CAMBRIDGE CANADA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Automation and Robotics BR&E Survey: Recommendations

City of Cambridge

2025

Automation and Robotics BR&E Survey Report

ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Based on analysis of business feedback and client context from the Automation and Robotics Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Survey, the following recommendations are provided for the City of Cambridge's Economic Development team. Recommendations are organized by survey section and are focused on meaningful, targeted actions to support local businesses and strengthen the sector.

Section 1: Business Climate and Challenges

- Promote local and provincial financial support tools, including grant awareness and capital connections.
- Support regional workforce alignment by engaging with post-secondary institutions to strengthen co-op, apprenticeship, and technical pathways.
- Explore the facilitation of targeted skilled labour attraction campaigns in collaboration with regional partners.

Section 2: Growth and Competitiveness

- Continue to brand and promote Cambridge as a national automation and innovation hub.
- Explore creating and maintaining a Cambridge automation cluster directory or map for internal purposes, collaboration opportunities, and to foster B2B linkages in the region.
- Support existing or interested businesses seeking industrial and commercial space by offering matchmaking or information on available properties and City-owned lands.

Section 3: Workforce and Training

- Explore coordinating a local workforce advisory group with post-secondary and industry partners.
- Support access to high-impact, short-term training through local incentives or partnerships with post-secondary institutions, local training providers.
- Encourage local university and college to expand and invest in co-op programs, and share co-op best practices with schools and businesses through case studies.

Section 4: Business Collaboration and Technology Use

- Explore hosting local networking events focused on automation and technology partnerships.
- Promote digital adoption readiness by convening workshops and sharing resources.

Section 5: Market and Competition

- Promote Cambridge as a reliable automation partner for regulated sectors (same as in Section 1, but perhaps with a focus on health care and other more regulated sectors).
- Share local success stories (through follow-ups with businesses) in high-profile sectors to attract customers and investors.

Section 6: Supply Chain

- Explore hosting forums or working groups to address shared procurement and supply chain issues.
- Advocate for supportive trade and procurement policy at higher levels of government, where feasible.

Section 7: Exporting

- Explore creating and launching an export-readiness toolkit and support guide tailored to automation firms.
- Partner with trade commissioners, local associations, or other regulatory bodies to host regulatory briefings on key markets.
- Highlight export success stories through City-led communications.

Section 8: Customer Insights

- Explore creating a "Meet the Buyer" series to connect local automation firms with OEMs and manufacturers.
- Promote the region's service reliability and technical expertise through case studies / profiles and buyer testimonials.

Section 9: Sustainability

- Promote awareness of sustainability grants and programs relevant to manufacturers.
- Emphasize Cambridge's sustainability focus and business practices in external and internal promotion of the sector.

- Explore regional partnerships focused on the circular economy and resource recovery.

Section 10: Innovation

- Partner with local post-secondary institutions to enhance applied research access and incubator programs.
- Share or host information on federal innovation funding (IRAP, SR&ED), and help businesses navigate application processes.
- Explore ways to reduce permitting friction for testing new technologies.

Section 11: Future Outlook and Gaps

- Invest in a long-term brand strategy positioning Cambridge as Canada's automation capital.
- Maintain an ongoing feedback mechanism for businesses and other stakeholders to provide input about sector shifts and emerging business needs.