

Township of

North Dundas

COUNCIL REPORT

To:	CAO, Mayor and Members of Council
From:	Rob Hunter, CMM
Date of Meeting:	August 9, 2011
Subject:	Economic Development Report

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receives this report for information purposes.

ORIGIN/PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the Economic Development Office Work Plan (see Appendix A).

BACKGROUND

The Economic Development and Communications Officer has conducted research over the past month and has developed the attached Economic Development Plan for the Township of North Dundas. The Work Plan outlines the overall programs of the Economic Development Office.

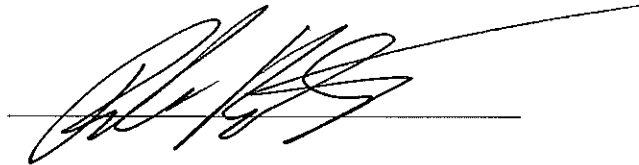
ANALYSIS

The Work Plan is broken down into nine (9) sections and has been derived after a month of research and discussions with key stakeholders. Each of the sections has sub-categories that describe the areas of work.

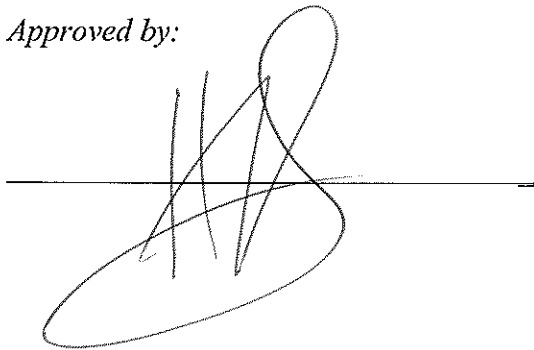
CONCLUSION

The Work Plan will guide the Economic Development activities for the next year. Activity Reports will be presented to Council in regards to progress and outcomes.

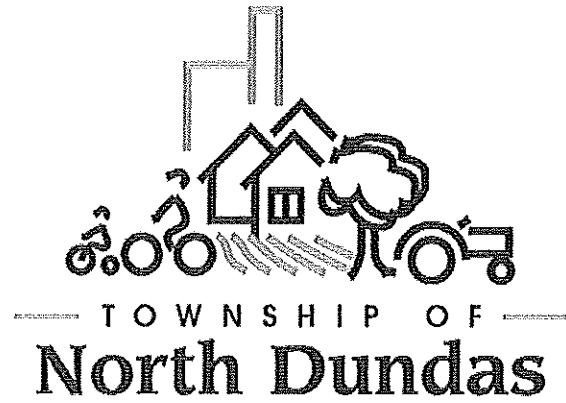
Submitted by:

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Approved by:

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APPENDIX A



DRAFT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORK PLAN

August 2011

General

The Economic Developers Association of Canada defines Economic Development as a process that influences the growth and well being of a community through such means as job creation, job retention, improved tax base and a reasonable life quality.

This plan contains initiatives that will help enhance economic development in the Township of North Dundas. This plan is broken down into nine (9) sections as follows:

- Economic Development Strategy
- Business Development
- Investment Attraction
- Marketing and Communications
- Research and Information Management
- Planning and Infrastructure Development
- Community Revitalization
- Tourism
- Other Economic Development Activities

Economic Development Strategy

The United Counties of SD & G in late 2011 and early 2012, will be hiring a consultant to produce an Economic Development Strategy for SD & G. This presents an excellent opportunity for the Township of North Dundas to partner with the SD & G Economic Development Office to have an Economic Development strategy developed for the Township of North Dundas at the same time. By partnering with the SD & G Economic Development office, this will greatly reduce the cost of completing an Economic Development Strategy for the Township of North Dundas as we would be leveraging the County funds. Therefore, this would eliminate the Township having to hire its own consultant to develop a separate standalone strategy for Township.

