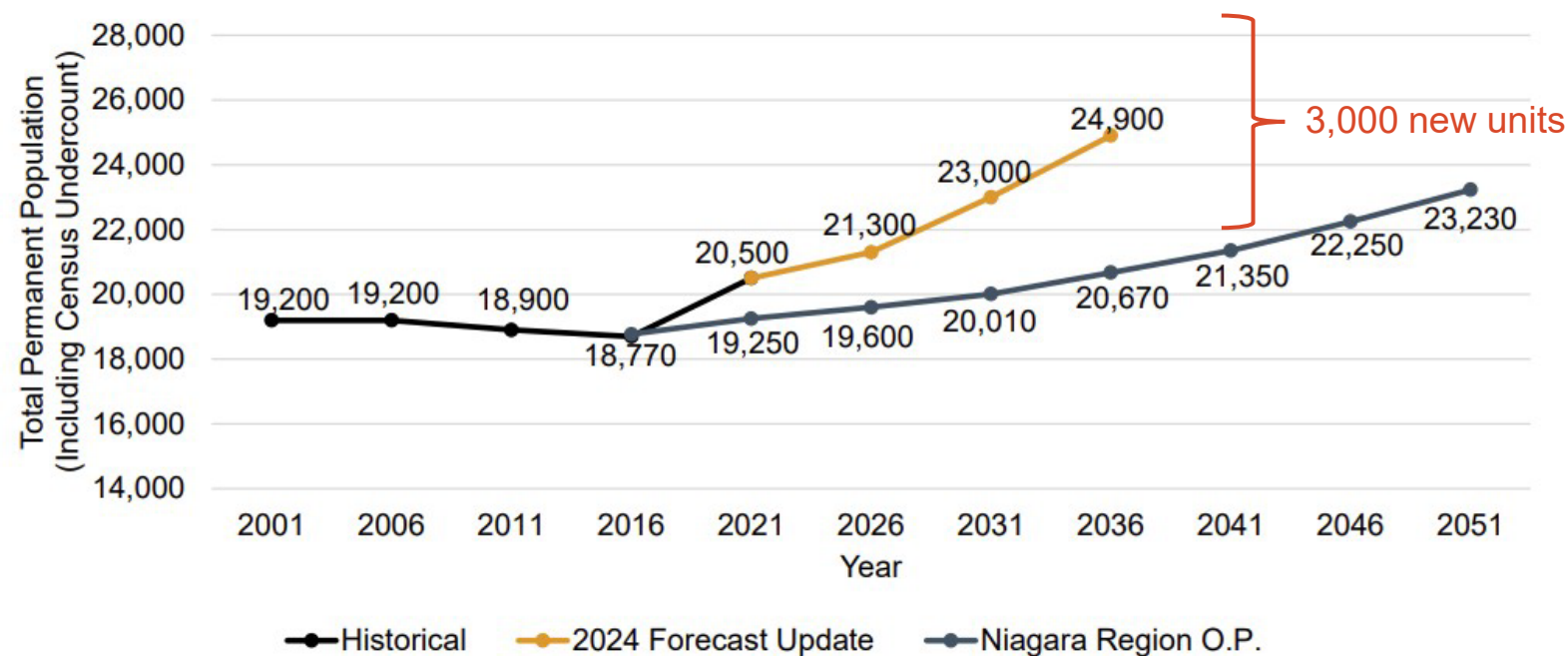
Insights Partnerships

- The private sector has indicated a willingness to build new and/or expand existing healthcare space
- Depending on location, the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) can provide financial incentives to support the development of that space



