

To: Economic and Development Services Committee

From: Anthony Ambra, P.Eng, Commissioner,
Economic and Development Services Department

Report Number: ED-24-108

Date of Report: October 2, 2024

Date of Meeting: October 7, 2024

Subject: Proposed Business and Economic Development Services
Visual Brand Identity

Ward: All Wards

File: 03-05

1.0 Purpose

As part of the endorsed City of Oshawa Economic Development Strategic Plan, key action items (Strategy 4.C.2 and 4.C.3) called for the establishment of an economic development brand that will promote Oshawa's economy.

Aubs and Mugg was retained to support the development of this project as included in [Report ED-23-213](#) and included in the Business and Economic Development Services 2024 operating budget.

The purpose of this Report is to present Oshawa City Council with proposed directions for the Visual Brand Identity for Business and Economic Development Services and receive Council endorsement on one selected Visual Brand Identity direction.

Attachment 1 is a copy of the proposed Business and Economic Visual Brand Identity Report.

2.0 Recommendation

That the Economic and Development Services Committee recommend to City Council:

The proposed Business and Economic Development Services Visual Brand Identity included in Attachment 1 of Report ED-24-108 dated October 2, 2024, Direction 1, be selected as the Brand Direction for Oshawa Economic Development and be applied to designs for banners, print and digital publications and other documents and materials generally in accordance with the associated brand guidelines prepared by Aubs and Mugg Inc.

3.0 Input From Other Sources

The following have been consulted in the preparation of this Report:

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Commissioner, Community and Operations Services Department
- Commissioner, Corporate and Finance Services Department
- Commissioner, Safety and Facilities Services Department
- Corporate Communications Branch
- Economic and Development Services Department Branch Heads
- Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce
- Oshawa Tourism
- Invest Durham
- Durham Tourism
- External Industry Partners and Stakeholders
- Aubs and Mugg Inc.

4.0 Analysis

4.1 Background

With the goal of developing a dynamic, inspiring and resounding call to action for current and prospective businesses and investors, both regionally and globally, predicated upon the competitive economic value proposition that the City of Oshawa provides, a consultant was retained to develop a proposed Visual Brand Identity for Business and Economic Development Services.

The City of Oshawa Economic Development Brand identity, herein referred as the (“O.E.D.B.”), aims to resonate to a business-to-business audience as the primary target, as well as foster within the greater Oshawa community civic pride around our unique economy using powerful and compelling storytelling.

In February 2024, a Request for Quote was released to marketing firms that specialize in brand development by the Business and Economic Development Services branch in consultation with Purchasing Services. In total, eight firms were invited to quote with one quote received by Aubs and Mugg Inc. Upon a successful interview and scoring, Aubs and Mugg were retained to undertake the project and a scope of work was executed to guide the project.

4.2 Project Plan and Process

Aubs and Mugg Inc. was retained on March 21, 2024, and work on the brand development project began immediately. A core project team comprised of representatives from the vendor (principal designer and creative director), Business and Economic Development Services and Corporate Communications met regularly to ensure thorough and ongoing engagement throughout the six-month timeline of the project. As part of the project scope, the vendor conducted thorough market research to understand the current landscape of

Oshawa's economy, overall brand perceptions and comparative opportunities. This research included review of the following:

- City of Oshawa 10-Year Economic Development Strategy
- City of Oshawa Ready Set Future: A Place Blueprint for Durham
- City of Oshawa Development Insider
- Community Profile
- Durham Tourism Materials
- Oshawa Tourism Progress Report
- City of Oshawa Corporate Visual Identity Manual
- City of Oshawa Centennial Brochure
- Corporate Relocation Guide
- Other Economic Development Brands

Additionally, other market research was undertaken to conduct comparator analysis. This included internal and external stakeholder interviews with City staff, Council, Invest Durham and the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce offered by Aubs and Mugg Inc. in a series of 30 minute one-on-one sessions.

4.3 Community Engagement

4.3.1 Stakeholder Consultation Process

As part of the project, staff undertook a four-week consultation process beginning on May 13, 2024 and concluding on June 21, 2024 to engage members of Oshawa's business landscape – both internal and external – about their understandings of Oshawa's business and economic strengths and their expectations for the new brand.

The consultation process included opportunities to participate in a feedback survey, as well as an invitation to participate in a 30-minute, one-on-one interview with a researcher.