Business Development

Business Counselling Services

Providing Business Counselling Services to the owners/managers of various businesses is an important component of Economic Development. Businesses that could be counselled could be a start-up business, or could be an existing business already in operation for a number of years. Depending on the needs,

counselling could be done in consultation with the SD & G Business Enterprise Centre. Information provided to clients could include but is not limited to:

1. Advice on financing, marketing, human resources;
2. Referrals to available government programs;
3. Or other functional area of the operation.

Business Retention and Expansion

Conduct a Business Retention and Expansion exercise after the completion of the Economic Development Strategy (noted in section 1) and when appropriate in the future. Business Retention and Expansion is an approach to economic development that focuses on nurturing existing businesses as key drivers of ongoing economic health and vitality in a community. Recognizing that the majority of new jobs created in communities come from existing businesses, business retention and expansion initiatives engage the local business owners in a dialogue in order to fully understand the challenges they are facing and the opportunities they see on the horizon. Where possible, strategies would be developed to assist the business community in addressing those challenges and realizing the opportunities for growth.

BR & E uses an approach that combines the initiative of community business visits with a systematic interview process, using community leaders and other citizens to make it work. This combination helps lead to increased economic development opportunities and improved quality of life in the community.

BR & E project materials and BR & E consultation would be provided by the OMAFRA office responsible for our catchment area to ensure the project flows smoothly.

Investment Attraction

SD&G Economic Development Office

Work closely with the SG&G Economic Development office in the following areas:

- Industrial / Commercial Investment Attraction
- Agriculture – Bio Processing Eco Industry Alliance
- Facilitating the growth, expansion, or restructuring of businesses
- Assistance with accessing various development programs and incentives.
- Providing direct investment into projects through their Community Ventures Capital Fund.
- Actively promoting the Township of North Dundas, and its capabilities, to national and international decision makers.

Site Selector Inquires

Another significant component of investment attraction involves responding to Site Selector inquires. The response can vary by site selector, but the information requested and provided is usually key information such as land availability, labour costs, utility costs, etc for the potential investors.

Marketing and Communications

Marketing

Marketing is important to enhance economic development opportunities in the Township. Marketing of the Township of North Dundas will take place both within and outside the Township through the production of promotional literature, advertising (including certain tourism related publications), press releases and possible attendance at trade shows.

Community Image and Brand Development/Management

Community Image and Brand Development/Management involves overseeing the design of the community brand (logo, slogans, tag lines, colour schemes, messaging, etc.) and setting guidelines for the use of the brand. Currently the Township does not have a creative tagline to accompany the Township logo. A tagline is a variant of a branding slogan typical used in marketing materials and advertising. The idea behind the concept is to create a memorable phrase that will sum up the tone and premise of a brand and/or to reinforce the audience's memory of a brand. It is suggested that the creation of a tagline be investigated once the branding exercise for SD & G is completed in the fall of 2011.

Media Relations

Having a good working relationship with the media is very important to help spread the word about economic development initiatives in the Township. Therefore, it is important to develop and maintain relationships with all media outlets (i.e. TV, Radio, Print) both locally and within the region. This will help to ensure that noteworthy economic development news is covered in a timely and accurate fashion.

Website

The township website is a valuable tool for providing information to residents, visitors and potential businesses and investors. It is suggested that a needs assessment be conducted. The information gathered during the needs assessment will help guide what, if any strategies for the website could be developed.

Signage

Produce and install Gateway signage on Hwy #43 and Hwy #31 entrance points to the Township. This signage will not only help to define the township boundaries, but it will also help market the Township. It is also suggested that we investigate promotional signage opportunities on Highway #401 to market the Township. This signage would be similar to the type of signage that the Village of Merrickville has located on Highway #401 just before exit #705.

Networking

Develop and maintain relationships with community and business stakeholders, developers, partners and all levels of government in order to enhance Township economic development efforts. Below is a list of a few organizations that can help further economic development in the Township:

- 1) North Dundas Chamber of Commerce
- 2) SD & G Economic Development Office
- 3) Cornwall and Seaway Valley Tourism
- 4) Ontario Tourism Region Nine
- 5) SD & G Small Business Enterprise Centre
- 6) Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- 7) Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario)
- 8) Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade
- 9) etc

Business Visitation

Conduct business visitation on an annual basis with a look towards increased frequency if the need arises in the future. These business visits will help to ensure that there is a good exchange of information between the Township and the business community at large.