Population Forecast

City of Port Colborne - 2021 to 2036



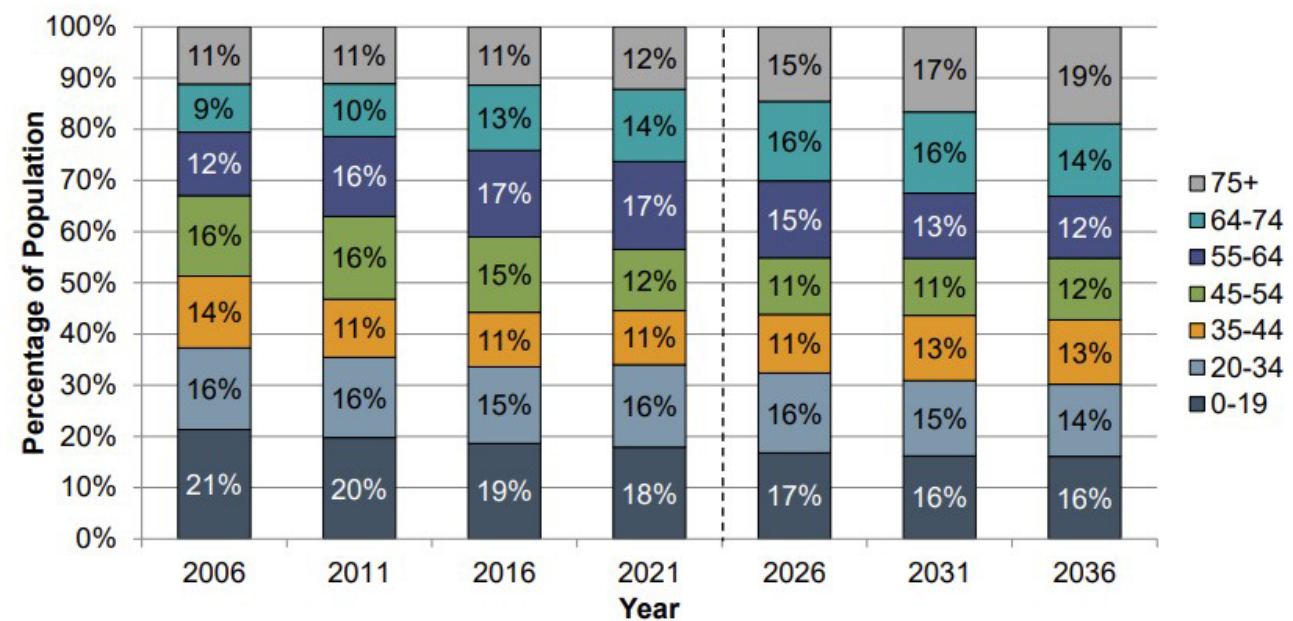
Insights

- We see approximately 60,000 unique visitors annually
- Our population doubles to approximately 40,000 people in the summer

Source: Historical derived from Statistics Canada Census, 2001 to 2021, Niagara Region O.P. Update from the Niagara Region 2022 Official Plan and supporting background technical work, and 2024 Forecast Update by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Population Forecast

Permanent Population Forecast by Age Group City of Port Colborne - 2021 to 2036



Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

The majority of age groups are forecast to experience noticeable growth over the next 15-years. However, the City of Port Colborne population is aging, between 2021 and 2036 the percentage of persons 75+ years of age and older is forecast to increase from 12% to 19%.

The 75+ age group is the fastest growing cohort with annual forecast population growth rate of 4.3%.

Social Economic Factors

Education

	Port Colborne	Province of Ontario
No certificate, diploma or degree	19%	15.3%
High School	35%	27.2%
Post secondary	46%	57.5%