Both the invitation and the feedback survey were shared with approximately 66 members of the Oshawa Business Landscape including members of the City of Oshawa Corporate Leadership Team, members of the City of Oshawa Economic and Development Services Senior Leadership Team, Oshawa City Council, members of the City of Oshawa's Business and Economic Development Services and members of the City of Oshawa's Corporate Communications.

The invitation and survey were also sent to representatives from Invest Durham and Durham Tourism, the Spark Centre, the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce and Oshawa Tourism, academic partners including Durham College, Ontario Tech University, and Trent University Durham GTA, a variety of local employers of varying sizes, local research assets and innovation spaces, and representatives from Oshawa infrastructure assets.

4.3.2 Stakeholder response

In total, seven (7) responses to the digital feedback survey were received, and 20 one-on-one stakeholder conversations were hosted.

Key themes that emerged from the conversations included:

1. Strategic Location and Quality of Life

Oshawa boasts essential infrastructure for a successful city, including major highways, an airport, deep water port, and rail lines, making it ideal for transportation. The cost of living and business operations is lower compared to Toronto and the rest of the GTA. With a vibrant mix of restaurants, arts and entertainment, waterfront trails, retail, and housing, Oshawa offers a high quality of life. Its core economic infrastructure is robust.

2. Educational Hub and Innovation Centre

Oshawa's four post-secondary institutions make it a competitive hub for education and innovation. These schools provide access to research facilities, faculty resources, a well-educated talent pipeline, partnerships with innovation labs, and extensive knowledge resources. This educational strength is a significant draw for new businesses.

3. Diverse Economic Landscape

Oshawa's economy is not dominated by a single industry. The healthcare and education sectors are considered the largest employers. However, the City is also home to a significantly high population of small businesses, as well as a growing number of international manufacturers. There is a strong focus on showcasing Oshawa as more than an automotive hub. Stakeholders believe the economic and cultural diversity will continue to grow, enhancing economic stability and fostering cross-sector collaboration, making Oshawa a place where anyone can succeed.

4. Emerging Economic Opportunities

Oshawa is undergoing significant economic transformation with new infrastructure developments, particularly in the North end, creating fresh opportunities. The City's population is increasing, and there is a strong sense of anticipation about Oshawa's future potential. Stakeholders feel that Oshawa is on the brink of a new era, driven by upcoming developments and growth.

5. Persistent Stereotypes and Social Challenges

Despite progress, Oshawa is still often associated with its automotive industry roots. There is a noted "pride of place" issue among residents, contributing to negative perceptions that extend beyond Oshawa.

4.4 Proposed Visual Brand Identity Recommendation

Staff are recommending Direction 1 (refer to Attachment 1) as the new brand identity for Oshawa's Business and Economic Development Services as it positions the Branch and Oshawa's diverse economy using a clean, modern, confident and professional approach fitting for a city with Oshawa's bright future.

The new brand is a platform for opportunity. It uses powerful imagery to tell the success stories of Oshawa's entrepreneurs, businesses, and diverse sectors. The identity is versatile and adaptable and can be seamlessly be used across various platforms and spaces and will make outreach more engaging and impactful.

At its core, this brand powers and empowers. It celebrates the people and businesses of Oshawa. Each visual element embodies the City's diversity, creativity, and innovative spirit, showcasing the vibrant economy and strong sense of community that define Oshawa. The brand is also designed to resonate with long-standing local businesses while welcoming new enterprises from outside the City.

4.5 Alignment to City of Oshawa Corporate Brand

The new identity complements the City of Oshawa's corporate brand while providing a distinct presence for the Business and Economic Development Services.

Fonts and colour palettes were selected based on the City's corporate brand guidelines to enhance brand recognition and comprehension by the public.

The proposed Business and Economic Development Services brand introduces linear features, frames and stylistic approaches for photography and video direction, while ensuring cohesion with the existing corporate brand.

5.0 Financial Implications

There are costs attributed to implementing the proposed visual brand identity in physical assets. Asset development can currently be accommodated within the approved Business and Economic Development Services branch 2024 Operating Budget.

6.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

This Report responds to the Oshawa Strategic Plan Priority Area:

"Innovate: Vibrant Culture and Economy" with the goal to attract new businesses and support existing businesses and industry.