Research and Information Management

Community Profile

Produce a Community Profile both in hard copy and electronic copy that captures and presents key economic development analysis data and other important community-specific data all in one document. The Community Profile is often the first document reviewed by investors and site selectors when they are looking for communities in which to invest.

Business Directory

Ensure that the Township website online business directory is updated on a regular basis. Work with the United Counties of SD & G on possible enhancements to the website directory after the completion of their branding exercise.

Land / Property Inventory

Conduct a Land / Property Inventory to have an up to date listing of all the commercial and industrial lands and buildings available for sale or lease in a community. This information will be available on the Township website and also made available in hard copy. In addition to containing all of the relevant contact information related to the property, the inventory usually lists other key information such as a comprehensive description of the property (square footage, zoning, servicing, selling price, lease rate, etc.). This Land / Property inventory will be conducted in cooperation with the United Counties of SD & G in the fall of 2011.

Planning and Infrastructure Development

Residential Development

Work with developers to enhance residential development in the Township. This will include working with local developers and also regional developers who might not be aware of the opportunities that exist for residential development in the Township of North Dundas.

High Speed Internet

Work with the Eastern Ontario Regional Network that is responsible for ensuring that there is High Speed Internet coverage in all areas of North Dundas. For most businesses IT Infrastructure is now as fundamental to their business operation as the availability of water, sewer, and gas services. High speed internet is also fundamental for residents who are currently living in the township or people who are looking to make the Township of North Dundas their home.

Community Revitalization

Main Street Revitalization

A key component of Main Street Revitalization is having the appropriate retail/service mix. It is suggested that we review the current retail/service mix. This review will help identify any potential gaps in the retail and service offerings of the main street areas. This will be helpful and act as a reference when working with both existing businesses and new investors to help fill those gaps as part of our recruitment efforts.

It is also suggest that we provide assistance as may be required to the various Community Groups that are undertaking Community Revitalization projects within the Township.

Tourism

Tourism Information

Making tourism information easily available to visitors to North Dundas will help promote both tourism products and activities in the area. Given this, ensuring that tourism information is easily available in the lobby of the Municipal building is suggested. To help drive visitors to the tourism information available, it is suggested that we also install the blue question mark tourism signs along major routes directing visitor traffic to the Municipal Building. Cornwall and Seaway Valley Tourism will provide this signage and a tourism information rack at no cost.

Festivals and Events

Festivals and Events are an important tourism product in any community. It is suggested that we provide assistance where/when appropriate to the various festivals and events in the Township. Assistance could be in the form of helping them source grants and/or other funding to help enhance their product offerings. Assistance could also be provided in other areas such as helping them source funding for human resources and/or also providing mentoring assistance when it comes to marketing and event entertainment.

Other Economic Development Activities

Government Programs and Funding for Economic Development Initiatives

There are numerous government and private funding programs that are available. It is important to identify and promote these available government programs and/or funding programs that will assist with economic development initiatives in the Township.

Organization Membership and Event Attendance

Membership and attendance at government and industry conferences, seminars, workshops and networking events is necessary for keeping in touch with industry trends, innovations, best practices and opportunities. Attendance and/ or membership include the following events and organizations:

- a) Ontario East Municipal Conference (September 2011)
- b) Economic Development Association of Canada Conference (October 2011)
- c) Economic Developers Council of Ontario Conference (Winter 2012)

Legislative Issues

Monitor Legislative issues that are and/or could have an impact on economic development activity in the Township of North Dundas and keep Council abreast of such issues.

Transportation

Advocate to the Federal and Provincial governments for the installation of passing lanes on Hwy #31 north and south of Winchester and also Hwy #43 in the Township both eastbound and westbound lanes (similar to Hwy #15 between Smiths Falls and Portland) to improve access to Ottawa, Hwy #401 and Hwy #416.