Median Household Income

Port Colborne
\$70,000

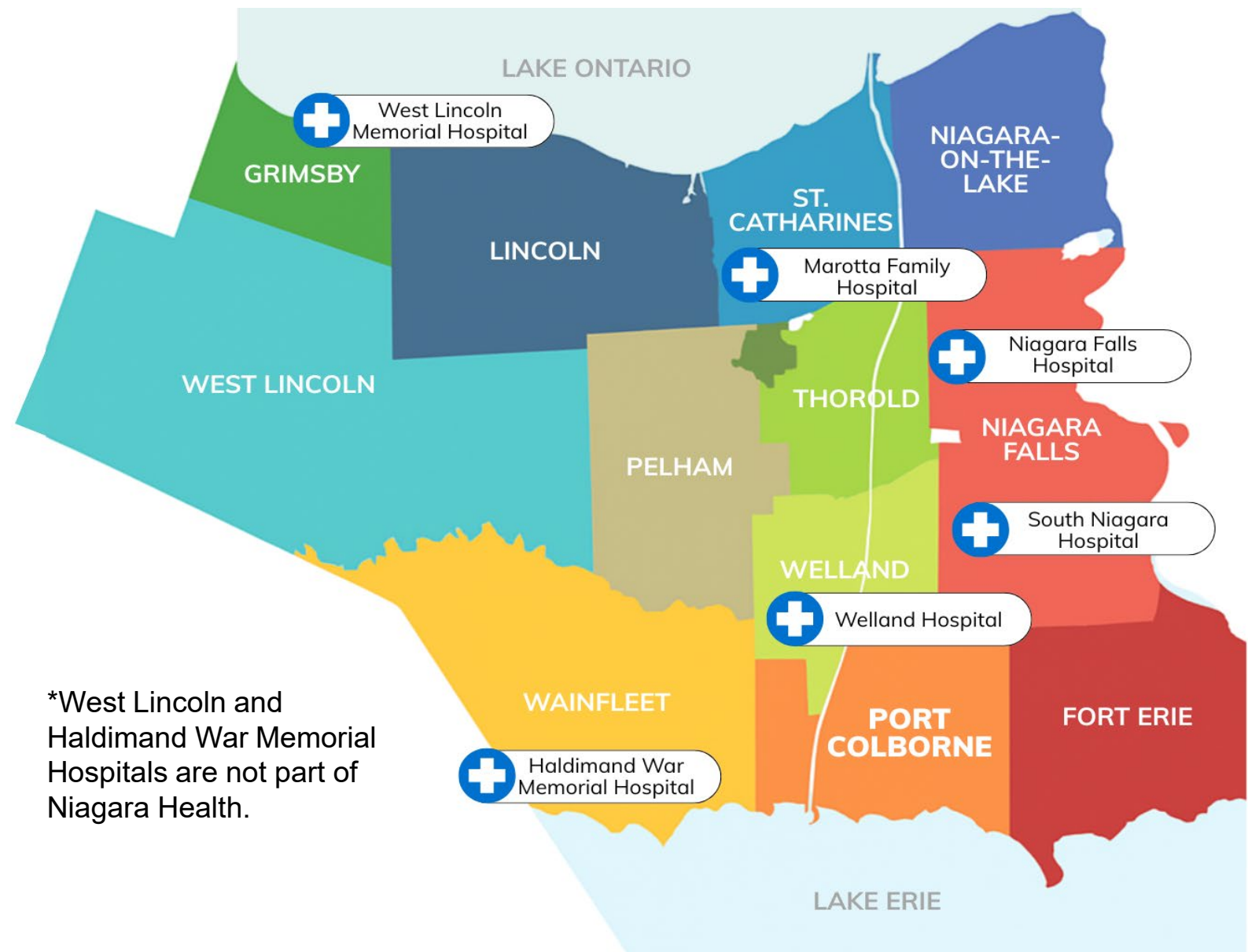
Province of Ontario
\$91,000



PORT COLBORNE

Source: [Stats Canada](#)

Hospital and Emergency Departments in Niagara Region



*West Lincoln and Haldimand War Memorial Hospitals are not part of Niagara Health.

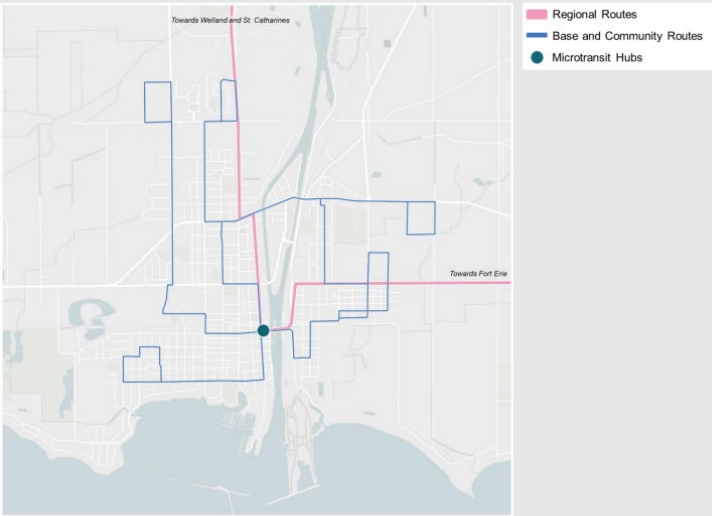
Location	Driving	Transit
Welland Hospital	16 mins	21 mins
South Niagara Hospital	23 mins	N/A
Niagara Falls Hospital	33 mins	1h 27mins
Haldimand War Memorial Hospital	33 mins	N/A
Marotta Family Hospital	36 mins	1h 44mins
West Lincoln Memorial Hospital	50 mins	N/A

Origin: Port Colborne City Hall
Sourced from Google Maps

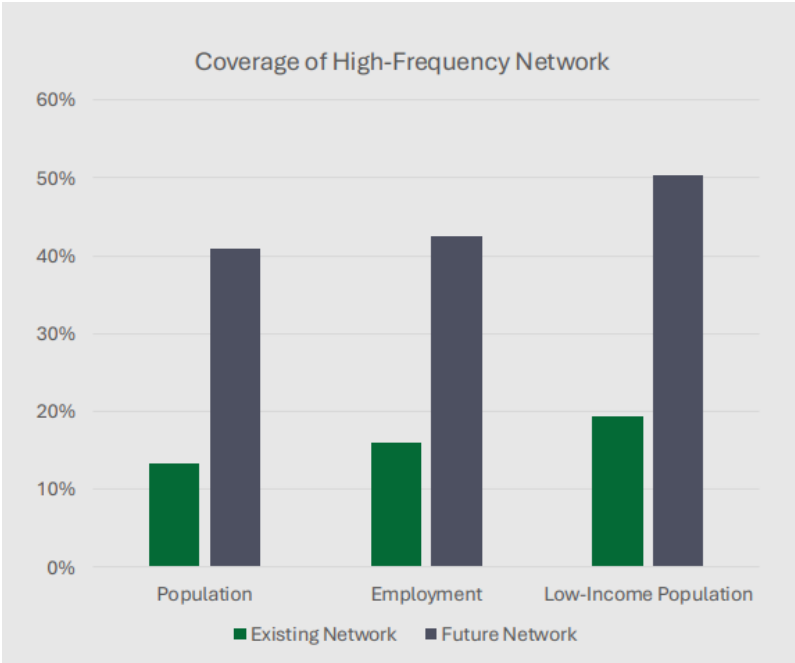
Transit

15-Minute Coverage by 2035

Port Colborne – Stage 3



www.ltrt.ca



NTC 4-2025

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

3:00 p.m.