Hailey Wright, BA Hons, Director,
Business and Economic Development Services



Anthony Ambra, P.Eng, Commissioner,
Economic and Development Services Department

City of Oshawa

Item: ED-24-108
Attachment 1

Business and Economic

Development Services

Visual Identity Development

Aubs&Mugg

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Introduction

Project Background

Developing a distinct brand for Oshawa's Business and Economic Development Services department is crucial in establishing its identity, credibility, and influence within the community and beyond. A well-defined brand differentiates the department from other entities, clarifying its unique mission, values, and objectives. It helps in building trust and recognition among local businesses, potential investors, and municipal partners, signaling professionalism and a clear vision for economic growth. Moreover, a strong brand can enhance marketing efforts, making outreach more effective by resonating with target audiences and aligning with their aspirations. Ultimately, a distinct brand serves as a powerful tool for attracting resources, partnerships, and opportunities, driving the department's success in fostering sustainable economic development.

About the Agency

Aubs & Mugg Inc. is an independent brand studio based in Toronto, Ontario, devoted to crafting powerful and authentic brand experiences. Our approach is grounded in keen observation, collaborative partnerships, and meticulous craftsmanship. With a presence that spans Ontario, Canada, and North America, we excel at telling brand stories that are not only engaging and inspiring but also deeply true to each brand's core identity.

We are honoured to have previously partnered with the City of Oshawa on the downtown brand, DTO, and we are grateful for the opportunity to continue building Oshawa's brand positioning. Our relationship with the City reflects our commitment to creating meaningful and impactful branding that resonates with communities.

Research Synthesis

Research Approach

Staff undertook a four-week consultation process beginning on May 13, 2024 and concluding on June 21, 2024 to engage members of Oshawa's business landscape – both internal and external – about their understandings of the community's value and their expectations for the new brand.

The consultation process included both the circulation of a digital feedback survey, as well as an invitation to participate in a 30-minute, one-on-one interview with a researcher.

Both the invitation and the feedback survey were shared with approximately 66 members of the Oshawa Business Landscape including members of the City of Oshawa Corporate Leadership Team, members of the City of Oshawa Economic & Development Services Senior Leadership Team, Oshawa City Council, members of the City of Oshawa's Business & Economic Development Services Branch and members of the City of Oshawa's Communications Branch.

The invitation and survey were also sent to representatives from Invest Durham & Durham Tourism, the Spark Centre, the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce & Oshawa Tourism, academic partners including Durham College, Ontario Tech University, and Trent University Durham GTA, a variety of local employers of varying sizes, local research assets and innovation spaces, and representatives from Oshawa infrastructure assets.

Select participants were also invited to share their input on the potential brand name. Name options were presented to them, with the ability to add additional names for consideration.

The following pages outline the five (5) key findings from this work along with the results from the naming survey.

Additionally, Aubs & Mugg reviewed a collection of existing economic development brands for nearby municipalities, and regions not within Oshawa's competitive landscape.

Key Finding 1/5

Oshawa boasts all the essential elements that make for a thriving city and robust economy.

- Oshawa has access to several major highways, an airport, port and rail lines, making it an ideal location for transportation.
- The cost of living and business in Oshawa is affordable when compared to Toronto and the rest of the GTA.
- With its restaurants, arts & entertainment, waterfront trails, retail and housing, Oshawa has a good quality of living.
- Core economic infrastructure is in place.

Key Finding 2/5

Oshawa's multiple post-secondary schools are an economic and social strength.

- With multiple post-secondary schools, Oshawa is a competitive education hub.
- This can be a draw for new businesses, with access to research facilities, faculty resources, an educated labour force, partnerships with innovation labs, and a wealth of knowledge.

Key Finding 3/5

Oshawa's economic landscape cannot be defined by any single business or industry.

- The healthcare and education sectors are perceived to be the city's largest employers.
- The city's economic landscape has been and continues to diversify very quickly.
- There is a wide range of business size and scale, from small business to international manufacturers.
- There is a consistent internal reminder that Oshawa is more than automotive.

Key Finding 4/5

Oshawa's economy is in the process of reinventing itself.

- Many new infrastructure developments, particularly in the city's North end, are creating new economic opportunities.
- Oshawa's population continues to grow.
- Much of what makes Oshawa appealing surrounds "what's coming" and where Oshawa is moving.

Key Finding 5 / 5

Stereotypes are hard to shake off.

- Oshawa is still associated with GM and the automotive industry, by both outside perspectives as well as many residents.
- Issues surrounding vulnerable populations continue to dominate many conversations and perceptions, both internal and external.
- There is a “pride of place” issue among Oshawa residents – creating negative influencers in networks that reach beyond Oshawa.

