

An aerial photograph of a city waterfront. A tall, modern skyscraper with a glass facade stands prominently on the left. The city is built on a peninsula or near a large body of water, with various residential and commercial buildings. A blue diagonal graphic element overlays the right side of the image, containing the title text.

# investbarrie

## Invest Barrie Spotlight 2024

**Invest Barrie** combines the Economic and Creative Development Department with the Small Business Centre to offer robust support to Barrie businesses, entrepreneurs, and the arts community. Fostering creativity and innovation, Invest Barrie works to retain and expand local jobs and investment.

[investbarrie.ca](https://investbarrie.ca)



# Partnerships, Announcements & Events

## Lakehead STEM Hub Announcement

City Council approved a plan to partner with Lakehead University to bring a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Hub to downtown Barrie with classes beginning in fall 2026.



Mayor Nuttall announces partnership with Lakehead University to bring STEM Hub to downtown Barrie (November 21, 2024).

## Regional Innovation Centre

In 2024, the provincial government announced \$1 million for a new Regional Innovation Centre (RIC) in Barrie, with the Sandbox Centre being named as the RIC in early 2025. This builds on the existing investments that the City has made into the Sandbox Centre to support business and entrepreneurs. The RIC gives entrepreneurs focused in the tech sector increased access to experts and resources, helping founders looking to scale up their business.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Mayor's Innovation Awards

These awards recognize businesses, individuals, and organizations whose innovative approaches and sheer determination contribute to a resilient foundation for our city.



## Research, Innovation, Scholarship and Entrepreneurship (RISE) Symposium

Invest Barrie jointly invited industry to learn and explore the research and innovation capabilities at Georgian College, along with attending an Automotive Parts Manufacturer's Association Open Member Event where Project Arrow was on display.

## Manufacturing Innovation Summit

This year took attendees 'Behind the Factory Doors', with tours and breakout sessions in three of Barrie's top manufacturing facilities. These sessions showcased local talent, and allowed participants to hear case studies and industry insights.



## NASA Hack-a-thon

Lakehead University hosted the 2024 NASA International Space Apps Challenge, which brought students to seasoned professionals together to tackle some of Earth's most pressing challenges over 48 hours.

## Saginaw Sister City Agreement

Mayor Alex Nuttall and City of Saginaw Mayor Brenda Moore signed the official agreement to become sister cities focusing on economic development, trade promotion, educational exchange, community development, and cultural exchange.



# Putting Barrie on the Map

## Trade Shows & Conferences

- **CANSEC**, Ottawa: Canada's largest defence industry trade show.
- **Collision and DiscoveryX**, Toronto: Premiere innovation event, showcasing innovation ecosystems and top tech firms.
- **The Battery Show**, Detroit, Michigan: Connecting with the advanced battery, and electric and hybrid vehicles technology community.
- **Automotive Parts Manufacturer's Association (APMA) Canada's Automotive Summit**, Vaughan: Representing Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) producers of parts, equipment, tools, supplies, advanced technology, and services.
- **ReIGNITE**, Muskoka: Invest Barrie sponsored the MedTech Camp with over 160 founders and funders.



Invest staff at the Battery Show to promote Barrie as a place to invest. The team worked with local companies Baytech Plastics Inc., Burger Group | SBS Drivetec Inc., MEDATech Engineering Services Ltd., and Theta TTS Inc.

## Delegations

- The City of Barrie traveled to Germany on a trade mission aimed at strengthening economic ties and maintaining the long-standing relations with Zweibrücken, Barrie's sister city.
- Arranged by the City of Barrie's International Relations Committee, Invest Barrie hosted delegates from the Consulate General of Japan, introducing them to the economic opportunities that exist in Barrie.

# Businesses Welcomed or Expanded

18

Projects supported by Invest Barrie through the City's development process

10

Grand openings/ anniversary events attended



Kennedy's Lakeside Grocery in downtown Barrie celebrated its grand opening on November 15, 2024.

## New and Expanded Business Highlights

- **Kennedy's Lakeside Grocery** (90 Collier St.) 3,400 square ft<sup>2</sup> market with fresh produce and butcher shop.
- **Kyndryl**, the world's largest IT infrastructure services provider, established a Security Operations Centre in Barrie.
- **Bayview Point Commercial Centre** (80 Big Bay Point Rd.) 38-acre Industrial Subdivision under construction.
- **National Car Wash** (220 John St.) Celebrated the grand opening of their 9,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, cutting-edge facility.
- **Jacobs & Thompson** (760 Bayview Dr.) Suppliers of fabricated foam, adhesive, and textiles expanded their existing facility.
- **Tiber Properties** (90 Mapleview Dr. W.) Added 235,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of industrial space to Barrie's south end.
- **Aerarium Group** (311 King St.) Added 65,000 ft<sup>2</sup> of multi-unit industrial space to Barrie's south end.

## Employment Development Concierge Program

This concierge program, launched in December 2024, assists new and existing businesses with the development of strategic employment projects or expansions to existing business operations. City staff help to navigate through site selection, pre-submission due diligence, funding and incentives, partnerships, and approvals processes.



# Connected Business Community

Building business connections to support companies to STAY AND GROW in Barrie

## Business & Employer Data Survey

Each summer, Invest Barrie hires a group of student Data Collection Assistants to conduct the Business & Employer Data Survey. These students engage with hundreds of local businesses from May to August. This marks the fourth year of the survey, which achieved an exceptional response rate of 85.4%, the highest rate to date.