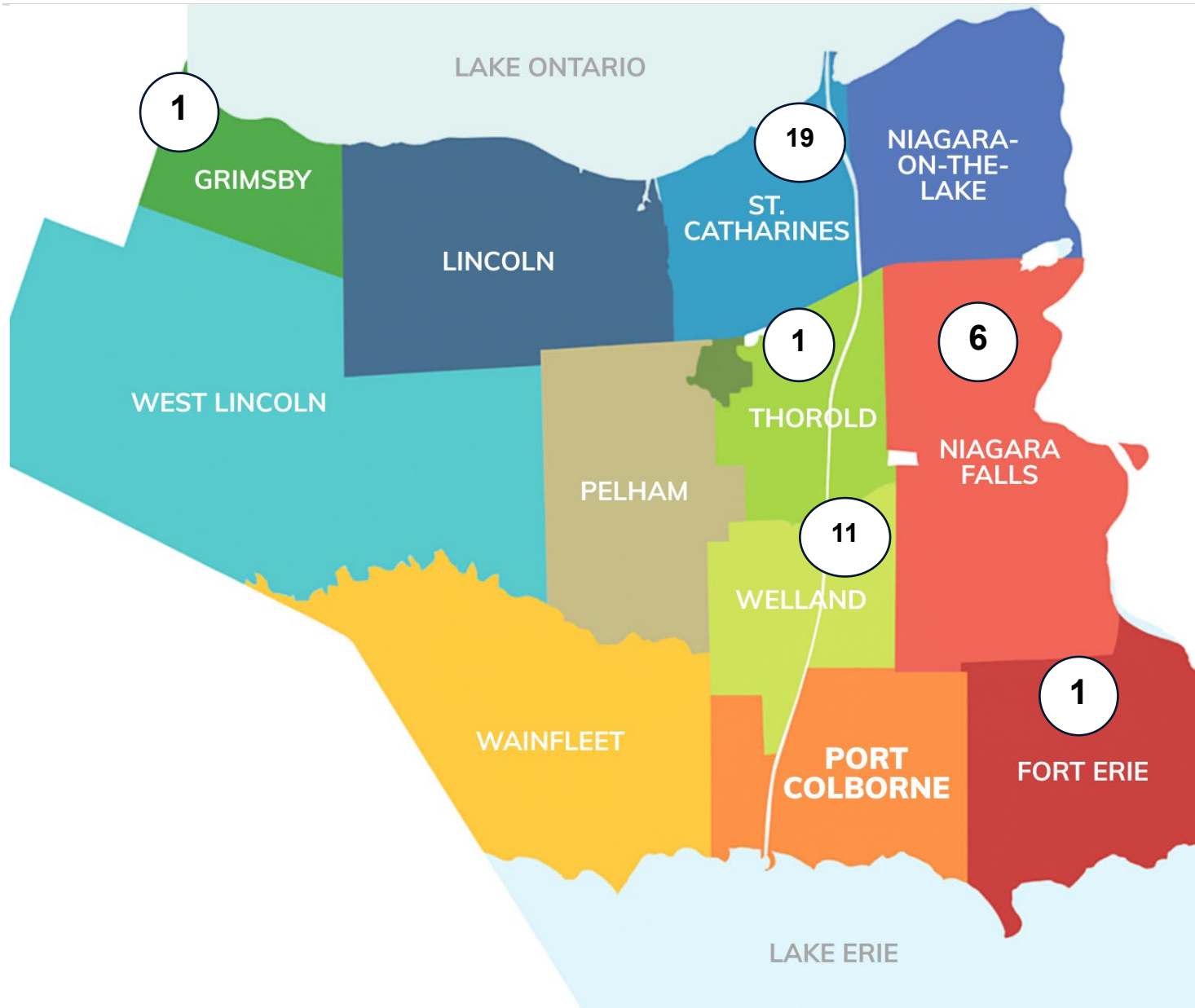
[Niagara Transit Commission Minutes NTC 3-2025](#)

Tuesday, April 15, 2025



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Primary Care Providers accepting patients in Niagara



39 family doctors are currently accepting new patients:

3 Community Health Centres are accepting new patients:

- Bridges Community Health Centre, Port Colborne
- Centre de Santé Communautaire (Services in French), Welland
- De dwa da dehs nye>s (Services for Indigenous and those with Indigenous ancestry), St. Catharines

Source: [Find a Doctor Niagara Region](#)

Port Colborne: Healthcare Services Overview

Primary Care

- Family Health Teams (Family Doctors)
- Bridges Community Health Centre
- Pharmacy's
- Nurse Practitioners (NP's)
- Physician Assistants (PA's)
- Naturopathic Doctors

Interprofessional Health Services

- Physiotherapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Chiropractors
- Massage Therapists
- Acupuncturists

Specialists

- Vision
- Speech
- Geriatric

Port Colborne Complex and Urgent Care Centre

- Urgent Care Centre
- Complex Care
- X-ray and Ultrasound
- Mental Health and Addictions Services
- Scheduled Ambulatory Care/Outpatient Clinics (Physio, Hepatitis C Care, Eating Disorder and more.)