Feedback on Naming

Select participants were asked for feedback on the following brand name options and offered an opportunity to share additional naming options to consider:

- Oshawa Economic Development
- Oshawa (Economic Development)
- Invest Oshawa
- Oshawa Business and Economic Development Services

Feedback on Naming

Oshawa Economic Development

- Received the second-most (5) first-place rankings
- Received zero (0) last-place rankings

Is it appropriate?

- Yes: 9
- No: 5
- Unsure: 1

Concerns:

General public doesn't understand 'Economic Development'. It's also perceived as 'too broad' and 'boring'.

Oshawa (Economic Development)

- Majority (8) chose this as their least favourite option
- Received the fewest (1) first-place rankings

Is it appropriate?

- Yes: 7
- No: 6
- Unsure: 2

Concerns:

General public doesn't understand 'Economic Development'. It's also perceived as 'too broad' and 'boring'. One participant mentioned they liked having Oshawa be front-and-centre.

Invest Oshawa

- Received the most (6) first-place rankings
- Received the fewest fourth-place rankings

Is it appropriate?

- Yes: 8
- No: 6
- Unsure: 1

Concerns:

'Invest' can confusingly imply banking for some. To some it doesn't capture the range of activities the department covers. One person finds it 'more interesting' than 'Economic Development'. Another noted the connection to 'Invest Durham'

Oshawa Business and Economic Development Services

- The majority (6) positioned this as their second-favourite name
- Was positioned as the least favourite name by 4 people (second, behind Oshawa (Economic Development))

Is it appropriate?

- Yes: 8
- No: 7

Concerns:

Its length makes the name challenging to work with, though it's noted to be the most accurate

Brand Positioning

Brand Narrative

Oshawa is a city brimming with opportunity. Our diverse and dynamic business landscape offers a welcoming space where everyone can thrive. With all the ingredients for economic success – expanding infrastructure, a vibrant arts and culture scene, and an exceptional quality of life – Oshawa is a place where anything feels possible. We embrace our rich history while eagerly forging ahead into a future filled with promise. New infrastructure developments, a growing population, and an evolving economy all signal exciting times ahead. We're not just building a city; we're creating a community where people can work, live, play, learn, and truly enjoy life. With unwavering confidence in our continued economic success, we recognize that fostering economic development is key to nurturing a thriving society and culture.

Brand Principle 1 / 3

We are confident.

Many things are said about Oshawa. People talk about us because we're a little different than our neighbours. We embrace this identity – what makes us distinct is what makes us confident. From our diverse, hard-working business community, to our versatile infrastructure, to our grit and resilience, Oshawa is a city that works. Our brand is as genuine and determined as our workforce; as confident as our identity as a city. We are unapologetically changing the definition of what Oshawa's economy can be, and how to attract it.

Brand considerations:

- Permission to be different than traditional economic development brands
- Refreshingly enjoyable and accessible
- Real people and real businesses

Brand Principle 2 / 3

We are a source of energy.

Exciting things are on Oshawa's horizon. We are in a phase of economic reinvention, with endless room to grow. This momentum is evident in our brand. We are enthusiastic about our bright future. We are invested with optimism. We are not only energetic, but a source of energy. Our brand powers and empowers. It sees and supports everyone, from the mom-and-pop restaurants to the multi-national corporations. We are a brand of brightness and life. We are here to drive innovation. We are ready to become.

Brand considerations:

- Optimism! Optimism! Optimism! Optimism! Optimism!
- An uplifting voice for the workforce
- Movement, enthusiasm

Brand Principle 3 / 3

We are a platform for opportunity.

Oshawa's business landscape is eclectic and diverse. We cannot be defined by any single industry or narrative. This is a place of pure potential. There is opportunity for everyone, and room for all stories to be told. Our brand is a platform for these voices; we share their stories to show what's possible here. To speak for them, our brand must be as varied and nuanced as our economy. We are multifaceted. Our brand is a platform for opportunity.

Brand considerations:

- Many things making one
- Foundational brand system
- A closet of design devices (formal, informal, etc.)

