



The 2024 Regional **Business Walk Blitz**, led by the **Portage Economic Response Team** (PERT), aimed to engage with local businesses, gather feedback, and identify areas for growth and support. The initiative focused on understanding the challenges businesses in the Region of Portage la Prairie face, offering solutions based on their input.

From October 29 to November 1, 2024, 11 teams visited **106 businesses**. Feedback from these visits revealed several key concerns, including retail crime, labor shortages, competition, and global economic impacts.

PERT is a coalition of regional economic development organizations, including Portage Regional Economic Development (PRED), Community Futures (CF) White Horse Plains and Heartland, the City of Portage la Prairie, Arrowhead Development Corporation, the Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie, Southport Aerospace Centre, and the Portage and District Chamber of Commerce. This collaborative effort enabled efficient data collection and the development of targeted action plans.

During the Business Walk program, PERT also responded quickly to the announcement of the Portage Mall closure, supporting affected businesses and planning for the area's future. The feedback gathered remains confidential, with data shared only in aggregate to protect privacy while still providing valuable insights.

Moving forward, PERT has been working hard since the walks to develop a series of follow-up actions and strategic initiatives to address the concerns identified and strengthen the region's economic foundation. This initiative is designed to foster stronger connections with business owners and offer ongoing support for the region's economic growth.



Focus Areas for 2025 Efforts

In 2025, PERT will focus on three key areas identified during the 2024 Regional Business Walk Blitz. These areas are critical to addressing the challenges local businesses face and fostering economic growth in the Region of Portage la Prairie. Each area will have its own dedicated release, starting with Phase 1 - Retail Crime, which will be detailed in May 2025.

Business walks 2024 Update and Report Release Plan

1. Retail Crime and Safety Prevention

Retail Crime and Safety were major concerns raised by businesses during the 2024 Business Walks. PERT will focus on providing practical tools and resources to help businesses reduce crime and enhance safety. This will include organizing workshops, offering expert advice, and educating businesses on how they can implement preventative measures. Detailed actions for this area will be released in May 2025 as part of Phase 1.

2. Competition and Economic Uncertainty

Businesses have expressed concerns about increased competition and economic uncertainty, particularly due to global economic shifts. PERT will provide guidance to help businesses navigate these challenges. This will include offering information on tariffs, trade, and local economic initiatives, as well as organizing sessions with trade advisors to discuss impacts on local businesses.

3. Labor and Workforce Development

Labor shortages and workforce development are pressing issues for local businesses. PERT will work on strategies to address these challenges, including using immigration programs, providing resources on labor market tools, and supporting workforce development initiatives. These efforts aim to ensure businesses have access to a skilled and stable workforce. Tools, resources and updates for business owners will be available in Phase 3 of the report.

Each focus area will have a dedicated release throughout 2025, starting with Crime and Safety in May 2025. PERT is committed to addressing these concerns and supporting the local business community through targeted initiatives, workshops, and ongoing engagement.

We will continue throughout 2025 to work on these initiatives and communicate regularly with the community. In addition, Business Walks 2025 have been scheduled for September! We look forward to seeing you all again in person to continue addressing the region's needs.

[MORE INFO](#)



[CONTACT US](#)