Emergency Services

- Welland Hospital Emergency Department
- Port Colborne Fire Department
- Niagara Regional Police
- Niagara EMS
- POCOMAR

Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP)

Hamilton Health Sciences-Mobile Cancer Screening Coach

REACH Niagara

QUEST Community Health Centre



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1940s–1990s: Era of Local Hospital-Based Care

- Residents of Port Colborne began organized community fundraising for their hospital with the formation of the Port Colborne Site Auxiliary in the late 1940s
- This volunteer-led group played a major role during the opening of the new hospital facility in 1951, serving tea to around 3,600 attendees and engaging the broader community in support efforts
- The City donated the land and the general population participated in a community share program
- The Port Colborne General Hospital, established in the post-war boom, was a cornerstone of healthcare for residents of Port Colborne and the surrounding rural communities, and operated as a full-service community hospital with inpatient beds, a 24/7 emergency department, maternity services, diagnostic imaging, and general surgery.
- The hospital was municipally significant – not only as a care provider but also as a major local employer and symbol of community independence.

1990s–2000s: Regionalization and Service Reduction

- In the 1990s, Ontario's healthcare system began moving toward regional consolidation.
- The creation of the Niagara Health System (NHS) in 2000 brought together multiple hospitals and boards under a single administration.
- As a result, services were centralized to larger regional sites.
- Port Colborne General saw a gradual reduction in services, including the closure of its emergency department and inpatient beds.
- These decisions were met with strong public opposition and local advocacy efforts aimed at preserving community-based care.

2008–2010: Hospital Improvement Plan and Urgent Care Transition

- In response to public concern and operational challenges, NHS released its Hospital Improvement Plan (HIP) in 2008, which formally transitioned the Port Colborne site into a Complex Care and Urgent Care Centre (UCC).
- The UCC opened in 2009, providing walk-in access to non-life-threatening urgent medical care, diagnostic services, and limited hours of operation.
- Though it filled a gap left by the loss of the emergency department, the shift marked a profound change in how Port Colborne residents accessed urgent and primary care.

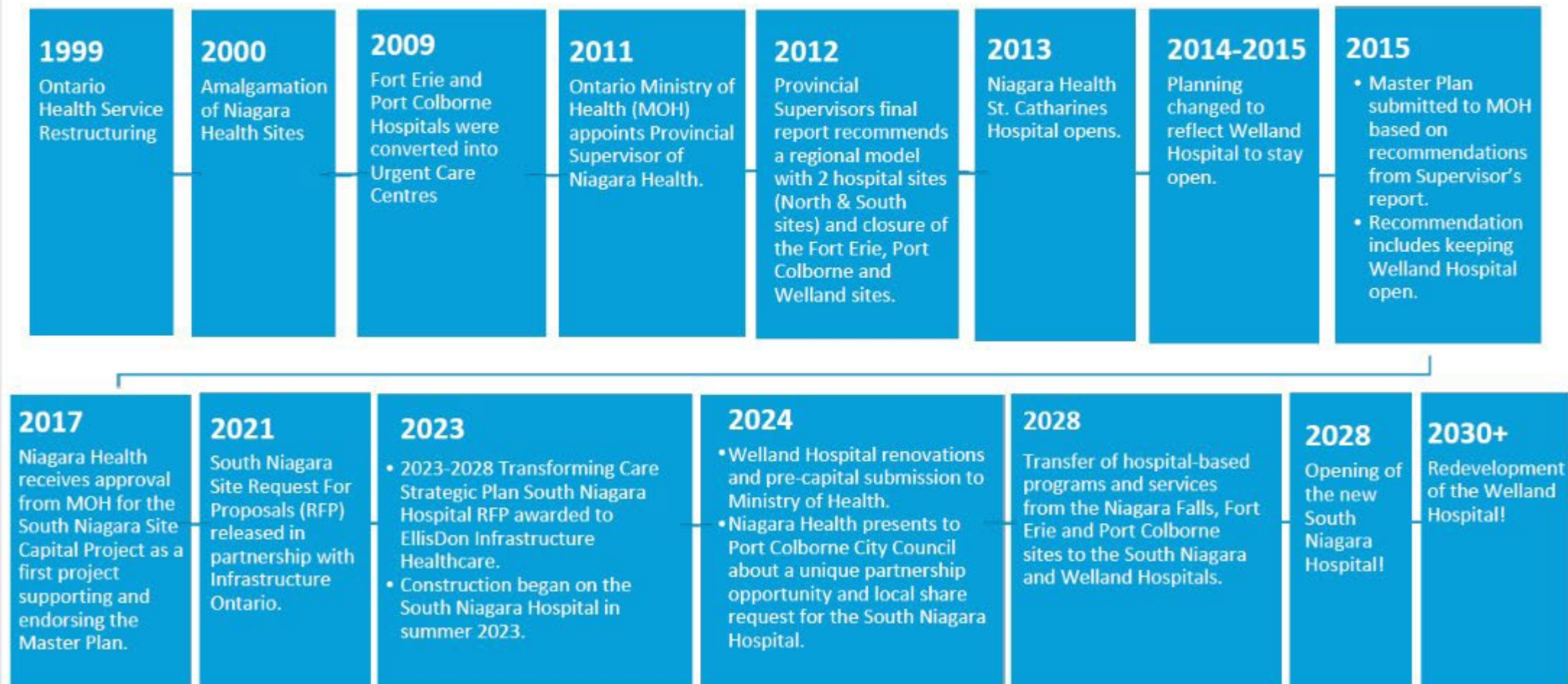
2010s to 2020s: Rising Demand, System Strain, and Primary Care Gaps