Brand Identity Concepts

Direction 1

oshawa —————
————— **economic**
development

**oshawa —
— economic
development**

The Frame

The Oshawa Economic Development logo transforms into a frame allowing content to be focused, celebrated, and organized.

oshawa —
— economic
development

oshawa —
— economic
development



Conceptual Billboard



**The next
eGaming
empire will
be built
in Oshawa.**

oshawa—
economic
development

oshawaecdev.ca

Conceptual Construction Hoarding



Conceptual Social Media Application



2024
Oshawa
Community
Profile



oshawa —
— economic
development

**oshawa —
— economic
development**

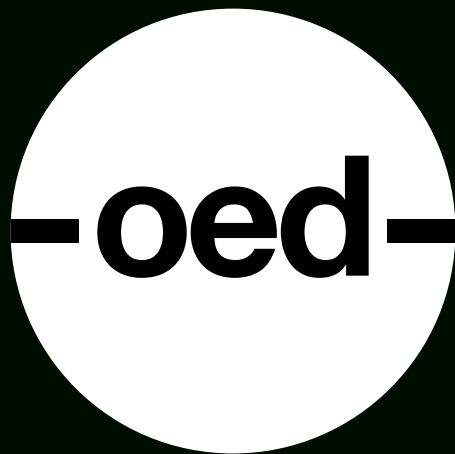
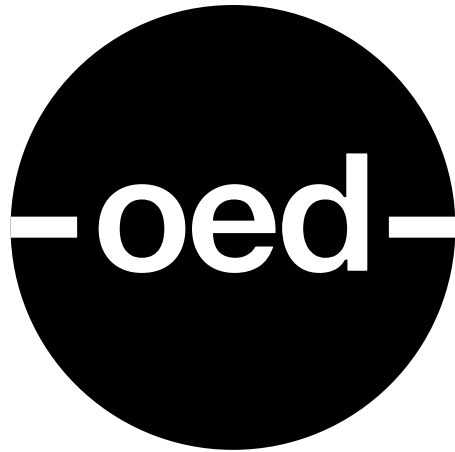
**oshawa —
— economic
development**