Among those that participated in the survey, the manufacturing sector saw a 14% increase in employment, along with a 5.5% growth in the number of businesses that export. The health care and social assistance industry also grew by 7.8%, indicating increased demand and investment in healthcare services.



## Promotional Outreach

Invest Barrie markets the city as a top domestic and foreign investment destination, positioning it as competitive for talent, tourism, and business opportunities.

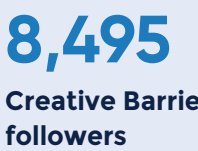


Over 631K overnight visitors contributed \$112.8M to Barrie's local economy in 2024, a 79.5% year-over-year growth of economic impact.



Almost 140K visitors came to Barrie's 2024 Airshow, resulting in a total economic impact of \$11.3M.

## Social Media Highlights



## Small Business Centre

The Small Business Centre (SBC), supported by the Province of Ontario and the City of Barrie, is one of 54 Small Business Centres operating across the province providing guidance and resources to small businesses. SBC also partners with Georgian College's Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre on their Further Faster business training program and Intellectual Property programming.

**392**

**1:1 Consultations**

**51**

**Online training & educational opportunities delivered to local entrepreneurs**

**100+**

**Attendees at the Small Business Forum: Partnership with Procurement Assistance Canada on a tradeshow and workshop event**

**58**

**Participants in two Starter Company Plus cohorts and one Summer Company cohort**

**\$36K**

**Summer Company Grants (12 grants @ \$3,000 each)**

**\$135K**

**Starter Company Grants (27 grants @ \$5,000 each)**



## Arts & Culture

An updated Culture Plan and Public Art Strategy to be completed in 2025 will shape Barrie's cultural landscape over the next decade by guiding decisions, policies, programs and investments to enhance the local creative sector.

- Over 3,300 participants in arts and culture workshops, programs, and events
- 68 nominations across six categories – a record number for the Barrie Arts Awards
- Over 600 hours of performances by 37 young, emerging musicians employed full-time by the Canadian Musicians Cooperative during July and August
- 55 events and activities hosted during the 3-week Culture Days festival
- \$230,418 distributed to 14 different organizations through the Arts & Culture Investment Program
- 3 partnership projects with the Downtown Barrie BIA – Brightening Barriers, Seeds to Sow, Culture Days





# Public Art Programs

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## Seeds to Sow Temporary Exhibition

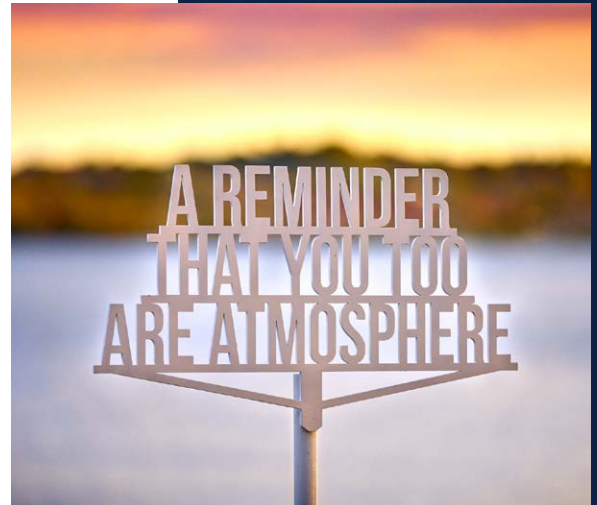
In 2024, the City of Barrie organized and hosted Seeds to Sow, a temporary exhibition of site-specific public art, from artists from across Canada. Six original installations were featured, along with a satellite exhibition at the MacLaren Art Centre. Over 50,000 people attended the waterfront during the Seeds to Sow exhibition time.

## New Murals

- Mother Nature Mosaic Mural: Created by regionally based artists Angela Aujla and Meg Leslie, this project was made possible through a partnership between the Rotary Club of Barrie and the City of Barrie.
- Moon Paint Jam Mural: Organized and directed by local artist Shalak Attack and included the participation of eight female-identifying artists from Canada and abroad. In partnership with the City of Barrie, Mural Routes, Loop Colours, and Donaleigh's Irish Public House.

## Other Initiatives

- Five traffic cabinets were wrapped with original designs by local artists through the City's Traffic Services and Economic & Creative Development partnership in support of graffiti abatement initiatives.
- Eight Brightening Barriers legacy exhibits featuring favourite installations from the previous three years.



## Economic Development Awards

Barrie is honoured to be awarded and recognized by provincial, national, and international economic development associations.



### IEDC Awards

The City of Barrie won two 2024 International Economic Development Council (IEDC) Excellence in Economic Development Awards:

- A Bronze for Excellence in Economic Development
- Talent Development & Retention Awards for the Commercial Trucking & Driver Job Fair and the Construction Industry Job Fair



### EDCO Awards

The City of Barrie won two 2024 Awards of Excellence from the Economic Developers Council of Ontario:

- Planning and Strategic Development - Urban Award for the Sport Tourism Strategy
- Visitor Attraction & Tourism Product Development - Urban Award for the 2024 Barrie Airshow



### Culture Days Award

Barrie was recognized by Culture Days Ontario as one of Canada's Top Participating Communities, ranking in the Top 10 Mid-Size Cities. One of our funded activities, "Nature's Threads" by artist Ebru Winegard, won Culture Days' People's Choice Spotlight Award.







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