- Over the following decade, Port Colborne's population aged significantly. By 2021, more than 25% of residents were over 65.
- At the same time, family physician shortages, limited specialist access, and increased dependence on the UCC for primary care, strained the local system.
- The earlier closures of obstetric and surgical services meant residents had to travel to Welland or St. Catharines for hospital-based care.
- Socioeconomic challenges – including lower household incomes, high rates of low-income seniors, and food insecurity – have further compounded healthcare access issues.



Niagara Health's Master Plan Journey

Transforming Care 
niagarahealth



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Source: Niagara Health

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Who is responsible for healthcare?

- Healthcare delivery and funding in Ontario is complex because it involves multiple layers of responsibility shared between the provincial government, local providers, and federal partners.
- While the province funds and regulates most services - like hospitals, primary care, and long-term care - delivery is carried out by a mix of public, non-profit, and private organizations.
- Ontario Health oversees system coordination, but services are delivered locally through hospitals, Ontario Health Teams, and community agencies.
- Funding flows through a combination of global budgets, service-based payments, and targeted grants, making the system both adaptive and difficult to navigate.

Emergency Services and Paramedicine

Canada Health Act (1985)

Canadian Charter of Rights
& Freedoms (1982)

**Private
Businesses**

The Primary Care
Act (2025)

**Provincial
Government**

Ontario Health

Healthcare in Ontario

Public Health Local

**Government
Agencies**

Public Health Agency of
Canada Act (2006)

Municipal Social Services
and Community Support

Controlled Drugs and
Substances Act (1996)

**Federal
Government**

Ontario Primary
Care Action Plan

Ontario Ministry
of Health

Housing

**Non-Profit
Organizations**

Health Protection and
Promotion Act

Accessible Canada
Act (2019)

Department of Health
Act (1996)

Public Health Ontario

**Municipal
Government**

Niagara Ontario
Health Team-
Equipe Sante

Connected Care for
Canadians Act (2024)



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Healthcare Legislation: Provincial

[The Primary Care Act](#) (2025): Sets out six clear objectives for Ontario’s publicly funded primary care system which will ensure people know what they can expect when connecting to primary care:

PROVINCE-WIDE
Every person across the province should have the opportunity to have ongoing access to a primary care clinician or team.

CONNECTED
Every person should have the opportunity to receive primary care that is coordinated with existing health and social services.

CONVENIENT
Every person should have access to timely primary care.

INCLUSIVE
Every person should have the opportunity to receive primary care that is free from barriers and free from discrimination.

EMPOWERED
Every person should have the opportunity to access their personal health information through a digitally integrated system that connects patients and clinicians in the circle of care.

RESPONSIVE
The primary care system should respond to the needs of the communities it serves and everyone should have access to information about how the system is performing and adapting.

Healthcare Legislation: Provincial

- [Ontario Primary Care Action Plan](#):
Mandate: 100% of people in Ontario are attached to a family doctor or a primary care nurse practitioner working in a publicly funded team, where they receive ongoing, comprehensive, and convenient care.
- Health systems with robust primary care systems have better health outcomes, lower healthcare costs, and more equity.
- Primary care visits are 33% of the cost of a visit to an emergency department in Ontario
- By providing care in the community, primary care reduces reliance on costly parts of the system such as emergency departments and hospitals.