City of Oshawa Corporate Logo and Oshawa
Economic Development Logo Lockup

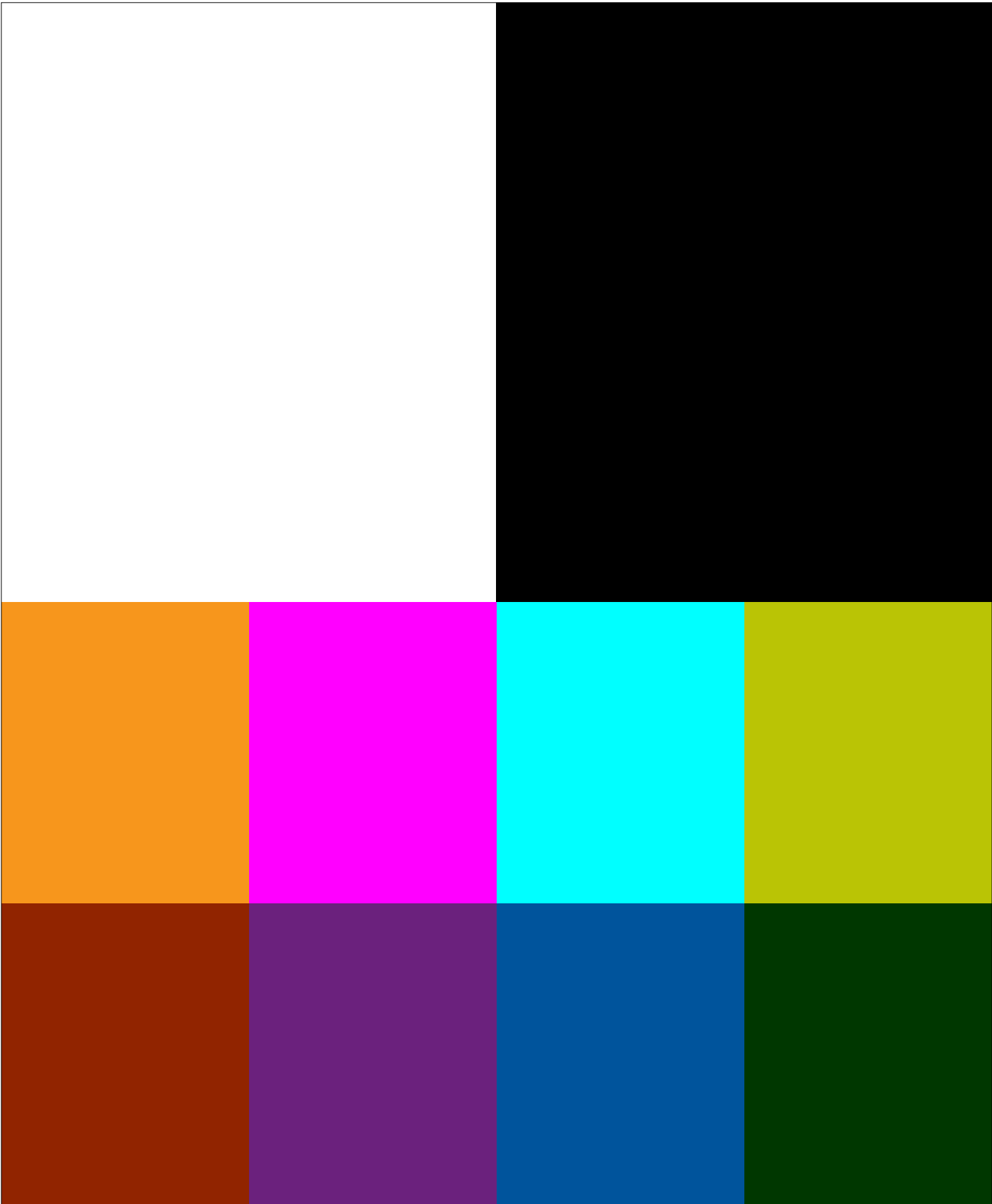


**oshawa —
— economic
development**

Icon (positive and reverse applications)



Colour Palette



Conceptual Frame Application Examples

oshawa —
economic
development



oshawa —
economic
development

oshawa —
economic
development





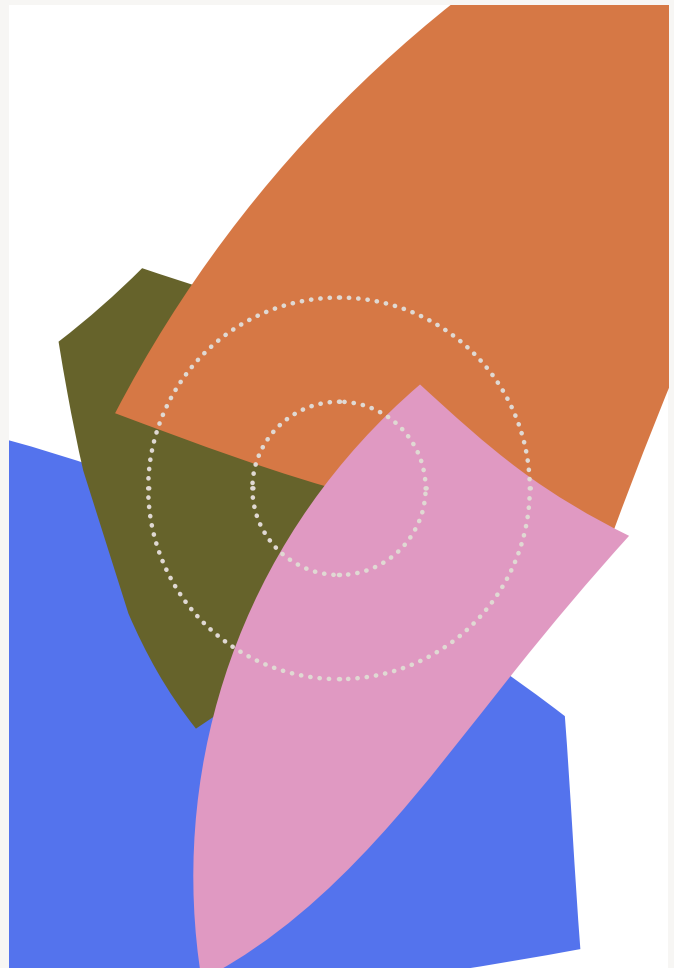
Direction 2



**Oshawa
Economic
Development**

Visualizing Oshawa's Economy

The Oshawa Economic Development logo features an O made of organic, overlapping forms – representing the city's eclectic, human, and evolving economy.



Conceptual Billboard



The next eGaming
empire will be built
in Oshawa.



oshawaecedev.ca

Logo (positive and reverse applications)



Direction 3

INVEST OSHAWA

Conceptual Billboard



Direction 4

**Oshawa
Business
+ Economic
Development
Services**

Conceptual Billboard



Aubs&Mugg