We understand there will be an opportunity for funding proposals to improve primary care

Ministry of Health vs Ontario Health vs N-OHT

- [Ministry of Health](#) The provincial government department responsible for **overseeing, funding, and shaping** the healthcare system to serve the needs of Ontarians.
- [Ontario Health](#) is a super-agency **coordinating** Ontario's entire health system
 - Oversees hospitals, home care, primary care, mental health, long-term care
 - Supports Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) – local provider networks delivering integrated care
 - Manages provincial programs like cancer screening, digital health, and supply chain
 - Leads regional operations through Chief Regional Officers
 - Focus is on better coordination, improved access, system-wide accountability
- [Niagara Ontario Health Team-Equipe Sante](#) is a partnership of the Niagara region's health and social care providers organized under the Province's Ontario Health Teams initiative.
 - Works to create an inclusive, efficient health and social care system that integrates and streamlines the delivery of healthcare and social services
 - Helps Niagara residents access the care they need and improve the overall experience and health outcomes for Niagara's residents.



Social Determinants of Health

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the non-medical factors that influence a person's health outcomes. These are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, and they shape both individual well-being and population health.

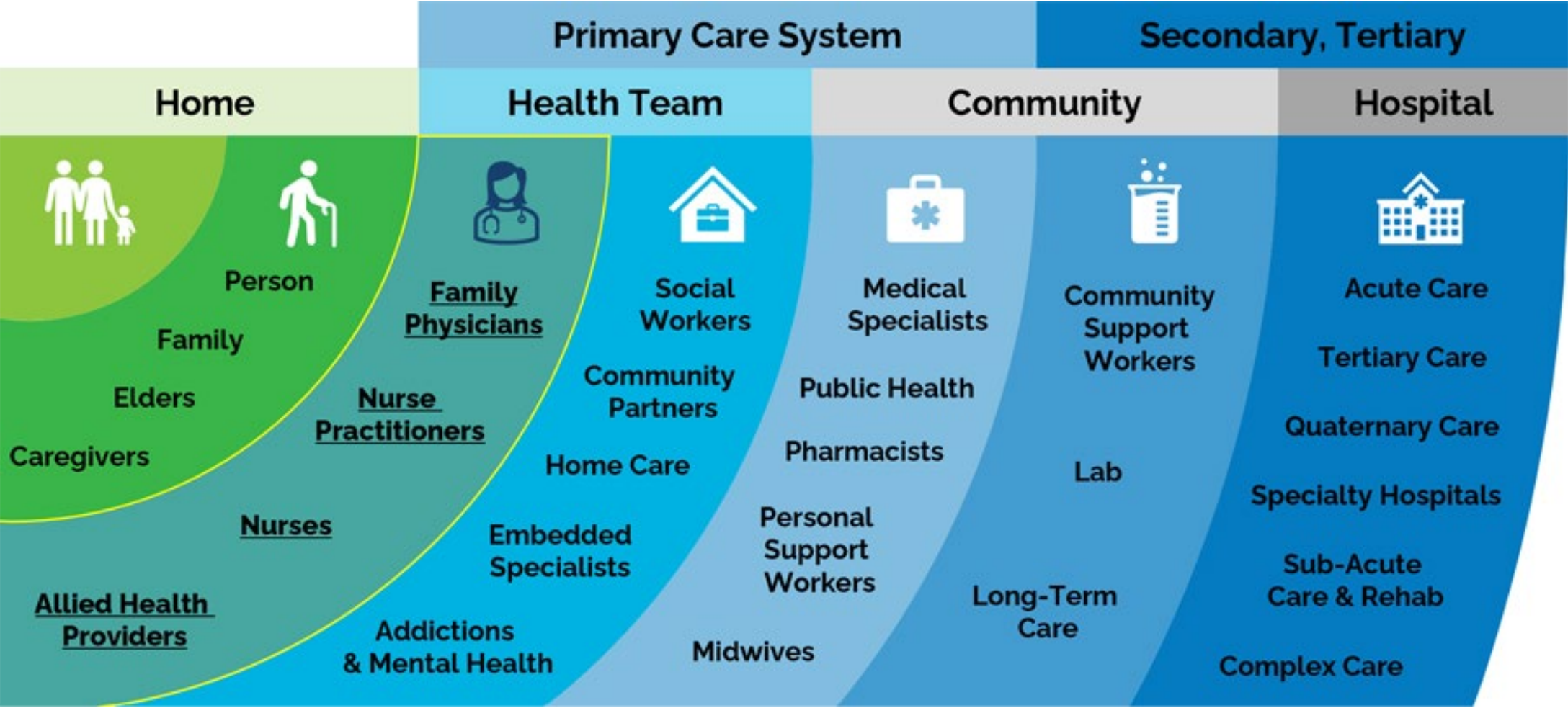
- Income and Social Status
- Employment and Working Conditions
- Education and Literacy
- Childhood Experiences
- Physical Environments
- Social Support Networks
- Access to Health Services
- Culture, Race and Racism
- Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation
- Food Insecurity

In Ontario, these are core to health equity planning. Populations disproportionately affected by negative SDOH include:

- Indigenous peoples
- Racialized communities
- Low-income households
- People with disabilities
- Seniors
- Newcomers and refugees



Primary Care System vs Secondary and Tertiary



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Conclusion: Current State

- **Council's position: The UCC needs to stay open**
- **Funding for healthcare is decided at a provincial level**
 - Port Colborne is viewed as a component of a larger health system
- **Niagara Health has a pre-established path to close the UCC by 2028**
- **The province has announced the opportunity to submit applications for funding** is coming and we understand local physicians are planning to apply
 - **Our local primary care physicians support improved primary care**
- **The number of primary care physicians is dependent on the interprofessional health services** supporting them
- **Port Colborne barriers to healthcare**
 - Social economic (Aging population, education and household income)
 - Space for primary care physicians and interprofessional health services
 - Transportation out of the city (To emergency departments, specialists, medical imaging etc.)
 - Geographical location in the region (Further away from centralized services)

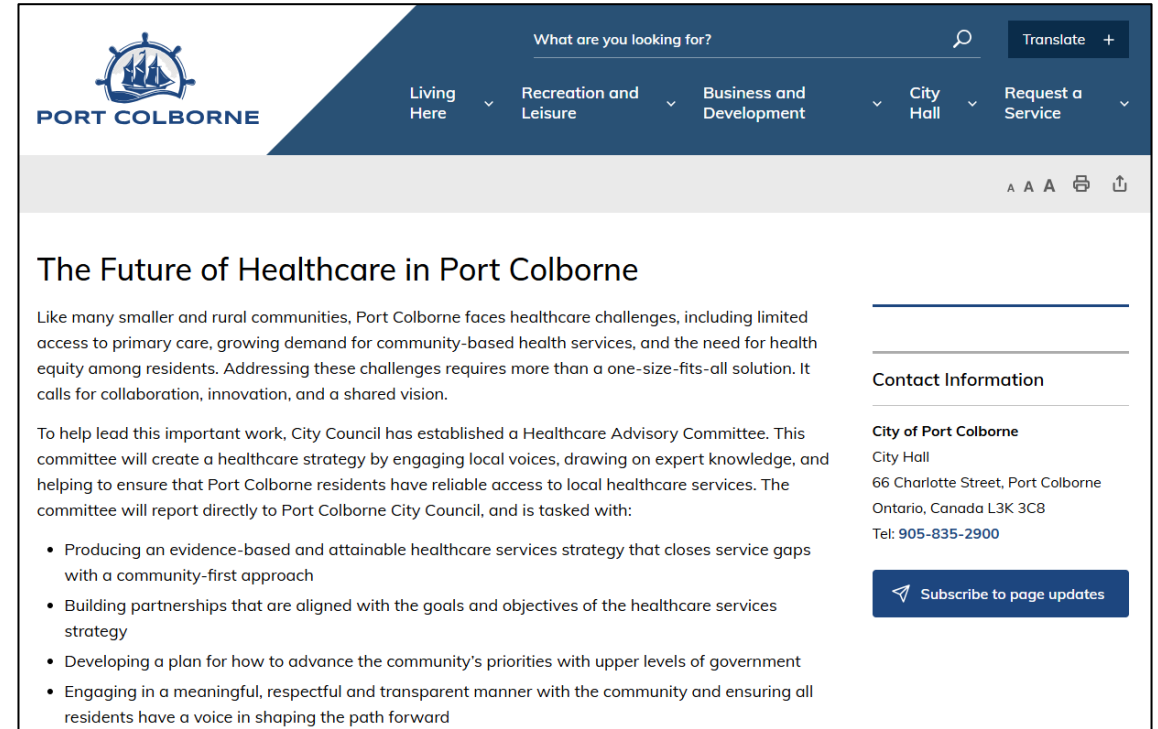
Conclusion: Ongoing Work

Ongoing

- Physician Recruitment
- Support for Pathstone and Memory Clinic
- Healthcare space development
- Transit and transportation infrastructure advocacy
- Regional, Provincial and Federal Government advocacy
- Outreach to partner agencies, community health services, local healthcare providers, businesses

Internal Committees

- Healthcare Advisory Committee
- Seniors Advisory Committee
- Social Determinants of Health Committee
- Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee



[Webpage-The Future of Healthcare in Port Colborne](#)

- Subscribe to receive latest updates

Next Steps

Supporting the Healthcare Advisory Committee

Mandate

- Work to ensure the residents of Port Colborne have access to healthcare and associated community and healthcare services that are required within the community

Key Deliverables

- Develop and recommend to Council a comprehensive, evidence-based, and attainable, **healthcare services strategy** that includes core key performance indicators to measure success
- An assessment of the alignment of healthcare service proposals, initiatives and opportunities and their alignment with a Council approved healthcare service strategy
- A comprehensive upper level of government relations strategy to support the achievement of a Council approved healthcare service strategy; and
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Thank you!



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